THE

WHOLE PRACTICAL

WORKS



OF THE REVEREND AND LEARNED

Mr. JOHN WILLISON,

LATE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

In Dundee.

WITH AN

ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE, CHARACTER, AND WRITINGS OF THE AUTHOR.

AS ALSO,

AN INDEX OF THE PRINCIPAL MATTERS CONTAINED IN THE WHOLE WORK.

THEY THAT TURN MANY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL SHINE AS THE STARS FOR EVER.

DAN. XII. 3.

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1817.

AN ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIFE, CHARACTER, AND WRITINGS

OF THE AUTHOR.

IT is not intended in the following account of the well known author of this valuable work to entertain the reader with an uninteresting detail of his family connexions, or the minute particulars of his conduct in the earlier periods of his life, which, though every way exemplary, yet cannot be supposed to furnish those interesting incidents which were produced by his connexion with church affairs in the more advanced periods of his life: to which therefore I shall chiefly confine myself.

Mr John Willison was descended from reputable and worthy ancestors, distinguished for eminent piety and their warm attachment to the presbyterian cause. He was born in the year 1680. His parents, from his pious inclinations, and uncommon progress in all kinds of literature, early designed him for the service of the church, with which his own maturer thoughts happily coincided. After a regular course of academical education, he prosecuted the study of divinity with great success, and soon after his being licensed to preach, he received an unanimous call to the pastoral office at Brechin: there he applied to the ministry with great diligence, and was so much admired as a preacher, that upon the first vacancy of a minister, at Dundee, he was unanimously chosen to succeed, and his removal thither earnestly solicited by the people of that place. Being thus by providence placed in a more extensive sphere, he became still more assiduous in discharging the duties of his office, and was no less admired for his public performances than beloved for his primitive simplicity, purity of manners, extensive benevolence, and remarkable modesty.‡

He married a pious and religious lady, by whom he had several children, whose pious dispositions, and the many good qualifications with which Mrs. Willison was adorned, rendered him in all respects happy in the conjugal relation. His behaviour as the head of a family, was such as shewed how much he had the eternal interests of those more immediately under his care at heart: besides the constant and regular worship of God in his family, morning and evening, he spent a part of every day in instructing his children and servants, and praying with them, but more particularly on the Lord's Day, in the religious observation of which he was not only very exact himself, but earnestly recommended the sanctification of it as one of the greatest means for keeping alive practical religion.

As an instance of his great regard to this duty, I am naturally led to mention his excellent treatise upon the Lord's Day, published for the use of families, wherein he fully proves the morality of the fourth command, gives suitable directions for the religious observance of the Christian Sabbath, and shews that the neglect of it is a great inlet to all kinds of profaneness and immorality.

His family piety was not confined to the duties of divine worship, but comprehended the whole of relative religion: he was a loving husband, an affectionate parent, a tender master, an agreeable companion, and a faithful friend. Though his whole life was one continued representation of true religion in its most amiable and inviting form, yet it is from his public ministry, that we must draw the principal, lively, and most distinguishing parts of his character.

Among his many and great labours, we shall only mention those he performed at home: for though his benevolence was too extensive to be confined to those immediately under his care, yet, sensible of the right they had to his services, he seldom injured them by supplying other churches, or permitting those to preach for him with whose gifts and graces he was unacquainted.

On the Lord's day, after performing closet and family prayer, he, with his family, went early to the church: and when he was not to preach, he was a constant, serious and attentive hearer, always noting what in each

‡ He was modest to such a degree, that his friends could not prevail with him to sit to a painter, in order that they might have his portrait after his decease, so that any head that can ever be given to represent him must be different from the life; which is the reason that no head is given with his works, as the doing thereof would only have been injurious to the author, an imposition on the public, and a blemish to the publication. Mr Willison was solicited to undertake to give a draught of him, which, so long after his decease, was found to be impracticable.

sermon reached his heart, affected him, or did him good, improving it by frequent meditation and prayer, though preached by those every way his inferior. And indeed his diligent improvement of the word preached, through the blessing of God, contributed not a little to his great attainments in knowledge and grace.

In prayer his gifts and graces appeared in an eminent degree, and his faculty of engaging the attention of his audience was equalled by few, and excelled by none.

His lectures were not so much critical as plain, practical, and instructive: his observations were striking and uncommon, and such as tended to answer the end for which the scriptures were written, namely, to make us wise unto salvation. Herein he had uncommon merit, performing this exercise with so much judgment, readiness and clearness, as deeply affected, as well as greatly instructed, his hearers: by this means his people have been observed to excel in their knowledge of the holy scriptures.

Of his talents in preaching, the world may judge, from the number of his printed sermons so universally read, justly admired, and generally useful. He was happy in the choice of his subjects: no occasion happened, either public or private, but he was always prepared, having an apposite text to preach upon, being a scribe well instructed in the kingdom of God, bringing forth out of his treasure things new and old.

His sermons were neither perplexed with an unnecessary number of divisions, nor burdensome to the memory with too few. His method and style were adapted to the capacities of his hearers, he illustrated his similitudes by those objects with which they were most familiar. He neither shot the arrow of the word over their heads in high notions, or the frothy flourishes of affected rhetoric: nor under their feet by coarse expressions, or insipid comparisons: but to their hearts, in all the liveliness and warmth of one who was really affected with the great truths which he delivered, often melting into tears, and raising his audience to the same degree of affection.

He wrote the notes of his sermons pretty large, and always legible: from these he compiled his Sacramental Meditations and Advices, being the last of his publications, and which contain the substance of all his unpublished sermons. This it was judged necessary to premise, in order to prevent the public from being imposed upon, as many of his MSS are in private hands, and may nevertheless be published, for the emolument of the possessors, to the prejudice of the author's memory, and contrary to his intentions.

Another constant part of his ministry was catechising: In this he not only delighted, but recommended it to others as the first charge that Christ gave to Peter, "to feed his lambs:" he experienced the benefit of this excellent institution, knowing that youth is the most usual season of conversion, the time when the heart is soonest melted, and the affections are most pliable.

In this work of catechising, which he always began and ended with prayer, he was remarkably owned and blessed of God: his soul earnestly laboured for the conversion of youth, and in this God granted him the desire of his heart: he saw a work of grace begun in the hearts of most of his catechumens, of which many to this day in Dundee are living witnesses.

He made use of the Assembly's Catechism, dividing the answers into lesser parts, supporting them with suitable texts of scripture, and drawing practical inferences from them. I need say little more of his managing this work, but refer the reader to his Example of plain Catechising, to which in this exercise he conformed, with some agreeable variations.

He composed his Mother's Catechism for the use of children when very young, and as an introduction to the Shorter Catechism, which he thought too long, and in some parts too abstruse, and above the comprehension of children: how well it has answered the author's design, the great number of editions it has undergone abundantly testify.

To these he added his larger and lesser Sacramental Catechisms, for the use of young communicants, which contain an excellent and plain explication of the nature and ends of that sacred ordinance, the nature of the covenant of grace, and the sacrament of baptism: and which may be of great use to those who are advanced in years.

He spent the evening of the Lord's day in conference with the young people under his care, in instructing them in the great duties of christianity, in conferring with them upon points of faith, and cases of conscience, in praying with them, and causing them to pray in his hearing, and instructing them particularly in this great duty, imitating in this the example of his great Master, who had compassion upon the ignorant, and despised not the day of small things.

In the administration of the Lord's supper his soul was filled with the most ardent love to Christ, and thankfulness to God for him: his heart was uncommonly enlarged, and the whole faculties of his soul were engaged: he performed all the parts of that sacred ordinance with the greatest liveliness, fervour and devotion, yet tempered with true judgment, propriety, and decency.

Those who have never heard our author upon sacramental occasions, may judge of his manner from his many excellent treatises published on that subject: to say any thing in commendation of which, would be to insult the judgment of the public, as they have so often been the means, through the blessing of God, of instructing the ignorant, reclaiming the openly profane, confirming the doubtful, and of building up believers through faith unto salvation.

In the sacrament of baptism he was equally faithful and earnest, always desirous of having that ordinance publicly administered, for the better admonishing of his hearers of the solemn dedication which was made of them to God through Christ, of their being members of his mystical body, of their open profession of being the Lord's only, and of walking before him in newness of life.

He observed the public fasts with the greatest strictness: his prayers and pleadings were chiefly for the pardon of national sins, and the granting of national mercies: he was large and particular in his intercessions for the

church, the land, the king and government, the reformed and persecuted churches abroad, and for the healing of the breaches and divisions of this national church at home. Nor was he less constant in joining with the nation on days of public thanksgiving, and the ease and cheerfulness with which he performed that part of his work, shewed how much he was interested in the success of our arms, or the deliverance of the land from any threatening calamity.

In the visitation of the sick he was uncommonly diligent, always ready, even at the most unseasonable hours, to visit the sick and dying, whether rich or poor: nor were his visits confined to those of his own quarter, or of his own opinion, but often to those of a different persuasion, when desired: and in those sad and solemn moments, when the heart and flesh begin to faint and fail, when eternity stares the soul in the face, and the messenger death stands ready at the door, when all earthly comforts fail, and the help of man is vain, he flattered not with a vain dependence upon the filthy rags of self-righteousness, but upon him who was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. He pointed out the Lord Jesus Christ as the Physician of value, the Rest for the weary, and the Refuge for the distrest.

For those in affliction he composed the Afflicted Man's Companion, which contains pious and proper directions suited to the different circumstances and conditions of the sick and dying, with suitable directions to their friends and neighbours, and those who have recovered from sickness, and the folly and danger of trusting to a death-bed repentance, which has been attacked by Mr Sandiman, of whom more hereafter, as limiting the mercy and grace of God to sinners, at the latest hour: In answer to which I shall only observe, that Mr Willison never limits the mercy or grace of God to any particular time or season, but asserts that true repentance can never come too late, though a late repentance is seldom sincere, often arising more from the fear of hell, than a real hatred of sin, and more from love to self than love to God: and indeed it is too often seen, that many of those penitents, who in the near views of death have professed great sorrow for their former sins, and made solemn promises of amendment if God should spare their lives, yet upon their recovery, their righteousness hath vanished like the morning cloud or the early dew, and they have returned to their former sins, like the dog to his vomit, or the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

Having now considered this eminent servant of Christ both as a Christian and public teacher, in which his character appears to the greatest advantage, I shall next lay before the reader an account of the public affairs of the church during his ministry, in the management of which, it is well known Mr Willison had a very large share. If any thing extraordinary happened that concerned the public interest, he was always consulted as one on whose penetration and prudence his brethren had an entire dependence: he was always considered as at the head of that party which espoused the religious liberty of the people, withstood the then prevailing corruptions, zealously adhered to the standards of the church, and contributed greatly to heal her divisions.—It will be necessary for the better understanding the following history to take a view of the church's settlement at the revolution in 1689: at that memorable period, in consequence of a well digested claim of right, prelacy was declared an intolerable grievance, and therefore abolished, and the present plan of church government, as more agreeable to the word of God, and the inclinations of the body of the people, adopted, the act for the king's supremacy in ecclesiastic causes was repealed, the confession of faith was ratified, patronages were abolished, and parishes had liberty to call their own ministers.

This establishment was confirmed and secured in the most solemn manner at the union in 1707, and declared by both parliaments to be "a fundamental and essential condition of the union in all time coming," but without any toleration to dissenters from the church.

But soon after the union, the English service was introduced into Scotland, adopted by the body of the episcopal clergy, and afterwards tolerated by the parliament, in 1712. This the church opposed, but without success: at the same time another bill was brought in for restoring patronages and repealing the act 1690, which gave liberty to parishes to call their own ministers; this likewise passed, notwithstanding the church's warm remonstrance against it, in which she asserted, "That the act 1690 is a part of the presbyterian "constitution, ratified at the union, and declared to be "unalterable, that they have still been reckoned a yoke "and burden upon this church, that the restoring of "them will inevitably obstruct the work of the gospel, "and lay a foundation for Simonical pactions betwixt "patrons and those presented by them."

In consequence of repeated applications to king George the first, by the church, the parliament in 1719 enacted, "That presentations given by patrons to vacant churches shall be of no effect, if the person presented do not accept or declare his willingness to accept of the same." This limitation was at that time considered as equivalent to the repealing of the patronage act, and that no presbyterian would ever comply with patronages, which they had so long and universally held in detestation: this observation was confirmed by the practice of the church for several years after, presentations were entirely disregarded, and vacant churches settled upon the call of congregations without any molestation from patrons.

Had the church improved this favourable crisis in corroborating with the civil power, she might have entirely delivered herself from that evil, as nothing could more effectually answer the end of mitigating patronages than the limiting of those who were capable of accepting presentations, and probationers being always in the church's power, she might have made such regulations and laid them under such restraints as she judged most proper: nor is there any thing in the constitution of the church at present to prevent her from acting in the same effectual manner, so that it is only from the civil power that a redress of this grievance is to be expected.

During this interval, some attempts were made by a few probationers for accepting presentations, but were obliged to retract upon the detestation shown by the people to such transactions: but sometime after, when Principal George Chalmers adventured to accept of a presentation to the church of Old Aberdeen, several young men took courage, and followed his example, and though at first they qualified their acceptances with the pretence of having the people's consent, yet they refused to retract upon the aversion shewn by the people to their settlements: this occasioned several intrusions and violent settlements, contrary to the known principles of this church. These, though gradually introduced, were neither commonly practised, nor openly countenanced by the superior courts, till after the year 1728: for the assembly, in 1725, after a great contest concerning the calling of a minister to Aberdeen, appointed, that besides the voting of the town council, magistrates, and elders, the inclinations of heads of families should be consulted: and the assembly, 1726, censured their commission for transporting Mr James Chalmers from Dyke to Aberdeen, without having due regard to the inclinations of the people, who opposed his call.

The assemblies, however, did not long continue in this disposition: after many hard struggles, some narrow decisions in favours of patronage through great interest took place, and they and their commission began soon after to pay more regard to patrons, in planting churches, though seldom hearers, than to the body of the people who attended the ordinances, the crown having the patronage of most of the churches in Scotland: this turn of affairs was thought to have been brought about by strong court influence, and the activity of several leading members, who had their dependence upon, or expectations from that quarter: These began openly to declare in judicatories against the rights of the people, and to assert that there were no stated rules in scripture relating to the calling of ministers, or who should be electors: this Mr Willison opposed, as contrary to the word of God, and the dictates of reason, and fully proved [see page 101-2, where he accurately and distinctly states the case] that the people have an unquestionable right to choose and call those pastors, to whom they intrust the care of their souls; and that no patron, heritor, body of men, or judicatory, can deprive them of the right and privilege of judging for themselves in matters of religion.

These intrusions were followed by the broaching of independency, attacks upon the constitution and standards of the church, and other errors zealously promoted by Mr John Glass at Tealing. This gentleman having given great offence, by propagating his erroneous opinions in several places, particularly at a communion in Dundee, in the spring 1726, Mr Willison represented to him in the most friendly manner, the evil and danger of his proceedings, and earnestly intreated him, as he valued the peace of the church, to desist; and declared his resolution for the exoneration of his conscience to oppose him, if he persisted.

This friendly admonition however had no effect, for in August thereafter, when Mr Willison and he preached at Strathmartin, Mr Glass, in his forenoon's sermon, from John vi. 69. introduced his singular tenets, and attacked the confession and covenants. These Mr Willison confuted in his sermon in the afternoon, from Luke xiii. 34. and being convinced that the truths of God were injured by this sermon and Mr Glass's former procedure, he in a discourse from Heb. vi. 11. before the presbytery at their next meeting in Dundee, testified against these innovations, vindicated the standards of the church and their composers, and proved the lawfulness of personal and national covenanting, from scripture and reason: to this discourse, Mr Glass objected, and at the presbytery's desire, gave an account of his sermon at Strathmartin, but omitted some exceptionable passages in it: this Mr Willison took notice of, but as the presbytery was not constituted, nothing farther was done.

At their next meeting this affair was again resumed, and Mr Glass was desired to be silent on that subject for the future, but as he would not forbear, he was suspended by the synod of Angus and Mearns in April 1728, and after a long process before the church, for contemning this sentence and persisting in his errors,† he was deposed from the ministry by the commission in March 1730.

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† At first Mr Glass and his adherents differed only from the national church with regard to church government, the magistrate's power, and national covenanting: since which they have been strangely altered and refined by the forementioned Mr Sandiman, son-in-law to the reverend founder. This gentleman in his letters on Theron and Aspasio, (a heap of unintelligible jargon, though by them esteemed unanswerable, and held as the standard of their party) very modestly represents all those who differ from them as in the high way to hell, churches as synagogues of satan, and ministers as flambeaux to light mankind to eternal damnation. How they engross the whole of religion to themselves, esteem all other professions as farce and nonsense, and prefer the theatre to all religious instructions, except those of their illiterate teachers, is no easy matter to be accounted for, on account of the great obscurity affected by them both in speaking and writing. In this kind of stile they have amazing success: sometimes they are quite unintelligible, and nevertheless often shew too great a clearness: for indeed those things which escape them, and are easy to be understood, are such as do no honour either to their judgment or understanding. The best account of their tenets however, as far as nonsense is communicable, is given by Mr Wilson in his answer to the above-mentioned letters, in whose favours even Mr Sandiman makes this concession, that he has understood the subject better than any by whom it has been considered, or those who have not been initiated into the arcanum of this very mysterious sect. They choose their teachers as the conclave sometimes does the pope, from the weakest and most illiterate of their number: all their members have a right to govern, and those who dissent are delivered over to satan.

During this process pastors were violently intruded upon reclaiming congregations, and the complaints of ministers, elders and others greatly increased: this occasioned many remonstrances and dissents in assemblies, and inferior courts. In Ass. 1730. many entered dissents against the settlement at Old Aberdeen, and others of the like nature, but were denied the liberty of recording them.

This raised the general cry, and increased the ferment among the people: but instead of appeasing them, the assembly enacted, That no protest or dissent should be recorded in their minutes; against this and other corruptions Mr Willison, with about forty other ministers, gave in a warm remonstrance to Ass. 1732. which, with another of the like nature, from fourteen hundred elders and private christians, the assembly refused to hear: and, contrary to instructions from presbyteries, enacted, That protestant heritors and elders should be the only voters in settling gospel ministers. This procedure, and the conduct of some preceding assemblies, prejudiced many, weakened the influence which assemblies formerly had, and laid the foundation of the schism which soon after followed.

Many of the clergy openly testified against these proceedings, which, though very offensive to many of the leading men, and those in the court interest, yet none was so much taken notice of as Mr Ebenezer Erskine, minister at Stirling, who in a sermon before the synod at Perth, in October 1732. impugned the proceedings of the Assembly, and used some strong expressions against the ministers and judicatories of the church, for which the synod appointed him to be rebuked: against which he appealed to Ass. 1733. who affirmed the synod's sentence, and rebuked him at their bar. Against this sentence Mr Erskine, Mr Wilson at Perth, Mr Moncrieff at Abernethy, and Mr Fisher at Kinclaven, protested, and also for liberty to testify against the act of Ass. 1732. or the like defections.

This the assembly highly resented, and appointed their commission to suspend them in August thereafter, if they did not retract their protest, and profess their sorrow for taking it, and to proceed to a higher censure if they disobeyed this sentence. The commission in August accordingly suspended the four brethren for adherence, and for their disobedience, in November following, loosed their relation from their respective charges, and declared them no longer ministers of this church. This rash and imprudent decision was carried only by Mr Goldie the moderator's casting vote: nor would they delay it till March, though allowed by the act of assembly, and earnestly solicited by many synods, presbyteries, magistrates and others, to delay them, spare them, and deal tenderly with them.

Against this sentence many protested, as did the four brethren who appealed to the first free, faithful, and reforming General Assembly of the church of Scotland: had the brethren preferred the peace of the church, to the pleasing ambition of being the founders of a sect, and the leaders of a party, they would have adhered to this appeal, and submitted to their sentence, at least till the meeting of the next assembly: which from the interposition of so many synods and presbyteries, with the commission in their favours, they had reason to believe, would consider their complaints, redress their grievances, and restore them to their charges. But instead of this, they made an open secession from the church: and soon after, constituted themselves into a distinct judicatory for licensing preachers, and ordaining ministers, wherever they should find encouragement, without even so much as consulting that faithful body of ministers that Mr Erskine allowed were still in the church of Scotland, and with whom he did not reckon himself worthy to be compared.

Mr Willison and his party having happily gained the ascendency in 1734, that assembly was very different from several of the preceding: they did all in their power to satisfy the friends of reformation, and to remedy the prevailing corruptions. They repealed the act 1730, against recording reasons of dissent, and the act 1732, concerning the settling of ministers: they reversed the settlement of a minister made by the commission at Auchtermuchty, against the consent of the congregation: they prepared an excellent overture concerning preaching, which was afterwards enacted: [see page 109] they appointed the synod of Perth and Stirling to restore the four ejected brethren to their charges, which the synod did without requiring any acknowledgment from them: and to facilitate their return, they enacted, that due and regular ministerial freedom is still left entire to all ministers. Notwithstanding this reformation, the brethren blinded with popular applause, and elevated by the increase of their disciples, continued bent upon their begun schism, and refused to return.

Mr Willison was at this time uncommonly indefatigable in promoting the peace of the church, and preventing the spreading of schism: besides his constant attendance at the assemblies, and inferior courts, he, with Messrs Gordon and Mackintosh, in 1735, by appointment of the assemby, went to London, and applied to the parliament for a repeal of the patronage act, but without success.

The lenity of assembly 1736, to Professor Campbell, and many of the established clergy, publicly reading on the Sabbath, and by that means solemnly acquiescing in an act relative to the murder of Captain Porteus, in which the parliament claimed a spiritual headship over the church, constituted themselves judges of ministers' fitness to sit in church courts, and threatened ecclesiastic penalties for disobedience to the civil power, was very grievous to Mr Willison, and many others in the church, and occasioned the four seceding brethren, who were then joined by four other ministers, to carry their secession and separation to an immoderate length, by licensing preachers, invading parishes, preaching up separation, and inveighing against the established clergy with the most unchristian virulence. They published a long act and testimony, to which they required all their followers to adhere, in which, though there were many good things, yet there were many falsehoods, misrepre-

sentations of facts, uncharitable expressions, and bitter reflections upon their brethren and forefathers.

These proceedings being laid before the assembly, they appointed the ministers of the synods and presbyteries where the brethren resided, to do all in their power by conference and other gentle means to reclaim them, and to report their diligence to the commission, which they empowered, if they should see cause, to cite them before assembly 1739. The eight brethren being cited and libelled, appeared before the assembly, May 17, 1739, in the character of a constituted judicatory, and instead of answering to their libel, they, with the most unparalleled insolence, read an act of their court, condemning the judicatories of the national church, as not being lawful courts of Christ: and declining all their authority and jurisdiction over them, they withdrew.—Upon this daring attack, the assembly enacted, "That for their declinature, contempt, and schismatical courses, contrary to their vows, and for the many groundless and calumnious reflections which they have cast upon this church, they deserve deposition." But they resolved to forbear them another year, to give them time to bethink themselves, and return to their duty, and appointed them to be cited to assembly 1743, which, upon their not appearing, deposed them from the ministry.

The conduct of the seceders after this sentence,* the backslidings of the church, and the visible decay of religion, occasioned the publication of the Balm of Gilead, in which Mr Willison accurately investigates the nature of these evils, and distinctly points out the means for healing them. And in 1745, when our religious and civil liberties were in danger from an insurrection in favours of popery, he warned his people of the danger of it from the pulpit, the substance of which he afterwards published, in six sermons, being the whole of his controversial pieces that was thought proper to be preserved in this edition, his other pieces against patronage, independency, &c. being chiefly temporary and local, a republication of them was judged unnecessary.

As nothing transacted in the church during the remainder of Mr Willison's life deserves a place here, I shall only add, that this faithful and laborious servant of Jesus Christ continued eminently useful in his Master's service, till the third of May, 1750, when he fell asleep in Jesus, in the 70th year of his age, and 47th of his ministry: "and him will the Lord bring with him."

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* This sentence, which the seceders honoured with the specious appellation of persecution, contributed to render them formidable. They continued invading the charges of the established clergy, aggravating their failings and mistakes upon the most public occasions, not even sparing them at the Lord's table, turning that sacred institution, designed by the most amiable founder of our holy religion as a feast of love and charity, into an engine of strife and contention. They framed a new covenant, the swearing of which they enacted in 1744, should be the term of ministerial communion with them, and the term of christian communion to the people; a most extraordinary covenant this indeed, not "a term," but "the term" of christian communion, as if it were the only qualification required by God for receiving the benefits purchased to us by the death of Christ, and though a man have every other requisite for obtaining eternal life, yet if he cannot solemnly assent to every thing contained in this new covenant, he must neither be owned as a minister of Christ, nor acknowledged as a child of God: yet these are the men who at their first secession, and in their first testimony, protested that they would still hold communion with all true presbyterians who groaned under the evils of the times and wrestled against them. But that turbulent spirit, which could ill brook submission to the established church, began to shew itself in their own judicatories; a foolish question arose in their synod at Perth, whether the not swearing to a clause in some burgesses oaths, namely, "I swear and profess my adherence to the true religion as by law established, and that I will continue to defend the same to my life's end, renouncing the Romish religion called papistry," should be another term of christian communion: this dispute was carried on with great warmth, and at last terminated in a separation. Those who opposed this clause, and were called antiburgers, withdrew from the synod, without either moderator or clerk, constituted themselves into a distinct synod, and declared, That no seceding presbytery or session not constituted in subordination to their present meeting, could be a lawful court of Christ. This separation, which greatly perplexed and prejudiced their followers, took off their censures from the established church, and employed them against one another: the burgers made an act, declaring the antiburgers constitution void and null, eversive of presbytery, and contrary to scripture and reason, for which the antiburgers deposed, excommunicated, and formally delivered them over to the devil.—The antiburgers having thus proceeded for two years in censuring their brethren, were obliged to confess that they had all along been lying under scandal in the partaking of their brethrens sins, and at a meeting of synod purged one another from it, by judicial rebukes and admonitions. How persons under scandal were fit to censure others and purge one another was not well understood, and has hardly a precedent, except in the reciprocal confessions and absolutions of the monks and priests, from whom perhaps the brethren borrowed this form of discipline.

THE

AFFLICTED MAN'S COMPANION;

OR, A

Directory

FOR

A FAMILY OR PERSON UNDER AFFLICTION,

BY SICKNESS OR OTHERWISE.

BY

THE REVEREND JOHN WILLISON, LATE MINISTER

OF DUNDEE.

Montrose:

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THE
AFFLICTED MAN'S COMPANION.

TO THE READER.

THE subject of this book, however melancholy it may appear to some, yet it is necessary to all; seeing the word of God, and our own experience, do assure us, that "Man, who is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble;" and that he "is born to troubles, as the sparks fly upwards." Nay, God's dearest children are not exempted from this common fate. We see what is the character God giveth of his church, Isa. liv. 11. "O thou afflicted, and tossed with tempests, and not comforted."

If in this world, then, we must look for tribulation, it is highly necessary for every man to seek direction how to provide for it, and behave under it, so as he may glorify God, edify others, and attain to eternal happiness at last. The tribulations we have to look for here are manifold; but, among those that are outward, I know none about which men ought to be more thoughtful and concerned, than bodily sickness, that usual harbinger of death, and which ushers the way to judgment.

This is a subject not much handled in public sermons, which are delivered only to them that are in health, the sick being incapable to attend them. Wherefore, it seems the more necessary to handle it in writing, that so the afflicted may have a book in their houses, and at their bedsides, as a monitor to preach to them in private, when they are restrained from hearing sermons in public.

And though sometimes ministers' sermons may be very suitable to the case of the sick and afflicted; yet, alas! the most part are careless and forgetful hearers of these things, while they are in health and prosperity, as reckoning the evil day at some distance from them. A book, then, such as the following directory, being with them in time of sickness and affliction, may, by the divine blessing, be useful to bring to their remembrance those counsels and admonitions which they very much neglected in the time of their health.

Again, ministers of the gospel, though never so much inclined to attend the sick, yet, by reason of disability and multiplicity of other work, cannot be always with them, to direct, resolve, and comfort them. But such a book as this, they may have still at hand to consult with.

And, in regard the afflicted for the most part are out of case to read for themselves, it would be a most charitable work for friends or neighbours that attend them, to lay hold on proper seasons for reading such a book as this in their hearing; and especially such chapters or directions as they judge most suitable for them. Thus you might be helped in some measure to exoner your consciences, and do your last offices of kindness to your sick and dying friends, when you can serve them no longer in this world.

I might have brought in and handled some controversies (had I been fond of them), in the ensuing treatise, about the administration of the Lord's supper to the sick, and about extreme unction, which some also begin to plead for, and thence have taken occasion to touch at some other new usages, such as the middle state, prayers for the dead, and other Popish errors, that some (called Protestants), would have revived and introduced among us. But I have industriously shunned what is controversial, and kept close to what is practical and owned by all true Christians.

For preventing the growth of these and other errors (from which this nation hath been much longer free than others), I wish all ranks among us would closely observe the sacred rule of faith, God's word, and remember the solemn and national engagements we of this land are under, to maintain the pure truths of God therein contained, in opposition to all sorts of errors, whether Popish, Pelagian, Arian, Antinomian, &c. And, may we ever abhor the doctrine that would teach us to break these bands asunder!

Have we not ground this day to suspect that Satan is carrying on a deep and subtle plot for shaking our covenanted Reformation, and weakening a Protestant interest? When, upon the one hand, some are beginning openly to advance and propagate the old abjured Popish doctrines which our reformers did throw out, and with axes and hammers would go at once to cut down all our carved work; and, at the same time, on the other hand, some would be at breaking down the excellent fences of our reformation, viz. our covenants, confessions, the magistrate's power, &c. For this end, papers are spread, and positions advanced, impugning the warrantableness of our national covenants and confessions, and the obligation thereof; reflecting also upon our worthy reformers and ancestors, as unenlightened, who framed and took them, or died adhering thereunto; and also denying the magistrate's power, CIRCA SACRA (for the support of the truth, and suppressing of heresies), acknowledged by the word of God and our confession of faith; and all this, forsooth, to make way for a toleration of all errors and sects among us; though they cannot but know, that tolerating of false religions is expressly ranked among the sins forbidden in the second commandment, according to the exposition of our larger catechism; and is also condemned by the twenty-third chapter of our confession: in both which, we may see the clear scripture-texts, cited by the Assembly, for refuting and condemning any such toleration. Ah! what joy may all this cause at Rome! therefore tell it not in Gath, &c.

As the Lord did signally countenance our Reformers' practice in entering into solemn and national covenants

with God, and among themselves, for religion and reformation, by the pouring out of his Spirit from on high, for bringing in of many souls to himself, and for overturning idolatry and superstition, and advancing reformation to a great pitch, in spite of all the enemies and difficulties that were in the way; so their practice of national covenanting, even under the New Testament dispensation, is sufficiently warranted, both by the light of nature, and by the word of God, and that in both Testaments. And this will appear if we consider the scripture-precedents, together with the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament relating to gospel times, and compare them with the New; and especially those which fortel the unchurching of the Jewish nation, and the ingrafting of the Gentile nations into their room: and that thereupon the national church-state and privileges of the Jews were to be transferred to Christian nations, and particularly this of being nationally in covenant with God. Which prophecies are to have their special and full accomplishment at Babylon's downfall For illustrating these points, and applying the scripture-texts relative thereto, I might expatiate in several sheets of paper, if it were proper here. I shall only at this time cite some of the texts that may be well improven to the foresaid purposes; which the reader may turn to and consider at his leisure, such as Isa. xix. 18, 21, 23, 24, 25. chap. xlv. 23. Jer. l. 4, 5. the lx. lxi. and lxii. chapters of Isaiah throughout. Isa. lv. 3, 4, 5. Micah iv. 1, 2. Zech. viii. 21, 22, 23. Rev. ii. 15. Rom. xi. 17, 19. chap. x. 12, 19. Mat. iii. 5, 6. Acts viii. 6, 12. 2 Cor. viii. 5. Mat. xxi. 43. Rom. ix. 24, 25, 26. compared with Hos. i. 9, 10, 11. chap. ii. 23. Likewise I might cite several prophecies with respect to the Islands, and utmost ends of the earth, which were peopled by Japhet, that have a very particular and favourable aspect to this covenanted land.

Besides all which, it is evident, from the first and great command of the law, which is directed to Israel as a nation, and is obligatory under the New Testament as well as the Old; that it is a moral duty, universally and perpetually binding upon nations and societies, as well as single persons, to chuse, acknowledge, and avouch the Lord to be their God, to walk in his ways. and keep his statutes. This is required in the first commandment according to the exposition of our Larger Catechism; and is there confirmed by these texts, that warrant and exemplify the practice of national covenanting, such as Deut. xxvi. 19, 17. Josh. xxiv. 22. In such a national way did our fathers of old acknowledge and avouch the Lord to be their God, and devote themselves and their posterity to the Lord. And, blessed be the Lord our God, who did many ways declare himself to be well pleased with the bargain, and especially by filling the temple with his glory.

As the prophets and godly Jews were at great pains to convey to posterity historical accounts of the wonderful deliverances God wrought for Israel at the Red Sea, and in rescuing them from Egypt, Babylon, and other enemies; so it would be useful to fortify our reformation, if we were careful to hand down to the rising generation a sense of God's distinguishing mercy to this land, in delivering us from spiritual Babylon, and rescuing us from time to time from these captains that have sought to lead us back thither. Many a time hath he delivered us, when we have been brought very low.

By many instances it hath appeared, that the glorious JEHOVAH hath not been ashamed to own his covenant relation to this sinful and unworthy land. God forbid that we of this age should be ashamed to own our covenant-relation to him. This hath been both our glory and our safety; and I hope, there will still be found a remnant to own it, and plead it with God in the time of danger. Surely, it is not time now to disclaim it, when the enemies of our Zion are combining together, and seeking to raze her to the foundation. Let all her lovers cry mightily to her covenanted Lord in her behalf, in these shaking times: let them join to put up that prayer of the Psalmist, lxxviii. 28. "Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us;" and that of Habakkuk, Hab. iii. 2. "O Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years."

May 27, 1797.

N. B. The foresaid digression, in the preface to the first edition, was occasioned by the broaching of some Sectarian notions, which introduced great reelings and shakings in this corner, and other parts of this church; since which time, alas! she hath enjoyed little peace within her walls, or prosperity within her palaces; but, instead thereof, she hath been tossed with tempests and troubles of various kinds, whereby the children of Zion have been brought, and still lie, under great distress and affliction.

The first impression of this book being disposed of, and a second called for, I have the more readily consented to it, at this time of general calamity and distress, seeing the book is intended as a Directory to Christians under affliction, whatever sort it be. It cannot but be obvious to every serious observer, that the Lord's judgments are in the earth at this day, and that the inhabitants of this land are generally visited with calamities of divers kinds, both spiritual and temporal; which makes a Directory how to manage and carry under them the more seasonable and necessary.

Ah! the Lord's hand is visibly lifted up against us at this day, and hath been for some years past, in shutting up the church's womb, blasting gospel-ordinances, and withdrawing his Spirit from the assemblies of his people, and from our judicatories. The flood-gate is opened for error, infidelity, and looseness, to overspread the land; so that the gospel of Christ, the holy Scriptures, and all revealed religion, are condemned and ridiculed by many. "The anger of the Lord hath divided us both in church and state, and hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst of us;" yea, hath made such woful breaches among godly ministers and christians, who are aiming at the same things, that no balm can be found for healing them. There is a way opened for a carnal self-seeking minister to get into the vineyard, when faithful labourers are thrust out, and godly preachers and students are discouraged from entering in. Not a few christian congregations, who lately were harmonious and unite in partaking of gospel-ordinances, are now so miserable, rent and scattered, through mournful intrusions and dividing courses, that they cannot worship God together; and many of them are wandering like sheep having no shepherd, exposed to beasts of prey, and liable to perish in a state of ignorance or negligence.

Likewise, the Lord's hand is remarkably lifted up against us, in the variety of temporal judgments and calamities brought upon us within a short very time by-past. Sometimes the Lord sends forth his stormy winds with extraordinary violence, so as to carry terror and destruction along with them both by sea and land, and even threaten to bury us in the ruin of our houses. Sometimes he sends such long

continued rains in harvest, as threaten to destroy the whole crop before our eyes. Sometimes such extraordinary storms of frost and snow, as to bind up the waters and mills, that food cannot be prepared for us, and we are ready to perish in midst of plenty. Sometimes he sends such destructive storms of lightning and thunder from heaven, and kindles such violent fires on earth, that whole cities, with their inhabitants, are like to be consumed therewith. Upon our neighbouring countries dreadful inundations have been sent of late, for destroying the inhabitants with their cattle and effects. Again, God hath visited us with long continued drought, cold, and unnatural storms in the spring, and sometimes with frost in midst of summer, which have brought on extraordinary scarcity and dearth of victual, so that there are great disorders committed in the land by riots and tumults for want of food, and multitudes of families are dissolved, and forced to wander begging their bread; and the cattle also are famished for want of grass and food to sustain them. In the mean time we are engaged in war with cruel enemies, who seize our ships, carry our countrymen captives, throw them into dungeons and nauseous prisons, where they use them barbarously; yea, much of their blood is shed, and many valuable lives are lost in our defence. And, besides our other calamities, we suffer greatly through decay of trade and merchandise, and penury of money; in many places, merchants, tradesmen, and artificers, want business; there is no work nor hire for labourers, and for those who would use honest industry for bread, whether men or women: so that want is "come upon us as one that travaileth, and poverty like an armed man," and many are reduced to extreme misery, and starving circumstances, for lack of bread.

By all which proceedings it appears that God hath a peculiar controversy with Scotland, and threatens to punish her remarkably for her heinous sins and provocations. The Lord's hand hath been long lifted up against us, and now it is higher lifted up than ever: and, the higher it is lifted, the blow is like to be the severer when given. He hath sent many lesser strokes and judgments upon us, as forerunners and warnings of greater, which he hath still his reserve for us, if we repent not; for his magazine is far from being exhausted. As there are many causes for these calamities of ours, so I think there is a principal one mentioned, Mat. xxiv. 12. "Iniquity doth abound, and the love of many is waxen cold." Infidelity, immorality, and contempt of the gospel, are come to a prodigious height: our hearts are become cold and frozen to Christ and his interest, to his people and holy laws: for which cause, God is provoked to send such judicial cold and frosts upon our land, and the fruits of the earth, so as to mar and diminish our crops, and reduce both men and beasts to the greatest straits. And yet so great is our impenitence and perverseness, that we will not see the Lord's hand, nor be reformed by all these judgments.

It might well be expected, when the Lord's judgments are so visible in the earth, that not only his people by profession, but even the inhabitants of the world, would learn righteousness, according to Isa. xxvii. 9. But alas! So perverse are we to walk with God, that neither the inhabitants of the world, nor those who profess to be separated from the world, will alter their course, nor learn righteousness; nay, instead of that, many are learning still more wickedness. "Shall I not visit for these things?" saith the Lord; and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" Alas! hath he not been provoked to say concerning us, as he did concerning his ancient people, Lev. xxvi. 23, 24. "If ye will not be reformed by all these things, but will walk contrary unto me: then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will bring seven times more plagues upon you, according to your sins." And likewise to say unto us, as unto them, "When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; and when ye fast and make many prayers, I will not hear: but I will consume you with the sword, with the famine, and with the pestilence," as in Isa. i. 15 Jer. xiv. 12.

The sword, famine, and pestilence, are God's three mortal arrows, which he commonly threatens to shoot against impenitent and incorrigible offenders. Two of these are already shot against us: the sword is drawn, and much of our countrymen's blood is already shed; and what further streams of it may flow before it be put up in its sheath, God only knows. The evil arrow of famine (as God calls it, Ezek. v. 16.) is let fly against us at the same time, and the famine is the arrow which is the sorest of the three. When it was put to David's choice, which of the three he would be the butt of, he would not chuse famine. The prophet Joel doth bewail and deprecate this judgment in the most pathetic manner, and calls the whole land to fasting and prayer, for removing it, Joel i. 10, 14. And we see, when God is most angry, and threatens to spend his arrows upon a guilty people, he begins with the arrow of famine as the sorest, as in Deut. xxxii. 23, 24. "I will spend mine arrows upon them, they shall be burnt with hunger." And we see what the Spirit of God saith of those who die by this arrow, Lam. iv. 9. "They that be slain with the sword, are better than they that be slain with hunger; for these pine away; stricken through for want of the fruits of the field;" and therefore their death is most lingering and miserable. Likewise, famine useth to bring on the most nauseous and mortal diseases, and frequently the pestilence doth follow upon the back of famine. Is it not then high time for our land to take the alarm, when God begins to shoot his evil arrows? When the lion roars, it becometh us to fear; yea, to humble ourselves in the dust, and mourn for our iniquities, which kindle the fire of wrath.

Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord, from whom we have deeply revolted: and, particularly, let us mourn for, and turn from, those sins which the word of God points out as bringing on famine; such as, 1. Ascribing our earthly comforts and blessings to other things than God the true author. This sin we find threatened with scarcity and famine. Jer. xliv. 17, 26, 27. Hos. ii. 5, 9.—2. Perverting of plenty to luxury and prodigality, sensuality and excess, revellings and dancings, balls and assemblies. We see how these are threatened, Isa. v. 11, 12, 13. Amos vi. 4, 6, 7.—3. Rejecting the bread of life, and despising the food of our souls. God used to punish men for their sins, by depriving them of bread for their bodies, Jer. xi. 21, 22.—4. Men minding their own things more than the things of God; and neglecting to build his house, and put respect upon his ordinances. Upon such account God brings on scarsity and famine, Hag. i. 9, 10, 11.—5. Covenant-breaking, and dealing cruelly with the poor, or with strangers that live among us: It was for these sins that God sent a three years' famine upon the land of Israel, 2 Sam. xxi. 1.

Moreover, let us look upon all these temporal storms and calamities which are come or coming upon the land, as

warnings to prepare for a more awful storm that we must all meet with; namely, the storm of death and judgment; let us stand habitually prepared for that storm, and then other storms will not so much affect us. If it be asked, What we shall do to be safe in time of that trying storm? the answer is, Let us see that we be among the broken in heart, or the sincere penitents, who are heartily grieved for all known sin: That we be true believers in Christ, who trust in nothing but his righteousness and merits, for justification and salvation: That we be born again, and made new creatures by a saving change both in heart and life: That it be our great business to clear up our evidences of peace with God through Christ, and of our title to the mansions which he hath purchased by his blood. O that God's judgments, when they are on the earth, were means to awaken us to flee from the wrath to come, to Christ our refuge! when the floods of great waters are swelling up to the brim, our only safety is to secure a hiding place in Christ's wounds.

Let us follow the example of Noah, who, when he saw the flood coming, took warning, and prepared an ark for saving himself and his household, Heb. xi. 7. Let us even imitate the Egyptians that feared the Lord; they, when warned of the dreadful storm of hail that was coming on the land, made their servants and cattle to flee into the houses, Exod. ix. 20. God hath in mercy, provided chambers for his people to hide themselves in, when storms are coming, even the chambers of his attributes and promises, and the chambers of Christ's wounds and intercession; in these only we can find safety; let us enter into them by faith, when he invites us, Isa. xxvi. 20, 21.

Seeing in these evil days we have so many harbingers and fore runners of death before our eyes, it will be highly our wisdom to keep ourselves still in a waiting posture always ready and willing to die. What is there in this weary land to tempt us to desire to abide in it? Is it not a land overwhelmed with sin and sorrow? O believers, are you tossed with tempests here? Seek the wings of a dove, that you may fly away and be at rest. Be habitually desiring to depart, that you may be with Christ. Surely for you to die is gain, yea, infinite gain! What are the imaginary pleasures of this world to the real happiness of the next? though the struggles of death be grievous to nature, yet the gains of dying should reconcile you to it. You do not stick at the trouble of putting off your clothes at night, to gain a little rest to your bodies; and why should you stick at uncloathing yourselves of the garments of flesh at God's call, to gain everlasting rest to your souls, and the fruition of Christ's glorious presence for ever? Let the thoughts of this gain put you upon using all means to get your hearts weaned from the love of the world and its comforts. Keep the mantle of earthly enjoyments hanging loose about you, especially in these calamitous times, that so it may be easily dropt when death comes to carry you to the eternal world. O for more of the lively faith of that world, and of him that is the Lord and purchaser of it! But seeing this subject is more largely insisted on in the book itself, I shall add no more here upon it; only I shall subjoin a collection of some sweet and comfortable texts of scripture, very proper for dying believers, to meditate and feed on by faith, to grip to and plead with God, and suck consolation from, when they have a near prospect of going through the dark valley, and entering into the unknown regions of eternity. God's word will then be our hope.

A COLLECTION OF COMFORTABLE TEXTS FOR DYING BELIEVERS.

COME unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest, Mat. xi. 28. Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out, John vi. 37.

In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also, John xiv. 2, 3.

Because I live, ye shall live also, John xiv. 19.

Chirst saith, Surely I come quickly. *Ans.* Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus, Rev. xxii. 20.

There remainetha rest to the people of God, Heb. iv. 9.

I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord, Gen. xlix. 18.

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Luke ii. 29, 30.

He is the Rock, and his work is perfect, Deut. xxxii. 4.

The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me, Psal. cxxxviii. 8.

Being confident —— that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ, Phil. i. 6.

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me, Job xix. 25, 26, 27.

Although my house is not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. For this is all my salvation and all my desire, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me. Psal. xxiii. 4.

Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of Truth, Psal. xxxi. 5.

For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death, Psal. xlviii. 14.

Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever, Psal. lxxii. 24, 25, 26.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise, Psal. li. 17.

O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest. I would hasten my escape from the windy storms and tempest, Psal. lx. 6, 8.

Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold, Psal. lxviii. 13.

The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin, 1 John i. 7.

Having boldness to enter into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, Heb. x. 19.

He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, Heb. xiii. 5, 8.

He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy, Micah vii. 18.

Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him, Job xiii. 15.

In his name shall the Gentiles trust, Mat. xii. 23.

Blessed are all they that put their trust in him, Psal. ii. 12.

He knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust, Psal. ciii. 14.

I lothe it, I would not live alway, Job vii. 16.

We know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. We are willing rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord, 2 Cor. v. 1, 8.

For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better, Phil. i. 21, 23.

And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee, Psal. xxxix. 7.

My beloved is mine, and I am his. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me. Awake, O north wind, come, thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits. Until the day break and the shadows fly away, make haste, my beloved and be thou like a roe, or a young hart on the mountains of spices, Cant. ii. 6, 16, 17. and iv. 16. and viii. 14.

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 57.

The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing, 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8.

The day of death is better than the day of one's birth, Eccl. vii. 1.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away, Rev. xxi. 4.

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief, 1 Tim. i. 15.

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life, John iii. 16.

For he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God, in him, 2 Cor. v. 21.

Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift, 2 Cor. ix. 15.

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, Luke i. 68, 69.

Them which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him. Then shall we be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: And so shall we ever be with the Lord, 1 Thess. iv. 14. 17.

Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, &c. Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power and glory, Rev. i. 5. and v. 12.

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren, 1 John iii. 14.

I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor heighth, nor depth, nor any other creature, should be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, Rom. viii. 38, 39.

I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day, 3 Tim. i. 12.

I count all things but loss and dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, &c. Phil. iii. 8, 9.

Christ Jesus who is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30.

We rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, Phil. iii. 3.

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, Col. i. 12.

Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus, Rev. i. 7. and xxii. 20.

Dundee, June 5, 1741.

SOME EJACULATIONS AND DYING WORDS OF THE AUTHOR.

TO MY WIFE.

My Dear—My distress calls me to think of parting with you: the will of the Lord be done. I thank you for your tender care of me, may the Lord bless and reward you for it; and sanctify your own tenderness, and support you under it. As you have studied to live a life of faith and prayer all your days, so I hope and believe you will continue to the end. In all your difficulties and fears, encourage yourself in the Lord your God: Commit your ways to him; trust him that is faithful and true. I resign you, my dear, to the HUSBAND of husbands, our dearest Lord Jesus Christ.

TO MY CHILDREN.

Dear Children, your earthly father must leave you; your heavenly Father is immortal. O! cleave fast to him. Trifle not about your souls' concerns in time of health; mind these things as the one thing needful; this you will not repent of when you come within a near view of death and endless eternity. O sirs! press for clear views of your interest in Christ, the only surety and Saviour of sinners. Among other evidences of it, live by faith on him, and study holiness in heart and life. Dear children, think how you will be able to stand before Christ your judge, at the last day, unless you have Christ's image on you, and be made new creatures. Lord make you all such, and bless you with his best blessing! My blessing be upon you all.—What means God gave me, I have bestowed them on you, or left them to you.—Be kind and careful of your mother while you have her. And let none of you forget, that though I go before you to the dust, you must all quickly follow me. O! that we may all meet together at the right hand of our blessed Redeemer, to see his face, and sing his praise. The time is near, be ye therefore also ready.

Now, my dear wife and children, remember what is above, as the words of your affectionate husband and loving father, who, being dead, yet hereby speaketh to you for

your eternal good and happiness; may they sink deep into your heart: So prayeth

JOHN WILLISON.

SOME OF HIS DYING EJACULATIONS.

O LET me sleep in Jesus! I would not live always in this evil world, that has little in it tempting, and seems still to grow worse, and where the torrent of sin and backsliding seems to grow stronger.

I would desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better than to be here. I am willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord. Whom have I in heaven but thee; for though my heart, strength, and flesh, fail, yet the Lord will be the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

Now, Lord, what wait I for, my hope is in thee, I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord.

O for Simeon's frame, to be saying, "Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

When Christ says, Surely I come quickly; may my soul answer, Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

I am living on the righteousness of Christ, yea, dying in the Lord. Even so, come. I am detained here upon the shore, waiting for a fair wind to carry me over this Jordan. I have waited, and will wait for thy salvation, O Lord. The Lord is a rock, and his work is perfect: Lord, perfect what concerneth me.

O that I could say with Paul, The time of my departure is at hand. I have kept the faith, I have run my race, I have finished my course; henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the righteous Lord will give me at his coming.

I am vile and polluted, O how shall I be cleansed: But that is a comfortable promise, "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." And so is that, "Though ye have lien among the pots, ye shall be as doves, whose wings are covered with silver, and their feathers with yellow gold."

I resolve to obey, to submit to the Lord's will, to die like Moses and Aaron, the one at the mount Hor, the other at mount Abarim. They went up and died there at the command of the Lord.

O that when my strength and flesh fail, God may be the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. When now the keepers of the house do tremble, O that God may be the keeper: when the grinders cease, because they are few, O that God would feed my soul with manna, that will need none of these implements; when the daughters of music are brought low, O to be fitted for the heavenly music above: When the lookers out at the windows are darkened, O that my soul may be enlightened to see Jesus my Redeemer.

Lord, help the unbelief and infidelity of my heart, and help to more of the faith of a risen Jesus, an ascended Redeemer. O let me believe and feel the sweetness of that word of Christ, "I ascend to my Father, and to your Father, and to your God and my God."

O how shall such an unholy creature as I presume to enter into such a pure and holy place! But the apostle has taught us, we may have boldness to enter into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus.

O that when the time of my last combat comes with my last enemy death, I may be helped above all to take the shield of faith, whereby I may be relieved from the sting of death, and may quench the fiery darts of the wicked one.

O that I may be helped to adore the sovereignty of God, kiss his rod, and humbly submit to it. Save me from both extremities; let me never despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when I am rebuked of him.

Now the prince of darkness will study to raise tempests of temptations to shipwreck the poor weather-beaten vessel of my soul, when it would enter into the harbour of rest above; may Christ come to be pilot, steer the helm, and it shall be safe.

O for more faith! may my faith ripen to a full assurance, that I may go off the stage rejoicing, and that abundant entrance may be ministered to me into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

O for more faith! that I may die like Simeon, when he had Christ in his arms, saying, "Now let thy servant depart in peace, mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

Lord, one smile of thy countenance would banish away all my doubts and fears, and make me sing in pain.

Is my Redeemer gone to prepare a place for us; why should I be so slothful to follow his footsteps, when he is saying, "Come up hither;" come up, dwell here; come up, reign here; come up, sing here.

O Lord, deliver my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. O save me from the horrible pit, draw me out of the miry clay, set my feet upon a rock, and establish my goings, and put a new song in my mouth.

O give grace to strive by faith and prayer, to enter in at the strait gate. Lord, thou hast bid me knock, and it shall be opened, ask, and ye shall find. Lord, I knock, open unto me; I would be in, I must be in; let me but in over the threshold; let me in within sight of my Redeemer's face, within sight of the smiles of his countenance, let me within hearing of the songs of the redeemed; let me get to the outside of that praising company; I will be well enough if I get in.

Lord, in I must be, out I cannot stay: O shut me not out with swearers, sabbath-breakers, and profane persons: Lord, I never chused their company while in this world; Lord, do not gather my soul with sinners hereafter.

The redeemed are gathering, and the wicked are gathering; Lord, gather me with thy flock:—They are fast a-gathering; the church's head is gone; he has left the earth, and entered into his glory; my brethren and friends, many of them have arrived where he is; I am yet behind. O how great is the difference betwixt my state and theirs. I am groaning out my complaint, they are singing God's praise: I am in darkness, and cannot see thy face, but they behold thee face to face. O should I be satisfied to stay behind, when my friends are gone?—Shall I wander here in a hungry desart, when they are triumphing above and dividing the spoil? O help me to look after them with a stedfast eye, and cry, O Lord, how long?

O heavenly Father, draw me after Jesus, for none can come to him without thy aid. O Father, draw me up there where he is, and I will mount up as on eagle's wings. O draw me, and when thou seemest to fly from me, Lord enable me to follow hard after thee.

Lord give me the staff of promise in my hand, that I may go over Jordan with it; O give me such a promise as that, "When thou passest through the waters I will be

with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."

Lord, my experiences are small, my manifestations are few: these I will not lean to: yet I will remember thee from the land of Jordan, from the Hermonites, and from the hill Mizar. Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why disquieted within me! Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.

O thou who rememberedst the dying thief when on the way to thy kingdom, O remember me when now seated in thy kingdom, and say to my soul, when I am dying, "This day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Lord, I am called to the work I never did, O give me the strength I never had. O strengthen me like Samson for this once when at death, to pull down the strong holds of sin in me. Lord, wash away my sins in the blood of Christ, and then my soul shall not sink in the ocean of thy wrath.

O what is my life but a vapour! a sand-glass of sixty or seventy years! O how fast does it run down! How soon runs it out! Vain, vain is the love of life! O give me grace to overcome the love of life, and the fear of death. O for more patience and less fretting. If the damned had hope of being saved from hell after a thousand years of my pain, how willingly would they endure it. Blessed be God, my pains are not hell, their state is not mine.

Lord, draw near to me, and save me; my body is full of trouble, and my life draws near to the grave. But, Lord, thy loving kindness is better than life. O make thy loving kindness sure to me, and I will willingly part with this dying life.

O that I could make all the world see the beauty of my precious and adorable Saviour!

Nothing but an interest in Christ can give peace in life, or comfort in death. He is the chief among ten thousand, altogether lovely. My body is in part dead, but I know I cannot die eternally while Jesus lives. I must go down to the grave; but what is the grave?—It is but a refining pot, since my Saviour lay in it, it is but a bed of roses. He is the *Rose of Sharon, and the Lilly of the valley.*

It was his free grace that drew me, and made me willing in the day of his power; no desire, no merit in me; it was all free and undeserved.

O let the chastisement of my body be the medicine of my soul, to cure me of sin, and bring me to sincere repentance for it; for Christ was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him.

Lord, remember the chastisement of Christ for sin, and let my pains be the chastisement of a father, and not the wounds of an enemy; let Christ's sufferings mitigate mine.

I rejoice in the prospect of that glorious inheritance reserved safe. I would not comfortably enter eternity any other way but in and through this God-man-mediator; if he was not God as well as man, I could not be supported:—but he is God.

O this precious Saviour, he is my all in all, he is my all-sufficient good, my portion and my choice; in him my vast desires are fulfilled, and all my powers rejoice, I am travelling through a wilderness to a city of habitation, whose builder and maker is God.

O delightful thought! that I, who was going on in sin, should be plucked as a brand out of the burning. O how will they lie on a death-bed, that have nothing but their works to fly to; with only this to depend on, I should be the most miserable of all creatures; but the long white robe of my Redeemer's righteousness is all my desire. They are truly blessed, they alone are happy, who are enabled to exult in the garment of celestial glory, which never waxeth old, in the illustrious robes of a Saviour's consummate righteousness, which are incorruptible and immortal. This is a robe which hides every sin, of thought, word, or deed, that I have committed. O how unspeakably happy are they who are justified by this all-perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and who therein can constantly triumph and glory.

Lord, I live upon Christ, I live upon his righteousness, I live upon his blood and merits; yea, I die also, leaning wholly upon this bottom. It is not past experiences or manifestations I depend upon; it is Christ, a present all-sufficient Saviour, and perfect righteousness in him I look to. All my attainments are but loss and dung besides him.

When I find myself polluted, I go to this fountain for cleansing. Lord give me delight in approaching to thee;—delight to be at a throne of grace. O that I could make my bed there, lie and die there.

The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. O for strength to offer a holy violence by faith and prayer.

INTRODUCTION.

MAN, when he first dropped from his Maker's hands, was a holy and innocent creature, pure from sin, and consequently free from sickness and trouble, enjoying uninterrupted health and prosperity both in body and soul. But no sooner was he tainted with sin, but he became liable to all sorts of miseries, temporal, spiritual, and eternal; his soul being the residence of his sins and lusts, his body turned the receptacle of sickness and diseases. And seeing God's own children have the relics of sin and corruption in them while in this world, they are not to expect exemption from such afflictions; and the infinitely wise God sees meet to make use of bodily distempers to correct the corruptions, and try the graces, of his people, and to promote both their spiritual and eternal advantage. Hence it is said of Lazarus, John xi. 3. "Behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." He was beloved, and yet sick. It is no rare thing for the dearest of God's saints to be put to chatter like cranes, and mourn like doves, by reason of sore sickness, as Hezekiah did, Isa. xxxviii. 14. Sanctified and healthy souls may be matched with weak and sickly bodies, as was Gaius, 3 John 2. Notwithstanding the case is sometimes most trying and exercising to the best of God's people, and they are never more ready to question God's love, or quarrel with his Providence, than under heavy sickness and bodily distress. It is therefore highly the concernment of all, whether families or private persons, to enquire how they ought to behave under or after afflicting sickness; and how they shall provide for such an evil time before it come. And, for the help of all that desire instruction in this matter, I have written the following Directory, which, for method's sake, I shall divide into several chapters.

I. I shall give some general directions to all families and persons visited with sickness and affliction.
II. Some particular directions to those who are sharply afflicted with sore sickness and long trouble.
III. Directions to the children of God under sickness.
IV. Directions to unregenerate persons under sickness.
V. Directions to the people of God, when recovered from sickness.
VI. Directions to unrenewed persons recovered from sickness.
VII. Directions to those sick persons who are apparently in a dying condition.
VIII. Directions to the relations, acquaintances, and neighbours of the sick, who are themselves in health for the time.

N. B. Let it be remembered that what I say to those visited with sickness, is likewise applicable to all other afflicted persons, whatever their distress be.

CHAPTER I.

CONTAINING GENERAL DIRECTIONS TO ALL FAMILIES AND PERSONS VISITED WITH SICKNESS.

DIRECT. I.—*Diligently enquire into the Ends and Designs for which usually God sends sickness and affliction upon persons.*

AN infinitely holy and gracious God hath various and wise ends in afflicting the children of men, whether they be converted or unconverted; which ought to be duly considered by all, and especially by those who are visited by sickness; some whereof I shall instance.

I. God visits with sickness, to cause careless sinners bethink themselves concerning their souls estate and condition, who perhaps had never a serious thought about it before. There are many, who, when in health and strength, are so intent upon the pleasures and profits of the world, that they mind nothing else; all the warnings, exhortations, and counsels of ministers, teachers, and friends, are lost upon them; they cannot endure to entertain a thought of God, of the soul, of death, of heaven, of hell, or of judgment to come; till God doth cast them into some sickness or bodily distress, and then sometimes they begin, with the prodigal, to come to themselves, and bethink themselves concerning their souls and a future life. Now, this is God's design, 1 Kings, viii. 47. "If they bethink themselves in the land whither they are carried captives, and repent," &c. By sickness, God gives a man, that before was wholly diverted from soul-matters, by business, company, and pleasures, occasion to bethink himself. The man is now confined to his chamber, is deprived of his former company and diversions, and so gets time and leisure to commune with his own heart, and reflect on his former ways, and to hear what conscience speaks concerning a judgment day, and a world to come, and the need of a Saviour. And so, by the blessing of God upon such afflictions, not a few have begun their first acquaintance with God and Christ, and serious religion. Nay, the furnace is Christ's usual work-house, where he has formed the most excellent vessels of honour and praise, Isa. xlviii. 10. "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." Manassah, the Prodigal, Paul, and the Jailor, were all chosen there.

II. God visits us with sickness, in order to instruct and teach us those things we know not, Psal. xcvi. 12. It was a saying of Luther, "Schola crucis est schola lucis." And indeed the school of affliction is the place where many of Zion's scholars have made good proficiency in spiritual and experimental knowledge. Now, there are several remarkable lessons which God would teach us by the rod.

1. The knowledge of God. It is said of Manasseh, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13, When he was brought to affliction," &c. "then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God." Though Manasseh was well educated, and early taught the knowledge of God; yet, till now, he knew not the Lord:—But now he knew him in his power and greatness, his holiness and hatred of sin; now he knew God in his goodness and mercy, and wondered that he had kept him so long out of hell.

2. Another lesson is the knowledge of ourselves. In time of health and prosperity, we are apt to forget ourselves, and our mortality: but sickness causeth us to know that we are but men, and frail men, Psal. ix. 20. that God hath an absolute sovereignty over us, and can as easily crush us as we do a moth.

3. He teacheth us the emptiness of the world. How vain a help is that which fails a man in the time of his greatest need! And oftentimes we see, that worldly means and friends can neither give the least ease to the bodies, nor comfort to the souls of persons under sickness and distress.

4. Another lesson is the great evil of sin, which is the cause of all sickness and diseases whatsoever, 1 Cor. xi. 30. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you." Ah! what a root of bitterness must that be, which brings forth such bitter fruit!

5. He sheweth us the preciousness and excellency of Christ and his promises; which only can enable a Christian to rejoice in tribulation, and be easy under the greatest pains and diseases. There are many who are indifferent about Christ in time of health, that when sickness comes, do change their note, and cry, O for an interest in Christ above all things!

III. God sends such trials and distresses, in order to mortify and kill sin in us, Isa. xxvi. 9. "By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin." And, indeed, sickness and affliction, through the blessing of God, hath a native tendency to weaken and subdue our prevailing sins and lusts. O man, is thy heart turned hard, so as thou art not sensible of thy own sins, or of others sufferings? God sees meet to try the fire of affliction, to see if it will melt thy frozen heart. Hast thou undervalued health, and slighted thy mercies? Now God removes them from thee, that, by the want of them, thou mayest know the worth of them. Art thou turned proud and self-conceited? God sends thee a thorn in the flesh to prick the swoln bladder of pride, that thou mayest not be puffed up above measure: God lays thee low upon thy bed, that thou mayest be lowly in thy heart. Doth love for the world prevail in thee? God sends affliction to discover its emptiness, and wean thee from it. Art thou fallen secure, dead, and formal? God sends affliction to awake thee, that thou mayest not sleep the sleep of death.

IV. God sends sickness, to awaken in us the spirit of prayer and supplication, and make us more earnest and importunate in our addresses to the throne of grace. There is a great difference betwixt our prayers in health and in

sickness, betwixt our humiliations in prosperity and in adversity. In prosperity we pray heavily and drowsily, but adversity adds wings to our desires, Isa. xxvi. 16. "Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them." Though they were backward enough to pray before, yet they pour it out most freely now. The very heathen mariners cried loud to God in a storm. What a famous prayer did Manasseh make, when he was under his fetters! We find it thrice mentioned, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 13, 18, 19. And the voice of a fervent prayer is what the Lord desires to hear.

V. Another end is, to loose our hearts from things of this world, and cause us look to and long for heaven. When we enjoy health and ease in this world, we are apt to say with Peter on the mount, "It is good for us to be here;" but, when distress cometh, God's people will turn their tongue, and say, with the Psalmist, Psal. lxxiii. 27. "It is good for me to draw nigh to God." When things here go well with us, we are apt to think ourselves at home; but, when trouble ariseth, we begin to say, "Arise, let us depart, this is not our rest." Though heaven was much out of sight, and out of mind before; yet, when afflicting sickness comes, the poor believer will sigh, and say with David, Psal. lv. 6. "O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest: I would hasten my escape from the windy tempest."

VI. God designs to make the world bitter, and Christ sweet to us. By such affliction, he lets men see that the world is nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit; that riches avail not in the day of wrath; then it is they may see the insufficiency of the world to relieve them, that, as one saith, "A velvet slipper cannot cure the gout, a golden cap cannot drive away the head-ache, nor a bed of down give ease in a fever." And as the world turns bitter, so Christ grows sweet to the believer. In time of ease and health, Christ is often very much neglected and forgot. As the disciples, while the sea was calm, suffered Christ to sleep with them in the ship, thinking they might make their voyage well enough without his help; but when they were ready to be drowned, then they saw their need of Christ, they awaked him, crying, "Master, save us, or else we perish." So the best of saints, when all is easy about them, are prone to suffer Christ to sleep within them, and so to neglect the lively actings of faith in Christ; but when the storm of affliction begins to arise, and they are ready to be overwhelmed with distress, then the cry, "None but Christ, none but Christ."

VII. God trysts with sickness and distress, in order both to prove and improve his people's graces, Deut. viii. 2. Rev. ii. 10. Grace is hereby both tried and strengthened. 1. Such afflictions do prove both the truth and strength of our graces, as they serve to try if we love God for himself, if we can endure to hold out in serving him, waiting and depending upon him, notwithstanding of discouragements. That faith will suffice for a little affliction, that will not suffice for a great one. Peter had faith enough to come upon the sea at Christ's call; but, as soon as the waves began to swell, his faith began to fail, and his feet to sink, till Christ mercifully caught hold of him, saying, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Mat. xiv. 31. Little did Peter think his faith was so weak till now.

2. They tend to improve our graces also, by quickening and strengthening them. They serve as a whetstone to sharpen faith, so as the soul is made to renounce earthly shelters, and to clasp about God, in Christ, as its only refuge and portion. They excite to repentance and serious mourning for sin; for, like the winter frosts and snows, they make the fallow ground of our hearts more tender. They prompt us to heavenly mindedness, self-denial, and patient waiting on God. Yea, the experience of God's people can attest it, that grace is never more lively than under affliction. David never found himself better, as to his spiritual state, than when he was persecuted and hunted as a partridge on the mountains; and hence he says, Psal. cxix. 17. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted."

VIII. God's aim is, to awake us to redeem time, to prepare for flitting, and clear up our evidences for heaven. In time of health, we are apt to trifle away time, loiter in our journey, and forget that we are pilgrims on the earth: wherefore God sends sickness as his messenger to mind us hereof.

Now it highly concerns us, when sickness attacks us, to consider and meditate upon those ends for which God brings on distress, and pray earnestly that they may be accomplished in us; and so our sickness shall not be unto death (spiritual or eternal), but to the glory of God, and the good of our souls.

DIRECT. II.—*Let all who are visited with sickness and distress, search for the Achan in the camp, and enquire diligently what is the ground and cause of God's controversy with them.*

IT hath been the practice of God's people in scripture-times, to enquire into the cause and meaning of God's rods which have been laid upon them. So David, 2 Sam. xxi. When the land of Israel was three years under the stroke of famine, he enquired into the meaning of it. So Job is exceedingly desirous to know why God set him up as a mark for his arrows, Job vii. 20. And hence it is that he makes that petition, Job x. 2. which is most suitable for every man in distress, "Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me."

I grant, indeed, that God sometimes visits his people with affliction, for the trial and exercise of their grace, and for their spiritual instruction, more than for the correction of their sin. But, sin being the original and foundation of all affliction, it is safest, when it is our own case, and most acceptable to God, to look on sin as the procuring cause. Or, if our sins have not immediately procured the present affliction, yet the best of God's children must own, that they have at least deserved it. We see the sin of the Corinthians is mentioned as the cause of their sickness, 1 Cor. xi. 30. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you." The Psalmist concludes the very same thing, Ps. cvii. 17, 18. "Fools, because of their transgressions and their iniquities, are afflicted; their soul abhorreth all manner of meat, and they draw nigh unto the gates of death." But ordinarily by sickness the Lord points at some one sin in us more than another; some Jonah in the ship that hath raised the storm, which the Lord would have us to search out, and throw over-board without delay.

Q. But how shall we discover and find out the particular sin for which God afflicts us with sickness and distress?

Ans. 1. Study the Lord's word, and the chastisements there recorded, which he hath inflicted upon people for

their sins; and enquire if you be guilty of the like. Observe what hath been God's mind to his people, and what sin he hath pointed out to them when they have been brought under such a rod, and so you may learn his mind to you, Rom. xv. 4. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning."

2. Consider what is the sin which conscience doth most of all accuse thee for, in thy most serious and solitary hours. Conscience is God's deputy, and thy bosom-monitor, whose voice perhaps thou hast little regarded in the day of thy health; wherefore God hath sent a sharper messenger to second the voice of conscience. Here now the voice of the rod, for it is the same with the voice of conscience. In the day of prosperity, carnal profits and pleasures made such a noise, that the voice of conscience could not be heard; wherefore God hath brought on thee the silent night of adversity, that his deputy may obtain audience. Well then, give ear; What saith conscience now? may you not hear it saying, as Reuben to his brethren in distress, spake I not to you in the day of health, do not commit such a sin, and do not delay repenting for such a sin, but you would not hear? O man, let conscience get a hearing at last as it got with the patriarchs when they were brought to distress in Egypt, and made them confess their sins in selling of Joseph, Gen. xlii. 21. "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear him: therefore is this distress come upon us."

3. Consider what are those evils that others have observed in you, whether they be friends or foes; hearken to what a Christian friend noticeth in you, either when speaking to you, or to others about you, "Let the righteous smite me," saith David, "and it shall be a kindness." Yea, do not disregard what even enemies say of you: as David got good by the malicious reproaches of Shimei, in the day of his affliction, so may you in the time of distress; for sometimes malice itself will speak truth. Enemies are sharp-sighted to spy out our faults, and so may, through the divine blessing, prove monitors to us, both with respect to sin and duty.

4. Consider the nature and circumstances of thy distress. Oft times the affliction is so suitable to the transgression, that we may clearly read our sin written on the forehead of our punishment, as in the case of Adonibezek, and many others. And also you may be helped to find it out by the Lord's timing of the rod to you; was it sent when you was under much formality in duty; or when you was eagerly pursuing the things of the world; or when you was under the power of some prevailing lust or other? then the rod comes to reprove you, and awake you to see the evil thereof.

5. Consider what is the sin that hath been formerly most affrighting to thy thoughts, and perplexing to thy conscience, when thou hast been in the immediate view of death and a tribunal. It is very likely (if thou hast not truly repented of it), that is the sin which God now intends to awake thee to see the evil of, that thou mayest sincerely mourn for and turn from it, looking to God in Christ, for pardon and mercy.

Object. "Ah! (saith one), it is my lot to lie under a dumb and silent rod; I cannot understand its language, I cannot hear its voice, I cannot find out the sin that is pointed at by it; what course shall I take?

Ans. 1. Be deeply humbled under this trial, and bewail thy case before the Lord; for it very much aggravates the affliction to God's people, when they know not the language of it; hence was it that Job lamented so heavily, that his way was hid, and he knew not the reason of God's contending with him, Job iii. 23.

2. A believer's case may be sometimes so dark, that it requires a good deal of spiritual art and wisdom to enable him to hear the voice of the rod, and understand its language. Hence it is said, "He is a man of wisdom that seeth God's name upon it," Mic. vi. 9. Now, this wisdom must only come from above: Therefore,

3. Go to God, and earnestly beg for this wisdom, that you may know his mind, and the meaning of the rod. Do as Rebekah, when the children struggled in her womb: she went to enquire of the Lord, saying, "Why am I thus?" Gen. xxxv. 22. Cry to God to give you his Spirit to teach and enlighten you to see sin in its evil, and the particular evils you are guilty of. This was Job's course in his affliction: "Shew me," says he, "wherefore thou contendest with me. That which I see not teach thou me. Make me to know my transgression and my sin." There is no better way for a prisoner to know the reason of his confinement, than to ask the magistrate that committed him. God is a wise agent, and can give the best account of his own actions.

4. If thou canst not find out the particular sin for which God afflicts thee, then labour to repent of every known sin, and cry for pardon of every unknown and forgotten sin also. Do that out of wisdom, which Herod did out of malice; who, because he could not find out the babe Jesus, killed all the children of Bethlehem, that he might be sure to kill Jesus among them. Let us seek the utter ruin and death of all our sins, that we may be sure to destroy that sin for which God afflicts us.

5. Study to exercise a strong faith, and a humble submission, while God keeps you under the silent rod. Believe firmly that God is most just, though you know not for what he contends. And, however long he thinks fit to make you walk in the dark, resolve humbly to wait on him, and commit yourself to him, who has many times guided the blind in the way they knew not.

Direct. III.—*When any fit of Sickness attacks you, think seriously upon Death, and make diligent preparations for it.*

I DO not mean that any man may delay the work of preparation for death, till sickness cometh: No, no; this should be the great and uptaking business of every man in the time of his health and strength. But sickness and diseases being the harbingers of death, and messengers sent from God to warn us of its coming; every man is thereby called to renew the work of preparing for death with all earnestness and application. God's voice by every fit of sickness is that in Deut. xxxii. 29. "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" God knows our folly, and readiness to forget this great work in the day of health; and therefore in his mercy he sends sickness and affliction, to teach us so to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to this piece of heavenly wisdom, of making preparation for death.

And here I shall drop, 1. Some motives to press it. 2. Advices for the doing it right.

Directions to Families and Persons under Sickness.

I. For motives, consider these things.

1. Consider God's mercy and patience towards you, in giving you so many warnings, and so many years to prepare for death; and in sending his messengers and warnings so gently and gradually, to excite you to this work; when many younger and stronger than you are hurried into eternity, and little or no time given them to think where they are going. Have you not been spared many years in the midst of dangers, when you have seen that bold archer, Death, shooting his arrows, and killing thousands of your neighbours and friends round about you? Sometimes the arrow hath glanced over your head, and slain some great man your superior; sometimes it hath lighted at your feet, and cut off a child or servant, your inferiors; sometimes it hath gone by on your left hand, and killed your enemy; at other times it hath passed on your right hand, and killed your near relations. So that you have seen friends and foes, superiors and inferiors, relations and strangers, dropping down dead round about you; and all this for a long tract of time, to give you warning to prepare for death. O let the goodness and forbearance of God towards you lead you to repentance, and persuade you to fly speedily to Christ for refuge and protection from wrath!

2dly, Consider how terrible death will be, if it meets you in an unprepared state, in a Christless and impenitent condition. What a fearful change will it bring upon you? A change from earth to hell, from hope to despair, from pleasure to pain, from comforts to terrors; a change from the offers of grace to the revelation of wrath; a change from probabilities to utter impossibilities of salvation. Death will cut off all your hopes and expectations of mercy for ever, Job xxviii. 3. There is no coming back to amend what hath been done amiss here; and there is no work nor device in the grave whither you go. As the tree falls, so it will lie through all eternity.

II. I come to give some advices, in order to the right preparation for death. *1st*, Set about self-examination work. Enquire if you be in Christ or not; if you be yet far off from God, or if you be brought near by the blood of Christ. And see that you be impartial in this search, and willing to find out the truth in this important question. Be not foolishly tender of yourself, and apt to believe that you are safe, when it is not so; for this way thousands do ruin themselves. But be content to know the worst of your case, and thoroughly to understand your soul's danger, that you may be moved to take the right way to escape it. Wherefore take a view of the mark of Christless and unconverted persons set down in God's word, and judge yourself by them: and consider also the designs of true grace there recorded, and see if they be applicable to you or not.

2dly, If, after enquiry, you find your state is bad, that you have been a lover of the world more than of God, you have minded your body more than your soul, you have lived in the neglect of precious Christ, allowed yourself in known sin; O then be convinced of your inability to help yourself, and of your need of Christ to help you. And labour to be deeply humbled before God under a sense of your sin and folly. "Ah, how foolishly, how rebelliously, how unthankfully have I carried! I have abused God's mercies, and left undone the work for which I was made, preserved, and enjoyed the gospel. Oh! I had all my by-past time given me to make preparation for endless eternity, and I have never minded it, till now that sickness, the harbinger of death, is come upon me. And now what shall I do to be saved?" Well then, in order to convince and humble you the more, cast back your eyes upon the sins of your nature, and of your by-past life; view them in their nature, number, aggravations, and deserts. O, do not so many years' sins need a very deep humiliation? O, do you not stand greatly in need of such a person as Christ, to be your Saviour and Ransomer from such a vast number of sins? O but their weight will press you eternally down to the lowest hell, if left to yourself, and laid upon your back.

3. O sinner, art thou deeply humbled, and desirous of mercy upon any terms? Believe, then, that thy case is not remediless, but that there is a sacrifice provided for your sins, and an able and all sufficient Saviour in your offer. Believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and become flesh to be a surety for you, that he is both able and willing to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. Though your sins, your dangers, and your fears, were never so great, yet he is able and willing to save. O flee presently to this refuge-city, whose gates are open to receive you. Trust your souls upon Christ's sacrifice and meritorious blood for mercy and salvation. Apply humbly to him, that he may teach you the will of God, reconcile you to his Father, pardon your sins, renew you by his Spirit, and save you from eternal wrath.

4. Give up yourselves to God in Christ, by way of covenant and solemn resignation. Every man doth this sacramentally in baptism; but you must also renew it personally and explicitly, and thereby give a cordial and voluntary consent to the covenant of grace. Acquiesce cheerfully in the gospel way of salvation through Christ and his righteousness; and accept of God, in Christ, as thy portion. Make choice of God the Father, as thy reconciled Father in Christ; and God the Son as thy Redeemer and Saviour; and God the Holy Ghost for thy sanctifier, guide, and comforter. And likewise give up thyself, soul and body, and all thou hast, to be the Lord's; engaging in Christ's strength to live for God, and walk with him in newness of life. And study to do all this deliberately, unfeignedly, and cheerfully. Though, perhaps, you have done this hypocritically at former times, you have profaned God's covenant, and behaved unstedfastly and perfidiously therein; yet now endeavour to be sincere with God for once.

5. Be living daily in the exercise of faith and repentance; renew the acts thereof frequently, in proportion to your renewed sins and guiltiness, cleave close to glorious Christ your high-priest and surety, and be ever washing in his blood. As long as you are in the world, you have need to wash your feet, John xiii. 10. Come death when it will, let it find you at the fountain, always looking to and making use of Jesus Christ. You have great need of Christ every day of your life, more especially in sickness; but most of all at a dying hour. O what need will you have of Christ then as an advocate with God, when the question is to be determined, where your mansion is to be assigned through all eternity, whether in heaven or hell? O then be looking always to Christ with the eye of faith. Live in the constant thoughts of this blessed Mediator. Let him be first in your thoughts in the morning, and last in your thoughts at night.

6. Be striving to mortify every sin and lust, both outward and inward. Be dying to sin daily, that so you may not die for sin eternally. O that sin may be daily losing its strength, and dying in you! so that it may be cer-

tainly dead before you. Pray earnestly, that all your sins may die before you die: for if they die not before you, but outlive the dying body, they will live eternally to sting and torment the never-dying soul.

DIRECT. IV.—*Be not anxious for recovery to health; but leave the issue of the present sickness to the will and pleasure of the infinitely wise God.*

REMEMBER, O man, that thou art the clay, and God is the Potter; he is absolute Lord of thy life and times, therefore learn to adore his sovereignty over thee and all thy enjoyments. David doth so, when he says, "Lord, my times are in thy hand," Ps. xxxi. 15. And indeed they are only best in his hand, for he best knows how to dispose of them. The prophet saith, Isa. xxx. 18. "The Lord is a God of judgment, blessed are all they that wait for him." Judgment there signifies wisdom, the Lord is a God of wisdom, and will order and time all things well; and therefore it becomes us quietly to wait for his pleasure, saying, "the will of the Lord be done:" It is taken notice of, as a great sin in the Israelites, that they waited not for his counsel, but limited the Holy One of Israel, Psal. lxxviii. 11. What unaccountable folly and presumption is it for worms of the earth to seek to stint and limit the Sovereign of heaven to their measures! It becomes us at all times, and especially in sickness and affliction, to have low submissive thoughts of ourselves, and high exalted thoughts of God's sovereignty, such as Nebuchadnezzar had, Dan. iv. 35. "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what dost thou." We should therefore refer all to his wise determination, and be willing to die or live, as he shall be pleased to appoint. I remember I have read of a godly woman, who in her sickness being asked by one, whether she was most desirous to die or live? She answered, I have no choice in that matter, but refer myself unto the will of God. But, said the other, suppose God should refer it unto you, whether to die or live, which of them would you chuse? If God (replied she) should refer it to me, I would even refer it back again to him. It becomes thee, O man, to be entirely resigned to the will of thy Master, and to stand like a centinel in thy station, ready to move as thy great general and commander shall give orders concerning thee. It would be pleasant and acceptable to God, to see thee more desirous to be delivered from sin than from sickness. O, but sin is a far worse disease than any sickness in the world! Beg importunately, that the great Physician may cure this woful soul-disease, and let him do with the body what he pleaseth. This was David's practice in his affliction, Psal. xxv. 18. "Look upon my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins." As for his pains and afflictions, he asks no more but that God would regard them, and look upon them, and do with them as he thought fit; but, as for his sins, no less will satisfy him than a pardon, and blotting them entirely out, so as they might be remembered no more.

DIRECT. V.—*Bind yourself with holy purposes and resolutions in Christ's strength, to be more watchful against sin, more diligent in duty, and to improve the time of health better, if God shall be pleased to restore it again to you.*

WHEN God is visiting your iniquities with rods, and pleading a controversy with you for your omissions and slackness in duty, he expects that you will return from your backslidings, and set about a serious reformation and change of life, Hos. v. 15. "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face; in their affliction they will seek me early." See then that you open your ear to discipline; study to answer God's call and expectation, and in his strength resolve to enter upon a new life. "Surely now it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more. That which I see not, teach thou me: If I have done iniquity, I will do so no more." Job xxxiv. 31, 32. Now is the season, you should say with Ephraim, Hos. xiv. 8. "What have I to do any more with idols?"

Having duly examined yourselves, and searched out your sins, you ought to put a bill of divorce into each of their hands. Deliberately resolve against all your sins, whether secret or open; and especially resolve against your darling and beloved sins, those sins which do most easily beset you. Resolve also against all temptations to sin; and, particularly, against the snares of bad company, whereby you have been formerly enticed; now say with David, Ps. cxix. 115. "Depart from me, ye evil doers; for I will keep the commandments of my God." You must not only purpose to forsake all sin, but also mind every known duty; that you will make religion your one thing needful; the pleasing of God, the chief business of your life; that you will set the Lord alway before you, give him your heart in all duties, aim at nearness and communion with God in every one of them; and still press forward to the full enjoyment of God in heaven through eternity.

Resolve also, through grace, that you will, in a special manner, mind secret duties, which the eyes of men do not observe, and those duties which conscience doth most challenge you for neglecting. And you that are heads of families, resolve to make more conscience of family-religion, of worshiping God with your families, both morning and evening; instructing your children and servants in the knowledge of Christ; and recommending religion and godliness to all round about you, whether relations or strangers.

And, if you would have your resolutions effectual, see that they be accompanied with a deep sense of your insufficiency to perform them in your own strength. Bear always in mind the corruption and deceitfulness of your own heart; and make all your resolutions in a humble dependence on the sufficiency of Jesus Christ your surety. Observe the apostle Paul's advice to his son Timothy, 2 Tim. ii. 1. "Be strong in the grace that is in Jesus Christ." All your stock, O believer, is in his hand, so that without him you can do nothing; but, through Christ strengthening you, thou art able to do all things.

DIRECT. VI.—*Set your house in order, by making your latter-wills, and settling your domestic and secular affairs, while you have freedom and capacity for doing it.*

AFTER the heart is set in order, the next work is to set your house in order, according to God's counsel to Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 1. It is recorded of the Patriarch Abraham, that he was careful to settle the affairs of his fa-

mily before his death, Gen. xxv. 5. 6. He disposed of his estate to Isaac, and legacies to the sons of his concubines. It is too general a fault, that men delay and put off making their wills, as they do their repentance, to the very last, and so too frequently never make them at all. Consider the evil of deferring or neglecting this necessary affair; for if you, upon whom God hath bestowed means, should die intestate, your estate may descend otherwise than you intended; much of it may be spent in tedious and expensive law-suits; such differences may fall out among relations, that should live in friendship and mutual affection, as cannot be healed; some of them may be reduced to extreme want, when a small legacy might have put them in a way of living; and many such inconveniences may follow. Well, then, if your neglect should bring on these evils, and involve posterity into endless strifes and contentions, may you not justly fear that the guilt thereof will pursue you into another world, whose wretched carelessness was the occasion of all that mischief?

Pray, what is the reason that men put off this affair? Is it not because they do not incline to think so seriously on death, as this will occasion them to do? Doth not this smell of abominable earthly-mindedness, speak as if a man desired all his portion in this life, and cared not for a better? and that he is so far from preparing for death, that he cannot endure to think of it? Alas, that this worldly disposition should so far prevail among us! But surely there is no wise man will say, that the putting off the thoughts of death, will keep death at the greater distance; or, that, preparing for death, and making our wills, will bring on death the sooner.

It were surely best to order our affairs timeously; yea, do it in time of health, rather than to delay unto a sick-bed, or a death-bed; for either you may be snatched off suddenly, and have no time for it; or you may be taken with such a distemper as shall seize your tongue, so as you cannot express your mind; or seize your understanding, so as you cannot rationally dispose of your effects. And though none of those should happen, yet, certainly it proves a great disturbance to a dying man, to be casting up, ordering, and settling the affairs of his family, when he should be securing a heavenly mansion for his soul, and clearing up his evidences thereunto. It is great wisdom to put this affair by hand, that you may have as little to do with the world as may be, and all occasions of distraction to your immortal soul may be prevented, when it is near to its flitting into an eternal and unchangeable state.

Moreover, in settling your secular affairs, observe these following advices: 1. Make your wills cheerfully, and freely lay down whatever you enjoy, when God calls you to do it. Praise God that you had those things while you needed them; and, when you have no longer use for them, leave them without repining to those that come after you. Look not back to Egypt when you are upon your march to Canaan.

2. See that you deal justly, in providing your family, paying all your just debts, and making restitution if you have wronged any. Abhor all designs of defrauding any of your lawful creditors; for, if your last act should be unjust, you leave a blot upon your name here; and since you cannot repent of this wickedness, it being among your last deeds, you expose yourself to a fearful doom in the world whither you are going.

3. In settling your estates, see that God and good uses be not forgot nor left out. When you are leaving the world, and can glorify God no longer here by your words or actions, see to honour the Lord with your substance, by leaving some part thereof to a pious and charitable use. I know, it is a work of charity to give for maintaining the bodies of the poor; and especially the poor of God's people, who belong to his family: But it is much more pious and charitable to leave somewhat for propagating christian knowledge in dark places; for educating poor children to read the scriptures; and instructing ignorant souls in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is much to be lamented, that so many rich men among us die, and leave nothing to such pious uses. The liberality of papists, on their death-beds, may give a sharp challenge to many professed protestants: O what a shame is it to the professors of the doctrine of grace, that the false doctrines of merits and purgatory, should produce so many donations and mortifications among the papists; and the faith of Christ's most glorious gospel should not do the like among true believers! Shall the proud conceit of merit, and the imaginary fear of purgatory, prompt men to do more this way, than the certain persuasion of the love of God in Christ, and the well grounded hope of eternal life through the alone merits of Jesus Christ: O what a reproach is this to our holy religion!

4. It might be much to the glory of God, and good of souls, that a great part of our testaments and latter-wills should consist of solemn charges, exhortations and blessings, to our children, or those to whom we bequeath any legacy; so as they can never open our testaments, or look into them, but they might hear something that may make impressions on their souls for their spiritual edification, and for quickening them to the diligent practice of both family and personal godliness.

CHAPTER II.

CONTAINING SOME PARTICULAR DIRECTIONS TO THOSE WHO ARE SHARPLY AFFLICTED WITH SICKNESS AND LONG TROUBLE.

DIRECT. I.—*Justify God in the greatest afflictions which befal you.*

THOUGH God should condemn you, see that you acquit him, and say, he is righteous in all his dealings. When the church was under the heaviest distress, she finds cause to justify God, Lam. i. 18. "The Lord is righteous, for I have rebelled against his commandment." So doth godly Nehemiah, Neh. ix. 33. "Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us: for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly." The same doth holy David acknowledge, Psal. cxix. 75. "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me." Now, in order to bring you to this agreeable frame, and to convince you of the equity and justice of God, in his dispensations, however heavy and long your distress be, I shall lay before you the following considerations:

1. Consider the infinitely holy and righteous nature of that God who smiteth thee, Psal. cxix. 137. "Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments." We presume it of a righteous man that he will do righteous things? and shall we not much more believe so of a holy and righteous God? We cannot be infallibly certain that

a righteous man will always do so: For a righteous man may leave his righteousness, because the creature is mutable; but God is immutably righteous; so that we may be confident of it, that the judge of all the earth will do right, for it is impossible he can do otherwise, Zech. iii. 5. "The just Lord is in the midst thereof, he will not do iniquity." He will not, he cannot; for it is contrary to his nature.

2. Consider that God never brings on any affliction without a cause, 1 Cor. xi. 30. "For this cause many are sick." He hath still just ground for the heaviest affliction, from thy sins and provocations; and may always say to thee, as to Israel, Jer. ii. 17, 19. "Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way? Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backsliding shall reprove thee: know, therefore, and see, that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord." There is still ground enough for affliction to be found in the best of God's people; and therefore it is said, Lam. iii. 33. "For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." No: it is our sins that oblige him to it. As Christ whipped the sellers of oxen and sheep out of the temple with a whip (as is generally thought), made of their own cords; so God never scourgeth us but with a whip made of our own sins, Prov. v. 22. "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins." If we consider the mighty God as a Lord dispensing grace, then we find he acts sovereignly, and according to his will and pleasure, Mat. xi. 26. "Even so Father, so it seemed good in thy sight." But if we consider him as a judge, dispensing judgments, he never doth it without a foregoing cause on the creature's part. God's treasure of mercy is always full, and ready to be let out to them that seek it; but his treasure of wrath is empty till men fill it up by their sins, Rom. ii. 15. "Thou treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath:" We always do provide fuel for God's wrath, before it kindle and break out upon us.

3. Consider further this instance of God's equity; that when there is a cause given, God doth not presently take it, but continues to threaten often and warn long, before he executes the sentence of his word. He sends lesser strokes as warnings of greater, if we repent not; and he repeats his warnings many times, both by his word and providence, before he smite. Yea, even when repeated warnings are slighted, he delays a long time, and waits to be gracious, Isa. xxx. 18. And when men's obstinacy and incorrigibleness arrive to such a height, that he can spare no longer; yet, how loth is he to give them up to severe judgment! Hos. xi. 8. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together." When the Lord hath sinners in his arms, ready to give them up to severe judgments, yet he makes a stand, and would be willingly prevented before he proceeds to this strange work; for so he calls his acts of judgment, Isa. xxviii. 21. Acts of mercy are co-natural, most agreeable and pleasant to God, Mic. vii. 18. "He delighteth in mercy: but judgment is his strange act, and his strange work."

4. Consider that when at last he sends strokes on us, they are always short of the cause; he exacts not the whole debt that sinners owe to his justice, as Ezra doth acknowledge, Ezra ix. 13. "Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve." The stroke he there is speaking of, was a most heavy judgment; fearful ruin and desolation came upon Jerusalem, and the whole of Judah; the city and temple were burnt to ashes, the people carried captive to a strange land, and treated as bond-slaves among the Heathen. Yet, saith the holy man, "Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve." *q. d.* It is true we have been carried to Babylon; but, in justice, we might have been sent to hell: our houses were burned, but our bodies might have been burned too: we have been drinking water, but we might have been drinking blood; we have had grievous burdens on earth, but we might have been groaning in hell: we were banished from the temple, but we might have been eternally banished from God's presence. We think it a great favour among men, when any punishment is mitigated, when the sentence of death is changed into banishment, or when banishment is turned into a fine, or a great fine into a smaller: And will you think that God deals severely or rigorously with you, when he lays you on a sick-bed, when he might justly have laid you in hell, and poured out all his wrath upon you there? You but taste of the brim of the cup, when God might cause you to drink of the bottom and dregs thereof.

Have you not cause then to acknowledge God's justice; nay, even his mercy, too, in his dealings with you, however rough they may seem to be! May you not, with good reason, say, any thing less than hell is a mercy to such an ill-deserving creature as I am! If even a hard-hearted Pharaoh, under distress, came the length to own the justice of God, Exod. ix. 27. "I have sinned, the Lord is righteous." Shall any professed Christian fall short of that obstinate Egyptian?

DIRECT. II.—*Labour still to be sensible of God's hand under heavy Affliction, and beware of stupidity and unconcernedness under it.*

IT is a sin to faint under heavy affliction, but it is a duty to feel it, Heb. xii. 5. "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him." The apostle there doth caution against two extremes, which every Christian under the rod should be careful to avoid: 1. Despising or making light of affliction. 2. Sinking or desponding under affliction. We are in great hazard of running into the one or the other. As to the first, we may be said to despise the chastening of the Lord, when we do not observe God's hand in our affliction, so as to reform the things whereby he is displeased; or, when we resolve to abide the trial, by the strength of our own resolutions and stoutheartedness, without looking to God for supporting grace; or, when we turn stupid and insensible under the heavy and long continued rod. This despising and slighting of the rod, is not patience, but stupidity; it is not Christian magnanimity, but a stoical temper of mind, most sinful and provoking to God. We see how angry God is with sinners when his strokes are not felt, Is. xli. 25. "He hath poured upon him the fury of his anger; and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew it not; and it hath burned him, yet he laid it not to heart," Jer. v. 3. "Thou hast striken them, but they have not grieved: Thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction;

they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refused to return." There is little hope of a scholar's minding his lesson, that is regardless of whipping. It is a dreadful sign to be like Pharaoh, sleeping in our sins, when God is thundering in his wrath. He that will sleep when his house is on fire, or lie still in bed, as if he was not concerned, may assuredly expect to be consumed in its flames. As David could not bear it, when the messengers he sent to the Ammonites out of good will, were affronted and despised; so neither God will endure it, when the messengers he sends to sinners are slighted; for he that slights a messenger, affronts his master. Those who make light of affliction, make light of God that sends it, and make light of sin that procures it.

Quest. "But when is it that people are suitably concerned under a heavy rod?"

Ans. When they see God's hand, hear God's voice, answer his intent, are curious to know his mind, desirous to do those things he requires, and reform those things he is displeased with. Remember every affliction is a messenger from God, and deserves a hearing from you. It comes to thee with such a message as Ehud did to Eglon, Judges iii. 20. "I have an errand from God to thee, O King;" I have a message from God to thee, O Christian, O sinner. Well, lend an ear, and hearken with reverence and attention to this errand; say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth, what wouldst thou have me to do?" Believe it, that God speaks as really to you by his rod, as by his word; therefore he says, hear ye the rod. God spoke as truly by his ten plagues to Egypt, as he did by his ten precepts to Israel And if the calm voice of the word were more regarded, we should hear less of the rough voice of the rod. As Gideon took briers and thorns of the wilderness, and with them taught the men of Succoth, who would not be taught by fairer means, Judg. viii. 16. So God takes the sharp prickles of sore affliction, to teach you his statutes, when you will not be taught by softer methods. Beware then of grieving God's Spirit, by turning stupid, and insensible under sharp or long continued trials: but the more pains God is at with you by his rod, hearken the more carefully to his voice, and labour to make the greater proficiency in the school of affliction, where he thinks fit to continue you; that so you may inherit that blessing, Ps. xciv. 12. "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law."

DIRECT. III.—*Beware of misconstructing God's dealings towards you, and of charging him foolishly.*

WE are apt to believe Satan's suggestions under heavy trials, and to entertain wrong thoughts of God and his dispensations. Now, these you ought to guard against, as, for instance, 1. Beware of harbouring atheistical thoughts, as if there were no Providence, no wise governor of this lower world, no distinction between the good and bad; and that it is to no purpose to be religious, like those mentioned in Mal. iii. 14. "Ye have said, it is vain to serve God; and what profit is it, that we have kept his ordinance, and walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?" Yea, even the Psalmist, when he begins to compare his own sharp trials with the wicked's ease and prosperity, is tempted to think all religion is in vain, and say, Ps. lxxiii. 13, 14. "Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning." But these are nothing but the hellish suggestions of Satan, that irreconciliable enemy of God and precious souls, against which we should closely stop our ears.

2. Beware of charging God in your hearts, with rigour and injustice in his dealings, like those, Ezek. xviii. 25. "Yet, ye say, the way of the Lord is not equal." How highly unjust, and injurious, are such thoughts of him who is the judge of all the earth, and cannot but do right?

3. Beware of thinking that heavy afflictions do always speak wrath in God against thee. No, sometimes they speak forth love, and God may be carrying on a love-design thereby to thy soul, viz. to subdue thy strong lusts, and draw thee nearer unto himself. As for those who think that the smarting rod, and Divine love, cannot dwell together, let them read that passage, Heb. xii. 5, 6. "And ye have forgotten the exhortation, which speaketh unto you as unto children, my son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

4. Beware of desponding and distrustful thoughts of God under sharp afflictions. Some are ready to raze the foundation; quit their interest in God, and the promises; and cast away their hope and confidence, saying with Gideon, Judg. vi. 13. "Oh, my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this evil befallen us?" So David was ready to draw a hasty conclusion, Ps. xxxi. 22. "I said, in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes." But this was the effect of unbelief; for he that believeth will not make haste.

DIRECT. IV.—*Under sore trouble and distress, labour to exercise a strong and lively faith.*

IT was a noble and heroic resolution in that holy man Job, under his singular trials, Job xiii. 15. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," *q. d.* Let my strokes be never so sore and heavy, yet, I will not let go my grips of his words and promises, I will not raze these foundations of my hope. It was this way the Psalmist kept himself from sinking under his heavy burdens, Ps. xxvii. 13. "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." Consider but a little the noble influence that faith hath to strengthen and support the soul under sore trials.

1. Faith grips to the great gospel promises of salvation in and through Jesus Christ, and so secures the soul's main interest through eternity; which is enough to make the soul easy in every lot.

2. Faith views God in Christ at the helm in the greatest storm, and so it endures, as seeing him who is invisible, Heb. xi. 57.

3. Faith casts the soul's anchor upon the rock of ages, and stays itself on God and the faithful promises; whereby the soul is eased and disburdened of its fears and melancholy apprehensions, Psal. iv. 22. Isa. l. 10.

4. Faith brings new strength and auxiliary supplies of grace from heaven, when the former supply is exhausted and spent; whereof David had the sweet experience, Psal. xxvii. 13. As God doth plant and actuate grace in the soul, so he is pleased to come in with seasonable supplies and reinforcements to the weak and decayed graces of his people, answerable to their present exigencies and pressures; and thus he doth, from time to time, feed the believer's lamp with fresh oil, giving more faith, more love,

more hope, and more desires; and hereby he gives power to the faint, and strengthens the things which remain when ready to die.

3. Faith keeps the soul from sinking under heavy trials, by bringing in former experiences of the power, mercy, and faithfulness of God, to the afflicted soul. Hereby was the psalmist supported in distress, Psal. xiii. 6. Psal lxxxvii. 4. O, saith faith, "Remember what God hath done both for thy outward and inward man; he hath not only delivered thy body when in trouble, but he hath done great things for thy soul; he hath brought thee out of a state of black nature, entered into a covenant-relation with thee, made his goodness pass before thee; he hath helped thee to pray, and many times hath heard thy prayers and thy tears. Hath he not formerly brought thee out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and put a new song in thy mouth, and made thee to resolve never to give way to such unbelieving doubts and fears again? And how unbecoming is it for thee now to sink in trouble?"

6. Faith supports the soul, by giving it a pleasant view and prospect of a happy outgate from all trouble; when it shall be admitted to see and dwell with Christ hereafter. Thus was Job supported in his great distress, Job xix. 25, 26, 29. "For I know that my Redeemer liveth; and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold," &c. A believing view of the soul's meeting with its Redeemer, and receiving a crown of glory from him at last, is an excellent support to a Christian under the heaviest affliction; and so it was to Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

7. Faith gives great support, by the encouraging representations it makes of Christ, and of his present concern for the believer while under affliction. As for instance, 1. Faith represents Christ to a believer under trial, as sympathizing with him under his distress, feeling his pain, hearing his groans, bearing his burdens, and ready to relieve him in his own appointed time, which it well becometh him to wait for.

2. Faith represents Christ as putting in his Almighty arm under the believer's head, and conveying invisible strength to support and hold him up under his greatest pressures.

3. Faith represents Christ as pleading the afflicted believer's cause with God, and answering all the charges of the law, the challenges of conscience, and accusations of Satan against him.

4. Faith represents Christ as standing by the furnace as a refiner where his gold is melting; carefully overseeing the trials of his people, that they may work for their good; and ready to bring them out thereof, when they are sufficiently purified from their dross.

5. Faith represents Christ as smiling on his people under the cross, whispering peace into their ears, and saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

DIRECT. V.—*Labour to bear with patience whatever load of trouble the Lord appoints for you.*

WE will perhaps observe some, who are strangers to religion, contentedly enduring very painful evils; and this they may do, by virtue of a natural hardiness and resolution which some are endued with; or, upon the account of arguments furnished with human prudence: This is only patience as a moral virtue, which some attain to. But it is patience as a spiritual grace, or a fruit of the Spirit, which we must aim at under our trials; that we may bear them contentedly, from divine principles, to divine ends. Now, this grace of patience we must earnestly beg from God under heavy afflictions, for it is only he that must work it in us; and therefore, he is called the God of patience, Rom xv. 5. And, in order to your attaining of this grace, I shall lay before you the following considerations, which may be useful, through the Lord's blessing, for that end.

1. Consider the patience of our Lord Jesus Christ, under sufferings inexpressibly greater than yours. When it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief; how patiently did he bear all? According to that remarkable word, Isa. liii. 7. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth" Now, Christ suffered as an example of patience, though it was not his chief end: and surely all the members of the body should study to imitate the head in patience. Did your blessed Saviour patiently endure such agonies and pressures of wrath for you; and will you decline to undergo some short pains or sickness, in obedience to his command?

2. Consider God's sovereignty over you. He is the great Potter, and you are his clay; and, why may he not do with you as he pleaseth? If your children offend you, you scourge them, and perhaps do it sometimes without reason; yet how ill do you take it, when they refuse to submit? How will you drive and spur your horses under you, and perhaps sometimes unreasonably? Yet they bear all quietly, and make no resistance. Shall they take blows from their master; and will you not from your maker, that has far more power over you? If any challenge you for cruelty to your children or beasts, you take it not well, because you think you may do what you will with your own, and no man hath right to quarrel you: But hath not God a greater property in you, than you in your children or cattle? And will you not patiently submit to your wise and absolute sovereign?

3 Consider thy sin as the meritorious cause of all thy afflictions, however heavy they be. If thou hast right thoughts of thy sins, and the aggravations thereof, thy mind may be composed to a patient submission to God's hand: If sin be heavy on thee, all thy afflictions will be light. Luther gives us this as a reason why he slighted the rage of the Pope and the Emperor, and all his outward troubles: "They are all little to me, because sin lies weighty on me." Hence it was, that Paul complained not at all of his sufferings, for as great as they were; but he cried out much of his sins, Rom. vii. 23. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Sense of sin doth swallow up the sense of affliction, as the ocean doth little brooks. For with whom shouldst thou quarrel, but thyself, when thou bringest troubles on thyself? This consideration should bring thee to resolve, and say with the prophet, Mic. vii. 9. "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him."

4. Consider how sharp soever the pains are, you are called to bear, yet they fall infinitely short of what you have justly deserved at God's hands. It is of his infinite mercy, that death and everlasting destruction hath not been your portion long since; and that you are not now

groaning under the extremity of his indignation in the bottomless pit, together with the devil and his angels. And, consequently, whatever falls short of this, is truly a great mercy, and is so far from being ground of quarrelling, that the greatest sufferer on this side hell, hath just cause to admire God's clemency in dealing more favourably with him than he hath deserved.

5. Compare thy case with others that have been, or presently are in distress. Do not say, there is none so hardly dealt with as thou art; for thou knowest not the affliction of others. Consider duly the trials of that eminent saint, Job, in all the circumstances thereof, and see if you can say, that your sorrow is near so great as his sorrow was. Again, compare your case with that of the damned in hell, who lie and fry in endless and ceaseless flames, so that they have no rest, day nor night, but the smoke of their torment ascends for ever? And think what a blessing it is, that you are yet in a state of salvation, and not delivered over to those everlasting burnings, which were the due demerits of your sins, and to which you might long ago have been justly condemned, had it not been for the patience and long suffering of Almighty God, who waiteth to be gracious to guilty sinners. When you consider these things, instead of being dissatisfied with the Divine dispensations, you have cause to bless God, that matters are not worse with you; and that you are kept out of hell to this day, where thousands, not more guilty than you, are presently roaring in endless desperation.

Unto these considerations, I shall subjoin some few helps, or advices, in order to the attaining of patience under sore troubles. 1. Labour to get pardon of sin, and peace with God, secured to thy soul, and this will enable you to bear the heaviest cross with patience. Hence it was that Luther cried, "Smite, Lord, as thou wilt, I take all in good part, seeing my sins are pardoned: O, pardon of sin is the crowning blessing, therefore I will bear any thing, I will swallow up quarrelling into admiring; I will welcome the pruning knife, seeing there is no fear of the bloody axe to fell me down."

2. Labour to see God's hand in thy affliction. Do not, like the dog, snarl at the stone, but look up to the hand that throws it. And, surely, a view of the hand of a holy God, may serve to calm all the boisterous waves of thy corruption; so did it with David, Psal. xxxix. 9. "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." When he looked to the instruments and second causes of his afflictions, his heart waxed hot, and the fire of his inward passion began to burn and break out; but, when he once espied God's hand and seal to the warrant for his correction, he became silent, and patiently submitted to the Divine will.

3. Get a humble and self-denied frame of spirit, that you may have low thoughts of yourself, and of all your attainments whatsoever. A proud man cannot think of submitting to the Divine will, but will break before he bow. Hence we see a vast difference between a proud Pharaoh, and an humble Eli, under the rod; the one says, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?" But the other saith, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good."

4. Get love to Jesus Christ. Love is an enduring principle, 1 Cor. xiii. 7. It endureth all things. It makes the soul, like the kindly child, draw nearer to Christ the more it is beaten.

5. Interpret God's ways and dealings with you always in the best sense. And, lastly, be earnest in prayer, that God may conquer your rebellious will, and subdue those mutinous risings of heart within you against himself.

Direct. VI. *Beware of envying wicked men, when you see them in health and prosperity.*

THE Psalmist, when he was chastened every morning, and in great adversity, was liable to this evil, Psal. lxxiii. 3. "I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperiy of the wicked." Corrupt nature doth strongly incline us to this sinful disposition, espicially in the day of sore affliction: "For the Spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy," James iv. 5. But, did we rightly consider the state of wicked men, we would see greater ground to pity than envy them, in the most prosperous condition: Why? "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them," Prov. i. 32. It makes them forget God, and turn hardened and secure in sin, which hastens their ruin. Who would envy a malefactor's going up a high ladder, and being mounted above the rest of the people, when it is only for a little, and in order to his being turned over and hanged? This is just the case of the wicked men, who are mounted up high in prosperity; for it is so only that they may be cast down deeper into destruction. Observe that word, Ps. xxxvii. 1, 2. "Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity: for they shall soon be cut down like grass," &c. and that word, Ps. xcii. 7. "When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever." It would be a brutish thing to envy an ox of his high and sweet pasture, when he is only thereby fitted for the day of slaughter. Who would have envied the beasts of old, the garlands and ribbons with which the heathens adorned them, when they went to be sacrificed? These external ornaments of health, wealth, pleasures, and preferments, wherewith wicked men are endowed, cannot make their state happy, nor change their natures to the better. Whatever appearance those things make in the eyes of the world, they are but like a nauseous dunghill covered with scarlet, as vile and loathsome in God's sight as ever. How quickly is the beauty of earthly things blasted! "The triumphing of the wicked is short," Job xx. 5. They live in pleasures on the earth for a while; but God sets them in slippery places, from whence they soon slide into perpetual pain and anguish. They have a short time of mirth, but they shall have an eternity of mourning. The longer their prosperity is, their sins are the greater, and their sufferings will be more grievous. But, O believer, it is in mercy to thee that God doth hedge up thy way with thorns, that thou mayest not find thy paths; whilst he turns the wicked loose, and suffers them to stray and wander whither they will, to their eternal ruin. God takes this method with thee to make thee meet for an inheritance, and prepare you for a crown of glory; but he takes a contrary way with the wicked, to fit them for destruction: Therefore you ought not to be fretful under his hand, but thankful. We read of Queen Elizabeth, when she was in prison, how she envied the poor milk-maid she saw passing by, and would have thought herself happy to have been in her condition: But had that afflicted princess known the glorious reign of forty-four years she was soon to enter upon, she would not have re-

pined at the happiness of so mean a person. But, O afflicted believer, it is not a glorious reign for a set number of years, that is provided for thee; it is even a reign with glorious Christ thy Redeemer for ever and ever: And, hast thou any ground to be discontented or envious?

DIRECT. VII.—*Guard against repining complaints and discontented murmurings, against the Providence of God, under heavy Sickness and affliction.*

WE see the murmurers and complainers are classed with those that walk after their own lusts, Jude, v. 16. I know the people of God are liable to murmuring and impatience also under affliction; but there is a great difference between them and the wicked. I will have occasion to speak of believers murmuring afterwards, when I come to speak of their case in particular; but here I shall handle the sin of murmuring in general, and as it appears mainly in the unregenerate, under heavy affliction.

This sin of murmuring is the froth of impatience, and scum of discontent; it is first cherished by repining thoughts, and then vented by unsuitable complaints and expostulations, taxing the administration of Providence, as if God dealt too hard with us. Our very thoughts are audible with God, yea, as loud in his ears, as words are in ours; but it is yet worse, when repining thoughts are not crushed, but suffered to break forth into words tending to the dishonour of God.

Quest. "But, is it altogether unlawful to complain of affliction, whatever be our case.

Ans. Humble complaints are not murmurings, nor sinful in themselves, otherwise there would be no room for prayer, and for spreading out our distressed case before the Lord. We find God's children making complaints in affliction; but when they do not complain of God, but to God, with an humble enquiry into the cause and meaning of his dispensations, and laying all the blame upon themselves, as did Job, chap. x. 1, 2. "I will leave my complaint upon thyself. I will speak in the bitterness of my soul, I will say unto God, do not condemn me; shew me wherefore thou contendest with me." Thus the blessed Son of God himself did in his distress, when he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But there, we may observe, he complains to God, not of God; he hath not a hard word or thought of God, but expresseth a holy confidence in God, "My God, my God," he hath two words of faith for one word of fear. He humbly enquires into the cause of the dispensation, and desires to bring up his will to God, not that God should bring down his will to him: If it be possible (says he) let this cup pass; however, glorify thy name, provide for thy own glory, and do with me what thou pleasest. In this matter our Lord doth set himself as an example of patience to us, teaching us to beware of impatient murmuring and quarrelling with God's Providence in our affliction; which many times we are guilty of, either when we harbour harsh thoughts of God's dealings, or break forth into rash and unadvised speeches; when we charge God foolishly, and complain either of too much severity, as Ezek. xviii. 2, 25. Or of too long delay, as Isa. xlix. 14. Or when our complaints are mixed with unbelief and distrust, as Psal. lxxviii. 10. Or when we complain more of our punishment than we do of our sin, and nothing will satisfy us but deliverance from trouble.

Now, to deter you from those murmurings and complaints in trouble, I shall lay before you the following considerations: 1. They who deserve worst, do commonly complain and murmur most, and are most ready to think they are hardly dealt with. The unthankful Israelites were still murmuring; ambitious Absalom was discontented; bloody Haman, in the midst of all his greatness, cries out, "What doth all this avail me?" But humble Jacob saith, he was not worthy of the least of all the mercies and truth which God had shewed him. And holy Job blesses God, and patiently submits, when he took from him, as well as when he gave him.

2. Murmuring is a sin that God takes special notice of, and looks on it as an injury and affront done immediately against himself, Num. xiv. 27. "I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me." He that gives ear to the groans of his own spirit, doth also hear the grumblings of thine, and will reckon with thee for them.

3. It can nowise benefit or relieve us in distress. I may say of sinful complaining (as Christ of sinful care), which of you, by complaining, can add one cubit to his stature? What ease or relief can you get by contending with God? Nay, instead of easing you of your burden, it will make it heavier; as a child, the more he struggles with his parents, he is the more beaten. The Israelites were once within eleven days' journey of Canaan; but, by their murmurings, they provoked God to lead them forty years march in the wilderness, before they could reach it.

4. Whatever be your distress, there is no just ground for complaints whilst thou hast thy life for a prey. Remember that word of the afflicted church, Lam. iii. 39. "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" A man living, a man upon the earth, a man out of hell, hath no cause to complain, whatever be his afflictions. For, let him compare his sin and punishment together, and he will find there is no proportion: Sin is a transgression against the infinite God; punishment is but an affliction upon the finite creature: Sin strikes at the very being of God; but punishment only at the comfort of the creature. So that whatever your punishment be, you have more cause to give thanks than to complain, and to say, with Ezra, "Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve: It might have been a thousand times worse, if strict justice had been the rule: It is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed.

5. When you murmur under sickness, you quarrel with the messenger of that sovereign God who gave you your lives, and can take them again when he thinks fit; and we know, messengers ought not to be maltreated or abused, whatever be their commission, and far less when they are sent upon a good design. Now, if you consider the design of this messenger, and his errand to you, instead of fretting and quarrelling at his coming, you ought rather to bless God that sends such a suitable harbinger and forerunner, to tell you that death is approaching, and that he vouchsafes to take so much pains on you, to wean you from the world, and make you willing to be gone, by long continued trouble; when he might have seized you in a violent manner, and driven you away by main force, without using any means to obtain your consent. Have not many, who were most unwilling to die, at the beginning of a sickness, been brought, by the increase and continuance of it, to be well satisfied to leave the world, and

long to be with Christ? And was not this for their advantage?

6. Consider the great evil and sinfulness of impatient murmurings, complaints, and quarrellings, under affliction.

1. Murmurings hath in it much unbelief and distrust of God, Psal. cvi. 24, 25. "They believed not his word, but murmured in their tents" They could not believe that the wilderness was the way to Canaan, that God would provide and furnish a table for them there, and relieve them in all their straits. So it is with us in trouble; we quarrel with God's providence, because we do not believe his promises; we do not believe that this can be consistent with love, or can work for good in the end.

2. It hath in it unthankfulness. While we complain of one affliction, we overlook a thousand mercies. The Israelites murmured so for what they had not, that they unthankfully forgot all that they had. Whereas, a thankful person is so far from fretting, that God doth not give him every thing, that he wonders that God should give him any thing. "I am less than the least of all thy mercies," said Jacob. We are perplexed, said Paul, but not in despair; we have God to go to, which is matter of praise; but the murmurer unthankfully overlooks all his present, and forgets all his former mercies; and gives not God thanks for any thing. Because God removes his comforts, his health, strength, and ease, for a time; all the years he formerly enjoyed, though most undeservedly, are quite buried in oblivion.

3. It implies much pride and self-conceit. He that complains of God's dealings, secretly applauds his own deservings. Only by pride comes contention. When men have a conceit of themselves, they pick quarrels with God's providence, being apt to think they deserve better treatment at his hands; whereas the humble soul is sensible he deserves nothing but wrath, and therefore lays his hand on his mouth when the Lord afflicts him.

4. It involves men into rebellion against God. When God strikes men for sin, murmurers fly in his face, and kick against his strokes, like bullocks unaccustomed to the yoke. They, in some respect, resemble that desperate apostate Julian, of whom it is written, that he shot up his darts against heaven, when he was in distress. They fulfil that word, Prov. xix. 3. "The foolishness of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord." The repining heart boils with rage against God and his dispensations, like those wicked Jews when hungry and hardly bestead, Isa. viii. 21. "They shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upwards."

5. It imports much impenitency and unhumbleness for sin; and that we have seen little of the intrinsic evil of sin; and of our ill-deservings for it. Can we truly believe that our sins deserve hell-fire, and yet impatiently repine at sickness and lesser strokes upon our bodies?

6. It includes much atheism and blasphemy against God, and his infinite perfections, in several respects: (1) By our impatient murmurings, we either virtually deny that things here below are governed by God's providence; or else,

(2) We tax his providence with unrighteousness in the management thereof; as if God did withhold from us what is due, or inflict on us what we have not deserved. O what atheism is this! Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? May he not, upon the justest ground, answer every murmur, as Matt. xx. 13. "Friend, I do thee no wrong?

(3) We in effect grasp at the sovereignty, and usurp the throne of the Most High God, and would have the disposal of things in our hands; yea, we presume to summon God to our bar to give account of his administration, when we take upon us to quarrel any of his dispensations. Alas, we little remember the woe that is pronounced against so doing, Is. lxv. 9. "Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker: shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, what makest thou? or thy work, he hath no hands?"

(4) We on the matter take sin's part against God; we either justify it, or extenuate its evil, and allege, by our murmurings, that God is unrighteous, to punish such small sins with such heavy afflictions.

(5) We virtually question God's power to reach us a great blow, when we enter the lists with God, and contend with our Maker: Is it not in effect to say, we know how to reduce him to our terms, or make our party good against him?

(6) We disparage his wisdom, and take upon us to be his counsellors, as if we could instruct him better in the management of affairs, and teach him what is fit to be done with his creatures. Hear what the Lord saith, Job xi. 2. "Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty, instruct him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it." Murmuring is a reproving of God, and a charging him with ill conduct, saying, in effect, with Absalom, "There is none that takes care to order men's affairs; O, that I were king of the world! then should things be better ordered than now they are." So blasphemous is the language of our impatient murmurings. Let us, therefore, be ashamed of them, and abhor ourselves in dust and ashes, for our foolishness in censuring the actions of the only wise God. Shall a poor ignorant passenger, that understands not the use of the compass, be angry that the skilful pilot will not steer the vessel according to his pleasure.

(7) We hereby slight and undervalue the riches of Divine goodness, of which we have formerly shared, and do still partake; like the foolish and peevish children, if they cannot have their will, and get something they want, do presently throw away the things which they have, saying, with unthankful Haman, "All this availeth me nothing."

Lastly, I might add, This sin hath some resemblance to hell itself; for there the damned do continually vex and torment themselves with their fretting and impatient thoughts, which cause them to break out into fearful rage and blasphemy against God.

Quest. "But how shall we prevent such discontented murmurings? for sometimes trouble is so great, we cannot bear it patiently."

Ans. God hath given you reason to bear rule over passion, and furnish you with strong arguments to prevail against discontents. Why then should you be so brutish as to dethrone reason, and suffer sense and passion to govern you? Are you not Christians, and sworn to live according to the rules of that excellent religion? Why then do you act so contrary to your profession and engagements.

Besides what I have already said, I shall add some few remedies more, for the cure of this murmuring distemper.

1. Look on thy murmurings, as worse than all thy pains and troubles whatsoever; those are but afflictions from God, but these are sins grievous and provoking unto God.

2. Remember the judgments which murmuring hath

brought down from heaven upon sinners. Miriam was smitten with a leprosy for it; Dathan and Abiram were swallowed up alive; fiery serpents, plagues, and exclusion from Canaan, were Israel's judgment for this sin, 1 Cor. x. 10. "Neither murmer ye, as some of them murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer." The arrows which murmurers shoot against heaven, do soon return upon their own heads.

3. Whatever thy sufferings are for the present, yet still believe thy case might be worse. The troubles that light upon the body, are nothing so terrible as those that light on the soul, Prov. xviii. 14. "A wounded spirit who can bear?" They are nothing to what thy innocent Saviour suffered upon the cross; yea, nothing to what some martyrs have endured for the truths of the gospel.

4. Get very low thoughts of yourself, and a deep sense of ill deservings for sin. O! should a fire-brand of hell murmur for temporal afflictions?

5. Be still examining thyself, rather than censuring God. Doth God seem to neglect thee, say, Alas, it is most just! Have I not neglected him, and given a deaf ear to his calls many a day?

6. Bear in mind that those troubles will not last; there is a great change near; either they will issue in life or death. If life, you will be ashamed you had no more patience when sick; if death, then if you belong to Christ, it will give a finishing stroke to all troubles and complaints, and heaven will make amends for all. But if you be not in Christ, whatever your afflictions be now, troubles a thousand times worse, are abiding you in another world: Death will turn thy crosses into pure unmixed curses; and then, how gladly wouldst thou return to thy former afflicted state, and purchase it at any rate, were there any possibility of such a return? you now fly out in a passion, and say you are not able to bear what you complain of; but consider, if you will not obediently bear God's rod now; you will then bear more, whether you will or not; and God will make you able to bear more, when there will never be any hopes of relief.

7. Study to give vent to thy sorrow in a way of prayer and praise. An oven stopped is the more hot within; but the breath of prayer, or praise, gives ease. If we did complain more to God, we should complain less of God. What a mercy is it, that you have still God to go to? Improve the privilege, confess unworthiness, and beg the grace of patience and submission out of Christ's full treasures. Be also praising God for mercies received; and, however bad thy case is, bless God it is not in hell; you are in the land of hope.

CHAPTER III.

CONTAINING SPECIAL DIRECTIONS TO THE CHILDREN OF GOD, WHEN UNDER SICKNESS, OR ANY OTHER AFFLICTION.

DIRECT. I.—*Let believers especially guard against faintings, or desponding under God's afflicting hand.*

THIS is an exhortation which God in a peculiar manner directs unto his children, Heb. xii. 5. "My son, despise thou not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him." There are two extremes mentioned, despising and fainting; I spoke of the first before, in Chap. II. Direct. II. It is a duty to feel our affliction, but a sin to faint under it. God's people may be said to faint under their trials, when they sink or despond, or give way to fretting or repining under them. In the preceding direction I spoke of the evil of murmuring in general; here I shall speak of believers fainting in particular.

1. I shall enquire whence their fainting under affliction doth proceed.

2. Bring some arguments and helps against this evil.

3. Answer some objections of fainting believers.

I. As to the first, whence those faintings in believers do proceed: 1. They proceed from the grievousness of their affliction, and the heaviness of their burden, which is ready to amaze and stagger their thoughts, and sink their spirits with fear and despondency. Hence did the Psalmist complain, Ps. lx. 3. "Thou hast shewed thy people hard things; thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment." And, Ps. lxix. 2. "I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me."

2. From the smallness of their spiritual strength, and particularly the weakness of their faith, Prov. xxiv. 10. "If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small." Whence was it, that Peter fainted and began to sink in the waters, but from the weakness of his faith? Mat. xiv. 30, 31. We know not our strength till it be tried. Sometimes we have such a conceit of it, that we think, like Paul, we can walk upon a sea of trouble: But, in a little, behold some surprising blast assaults our confidence; and then we faint, and cry out with him, "Help, Lord, or else we perish." Peter reckoned only upon the sea, but did not think of the boisterous wind; and he looked to his dangers, more than to the power that was to carry him through them.

3. From their impatience of delay. When deliverance is long a-coming, it is not easy to wait God's leisure, and to keep the heart from desperate conclusions, Psal. xxxi. 22. "I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes."

4. From the power of Satan's temptations, and furious assaults. When Satan is let loose in time of affliction to throw in his fiery darts, the believer is ready to faint, and say, as Ps. lxxvii. 8. "Is his mercy clean gone for ever," &c.

5. From their wearisome conflicts with a body of death, and an ill heart. These, in time of affliction, do add affliction to the afflicted.

6. From long and great desertions. When God hides his face from the believer in affliction, his soul faints under it, as in Isaiah xlix. 14. "Zion hath said, the Lord hath forsaken me, my God hath forgotten me."

7. From the consciousness of their guilt, and ill deservings before God, upon the account of old sins, abuse of mercies, and untender walking before God. Affliction doth revive old sins, as with Job, Job xiii. 26. "Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the sins of my youth." His old sins, and guilt of his youthful follies, now revived upon him, and sat close to his conscience; which occasioned his fainting under his burden.

8. Great afflictions do frequently cloud the believer's graces and evidences for heaven, and discover their corruptions; whereby they are made to sink under their trial. They see more unbelief, impatience, distrust, and enmity to God in them, than they saw before; they see more of the weakness of grace, and of their want of faith and love, than before; whereby they are sometimes tempted to raze the

foundation, and say, all their former attainments were but delusions, and their professions but hypocrisy. These things make afflictions sometimes very heavy and sinking to the people of God.

II. In the next place, for preventing and helping this evil of fainting under affliction; let believers consider,

1. These heavy trials are all needful for you. Deep waters are not more needful to carry a ship into the haven, than great afflictions are to carry the vessels of our souls into the port of bliss Strong winds and thunder are frightful, but they are necessary to purge the air. One of the sharpest calamities that ever befel Israel, was the Babylonish captivity, yet even this was in mercy to them, for the Lord saith, Jer. xxiv. 5. "I have sent them out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good." Strange! of freemen to be made prisoners, and that in a strange land among the Heathen; to be removed far from their own houses, vineyards, friends; nay, and from the temple of God and his ordinances; and yet all this for their good! Why? They were hereby effectually weaned and broke off from their darling sin of idolatry.

2. Consider that your affliction, however heavy it be, will soon have an end, Isa. lvii. 16. "For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made." The goldsmith will not let his gold lie longer in the furnace than it is purified. The wicked have a sea of wrath to drink; but, O drooping believer, take comfort; you have but a cup of affliction, which will soon be exhausted. The time is near, when all thy trials shall have an end: In heaven there is no cross, no complaint, no tears, nor sorrows for ever.

3. Faint not, O child of God; for those afflictions are the hell which thou shalt have; thou hast nothing to fear hereafter. Judas had two hells, one in time, by terror in his conscience, another after this life, which endures to eternity; but all the hell that a believer hath is the light affliction, which is but for a moment.

4. Desponding or murmuring in affliction, is evil in any, but in none is it so bad as in the children of God. It doth very ill become their covenants, their privileges, their hopes. Have they resigned and given up themselves, and all they have, to God, by a solemn covenant, and will they fret when he disposeth of them! Didst thou not say, O believer, in the day when thy heart was stung with sin, and the terrors of God made thee afraid, "O, let me have Jesus Christ for my Saviour and portion, and I will be content though I should be stricken with boils like Job, or beg my bread with Lazarus?" Now, God tries thee if thou wilt stand to thy word: O beware of retracting. Hath not that soul enough, who hath an all-sufficient God for his portion? If God be thine in covenant, that comprehends all things.

5. It doth discompose and unfit the soul for any duty. It is ill sailing in a storm, so it is ill praying when the heart is in a storm of disquiet and despondency.

6. Your fainting under affliction, and carrying as if the consolations of God were small, is enough to stumble others at religion, and make them call the truth of it in question. When they see those that profess religion, and have often declared that their rejoicing is in Christ Jesus as their portion, begin to sink and despond under outward afflictions, O, may not they be tempted to say, "Where is the truth of religion? Where are those divine supports and consolations we have often heard of?"

7. O then seek to get faith revived, and strengthened, and resolve with Job to trust in God, though he should slay you. This would be of noble use to keep the heart from sinking under pressures of affliction, as the Psalmist found it to his sweet experience, Ps. xxvii. 13. "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

III. I come to answer some objections or excuses of fainting believers, which they do commonly allege as the ground of their discouragement in their afflictions.

Object. 1. "O (saith one) my afflictions are not ordinary, they are sore pressures I lie under, and of various kinds too."

Ans. 1. O believer, God hath taken the ordering of your lot in his own hand, and he knows what is fittest for you. Should a man be left to carve out his own portion, it would soon appear he would be his own greatest enemy. We would all be for the dainties of pleasure and prosperity, which would not be for our soul's health; as children think green fruit the best diet, because they please their taste; but their parents are wiser to keep them from them.

2. God may see you have many and strong lusts to be subdued, and that you need many and sore afflictions to bring them down. Your pride and obstinacy of heart may be strong, your distempers deeply rooted, and therefore the physic must be proportioned to them; as with the Israelites, Ps. cvii. 11, 12. "Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsels of the Most High; therefore, he brought down their hearts with labour." O believer, your God and Father, that hath the mixing of your cup and portion, is a wise and skilful physician, who knows your constitution and your need, 1 Pet. i. 6. "If need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations." And, as he knows your need, so he understands your strength. 1 Cor. x. 13. "Faithful is he, that will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able."

3. God sends great and sore troubles, that you may have the more experience of God's wisdom and mercy, in your support and deliverance, Ps. lxxi. 20. "Thou which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken and bring me up again from the depths of the earth."

Object. 1. "But (saith one) my affliction is singular: there was never any in my condition."

Ans. 1. It is very ordinary for every man in great distress to reckon his case singular, because he feels best what is nearest himself, but is a stranger to what his neighbour feels.

2. This suggestion is one of Satan's devices, that he may tempt a child of God to question his father's love; but he is a liar, and not to be credited in what he saith: For others of your brethren have been afflicted in the same kind and degree, if not worse, 1 Pet. v. 9. "Knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world."

3. Whatever your case be, you must own your sufferings are not so great as your sins. The trials of God's people in Babylon were singular: Yet Ezra owns, Ezra ix. 13. "Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve." If our provoked Judge shall, in his clemency, send us to Babylon instead of hell, we have no cause to complain.

4. But, O child of God, however thou complainest of the singularity of affliction now, all such complaints will be taken out of thy mouth ere long, and the time is near, when thou shalt be made to wonder at the wisdom of God,

in guiding so many sons and daughters to glory, through such a variety of trials, exercises, afflictions, and temptations; and made to say as those in Mark vii. 37. "He hath done all things well."

Object. III. "But (saith one) my affliction is long continued, and I see no outgate: and, how can I but faint under it?"

Ans. 1. It is not so long as your sins deserve: for in justice it might be for ever; it might be the worm that never dieth, and the fire that is never quenched.

2. Your sufferings on earth are not so long as your reward in heaven, Rom. viii. 18. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

3. No length or continuance of affliction here should hinder a believer's comfort. If we take a view of our head and pattern Jesus Christ, how long did his afflictions continue? No end was put to them, till he cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. Though he was the Son of God, yet, from the hour of his birth to the moment of his death, from his manger to his cross, his affliction still increased, and he ended his days in the midst of them. Now, Christ is the head of the church, and your great representative, O believers, into a conformity with whom you are predestinated; be content, then, to be like your head and pattern, to have no ease or rest from afflictions, till you lie down in the grave; it is "there the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest," Job iii. 17.

4. Remember that your afflictions are a part of Christ's cross, which your loving Redeemer hath contrived for your good, and hath appointed you to take up and bear with him. Now, love to Christ should keep you from wearying to bear off a part of Christ's cross, especially when he himself bears the heaviest end of it; nay, bears you and your cross both. It is said of Jacob, Gen. xxix. 20. that "he served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days, for the love he had for her." And shall not we endure a few years affliction for our Lord Jesus Christ, who lived a life of sorrows, and died a cursed death, for our sakes? Had we more love to Christ, his cross would not be so tedious to us.

5. Should it not be good news to thee, then there is a deliverance for thee at death from all thy troubles, and that this time is hastening, and very near; be not anxious for an outgate here in time, for that savours too much of unbelief and love to the world. Doth it not seem to say, that you would be better content to be turned back again to the stormy tumultuous seas of this world, than to be safely and speedily landed at your rest above? That you would be more happy in a few temporal mercies on earth, than to enter upon your eternal inheritance with Christ?

Object. IV. "No wonder (saith one) that I faint under my affliction, for I want those consolations and supports which God used to reserve for afflicted saints."

Ans. 1. If God be presently chastising you for your sins, you must be content to feel the bitterness of sin, before you taste the sweetness of God's consolations.

2. Can you say that your afflictions have duly humbled you, and fitted you for comfort! Have they yet brought you to a willingness to quit and renounce all your beloved sins, and even to part with all your earthly enjoyments and comforts at God's call, and to be content with God in Christ alone, for your happiness and portion? If this be not done, your afflictions have not had their due effect, to prepare you for comfort, and, till then, you cannot expect it. You are in the hands of a wise and skilful physician, who will not too hastily heal and bind up your sores, so as to let them spoil and fester at the bottom.

3. Though you have no sensible consolations from God in your present trials, yet, you must still labour to keep in the way of duty, and live by faith on his promises. Believe firmly, that God is good to them that love him, and that there is forgiveness with him to the penitent sinner. And if all the stars withdraw their light whilst thou art in God's way, then assure yourself the sun is near the rising.

Object. V. "But my affliction is such, that it disables me from duty, and makes me useless and unprofitable; and this makes me faint under my burden."

Ans. 1. God sends afflictions, never to unfit, but to quicken you for the performance of duty; to make you repent more thoroughly, pray more fervently, flee to Christ more earnestly, and mind heaven more intensely.

2. If it be your duty to others that your affliction incapacitates you for, then remember, if God in his providence disable you for that, it is no longer a duty incumbent on you; and you must not grudge if God take you off, and put others in your room. God is a free and sovereign agent, and will be tied to no mean or instrument whatsoever, for carrying on his work.

DIRECT. II.—*Let the Children of God be exemplary in Patience and Submission to God under their Afflictions.*

I TREATED of patience, and gave some motives and helps to it, to all afflicted persons in general, Chap. II. Direct. V. But here I shall bring some special arguments to Christian patience and submission, proper for believers. You that God hath done so much for beyond others, ought to shine in this grace of patience, and be examples to others for it, when God chastens you, though with very sore affliction.

1. Study patience under affliction; for it is the common path and beaten road to heaven, that all the saints have trod, who have gone thither before you. Behold the print of the foot-steps of all the cloud of witnesses in this road; and would you be singular, and chuse a way of your own? When God solemnly renewed his covenant with Abraham, and he had prepared the sacrifice, whereby it was to be ratified and confirmed, God made a smoaking furnace to pass between the pieces of the sacrifice, Gen. xv. 17. to let him know that there was a furnace of affliction attending the covenant of grace and peace, and all that enter thereinto. God has appointed that all the stones of the spiritual and heavenly building shall be hewed and polished by affliction here; and we are not to think that God's ordinary way will be changed for us. We must not think to walk on roses, when so many worthies have marched through briers and thorns to heaven.

2. Consider that the greatest afflictions you meet with, are consistent with the love of God; nay, spring from his love to you. Every sanctified rod is a gift and royal donation sent by the hand of God to you, Phil. i. 29. "To you it is given, in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." Now surely, if we look on the cross as a gift and honour, an advantage and blessing, we would bear it patiently, Ps. xciv. 12. "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord." O believer,

thy temporal cross comes from the same love that thy eternal crown comes from, according to Rev. iii. 19, 21. Men will not take pains to correct stubborn servants, but will turn them out of doors; but love constrains them to chastise their sons. God out of hatred lets many a sinner go unpunished in this world; for, why should he prune or dress the tree which he intends for the fire? The malefactor escapes scourging that is condemned to the gallows. Job. xxi. 30. "The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction, they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath." But it is far otherwise with the children of God. That is a strange word which Job hath, Job vii. 17, 18. "What is man that thou shouldst magnify him? and that thou shouldst set thine heart upon him? and that thou shouldst visit him every morning, and try him every moment?" Now, if we compare this place with others in the context, we will see how he acknowledgeth that the most overwhelming distress proceeds from the love and care of God, yea, from his fixing his heart on him, to magnify him, and do him good: and that for this end he doth chasten him every morning, and try him every moment! And that with such afflictions as for the present are so far from being joyous, as that they give the soul no rest, but make the man weary of his life; as he expresseth what effects his affliction had on himself. Yea, it may be observed, in the providence of God from the foundation of the world, that those who have had most afflictions, have had most grace, and the most eminent testimonies of acceptance with God. Jesus Christ the Son of God, had the most affliction of any; and yet the Father always loved him, and was well pleased with him.

3. Consider the bright examples of patience which God sets before you in his word. Besides that of his dear Son the Lord Jesus Christ, of which I spoke before, consider the patience of Job, when he was stript of all his earthly comforts, and laid under the greatest afflictions, yet he calmly falls down and worships God, Job i. 12. and said, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." Consider the patience of David, when he was driven from his throne, from his house, and from God's sanctuary, and all this by his own son; yet, how submissive is he to God? 2 Sam. xv. 26. "Behold here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good to him." And when Shimei cursed him and threw stones at him, he patiently bore it, and would suffer no harm to be done him for it, saying, as 2 Sam. xvi. 11. "Let him alone; and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him." Consider the patience of holy Eli, when, though he heard such news as like a sudden clap of thunder made the ears of such as heard it to tingle, and their hearts to tremble, yet he calmly and quietly submitted to it, 1 Sam. iii. 18. "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." He doth not fly in God's face in a passion, but falls down at his feet in a humble submission. Observe, also, the wonderful patience of Aaron, when God afflicted him very sore, he is silent and submissive under the Lord's hand, Lev. x. 3. "And Aaron held his peace." If we consider the greatness of the punishment, we will see the more cause to commend the greatness of his patience. 1. Aaron lost his children; not his estate or worldly substance, but his children; these are a part of a man's bowels; other earthly losses are not comparable to this: therefore it was that Satan, that cunning enemy, reserved the loss of Job's children to the last onset, as his great master-piece and sharpest attack. How sadly did Rachel lament and weep for her children! Mat. ii. 18. Yet Aaron held his peace. 2. Aaron lost his two sons at once; how pathetically did David bewail the loss of one son! 2 Sam. xviii. 33. "O my son Absalom, my son, my son, &c. yet Aaron lost both his sons together, and saith not one word; he held his peace. 3. Aaron lost them by a sudden death, of which he had no warning; sickness usually prepares men for the stroke that is coming by death; but Aaron met with a surprising blow, yet he held his peace. 4. Aaron's sons were not taken away by an ordinary stroke of God's hand, but by an extraordinary supernatural rod; for it is said, "there went out a fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord," Lev. x. 2. He lost them in such a manner as might speak forth God's anger; now, a religious father had rather lose all his children in the favour of God, than one child in his anger; yet, whatever were the bitter ingredients of his cup, Aaron was not impatient against God that mixed it for him, but held his peace, because God did it.

4. To engage you to patience under your trials, do but compare your case with that of others. Do not say, there are none afflicted as you are; for there are many far deeper plunged in the waters of Mara than you are; some are still upon the rack, and spend their whole days and years in continual fighting and struggling; as in Ps. xxxi. 10. "My life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing." Have you sore distress in your bodies? others have grievous wounds in their souls. Do you hear the wrath of man? others hear the wrath of God. You have but one single trial, others have many twisted together. Some are stript of all comforts, you have comforts still remaining. You have many sad things in your trial, but you have not ground as yet to complain as the Psalmist doth, Psal. xlii. 7. "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." Take a view of what the Son of God, what the apostles, and what the martyrs, and other worthies have endured. They had trial of cruel mockings, scourgings, bonds, and imprisonments; they wandered in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. They were tempted, they were crucified, stoned to death, sawn asunder, slain with the sword, &c. And yet, how well did they take with the cross? Saith Paul, "We glory in tribulation," Rom. v. 3. And what saith James, Jam. i. 2. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." As if he had said, "Rejoice aye more and more that you are afflicted; God is magnifying you, he is visiting you, doing you good, taking the more pains on you, and fitting you for glory."

5. The consideration of God's former mercies and kindnesses to you should engage you to patience in trouble, and make you blush to take any thing ill out of God's hand. Thus Job taught his impatient wife, Job ii. 10. "What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" O believer, let not thy affliction cause thee to bury thy mercies in oblivion. Has not God brought thee from Satan's family, and put you among his children: and will you forget or undervalue that honour? Hath he struck off thy fetters, taken off thy prison garments, and set you at liberty; and will you be unthankful? Hath he given thee Christ for thy treasure and portion, and entitled you to his unsearchable riches; and will

you be discontented? Hath he given you the graces of his Spirit, which are more precious than rubies, and will you quarrel when he smites in some outward things? Hath he made you an heir of glory, and provided eternal mansions above for you; and will you be fretful for want of some trifles here? The view Moses had of the recompence of reward in heaven, caused him to chuse to suffer affliction with the people of God.

6. The time of affliction is usually God's gracious tryst. ing season with his people, the time of their rarest comforts and sweetest foretastes of heaven, according to 2 Cor. i. 5. Paul and Silas did never sing more joyfully than when they were laid in the inner prison, with their backs torn with scourges, and their feet fast in the stocks, Acts xvi. 24. And when was it that Jacob saw the angels of God ascending and descending upon the ladder that reached between heaven and earth, but at the time when he was in a destitute case, forced to lie in the open field, having no canopy but the heavens, and no pillow but a stone? When was it that the three children saw Christ in the likeness of the Son of man walking with them, but when they were in the furnace, and that when it was hotter than ordinary? When was it that Ezekiel had a vision of God, but when sitting solitarily by the river Chebar in the land of his captivity? When was it that John got a glorious vision of Christ, but when he was an exile in the isle of Patmos? And, when was it that Stephen saw the heavens opened, and Christ standing at the right hand of God pleading for him; but when they were stoning and bruising him to death? So that the most remarkable experiences of God's kindness, that believers get in this world, have been trysted to the time of affliction: The consideration whereof should move every Christian to wait on the Lord, and bear his cross with patience.

7. When you are helped to Christian patience and submission under God's hand, it doth contribute much to the credit of religion, and to the conviction of the world, that there is a certain reality in the truths of the gospel, and a great efficacy in the grace of God which bears you up, and carries you through beyond the strength of nature.

8. O believer, bear up with patience under the cross, for thou hast not long to bear it God's wrath on the church abideth but for a moment, yea, a little moment, Isa. xxvi. 20. "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut up thy doors about thee, hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." Surely a moment, a little moment, which is the smallest part of time, will soon be over; and wilt thou not have patience for a moment? The Psalmist supported himself with this consideration, Ps. ciii. 9. "He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever." The time of indignation will soon be overpast, and the time of consolation will succeed. O believer, the end of all thy trials is near; think on it, and look for it. Is it bodily pain or sickness that is thy affliction! Then consider, the end of it will be either life or death: If death, then what thou sufferest is the last brunt, bear it patiently: Those enemies you now see, you will see them again no more. In the mansions above, there is no pain nor crying: The inhabitants there shall never say they are sick; and one hour with them will make thee forget all thy momentary afflictions. If the issue shall be life, you will be ashamed, when well, that you had not more patience whilst sick.

I shall close this direction with the words of the apostle James, Jam. v. 10, 11. "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

DIRECT. III.—*Let believers be much employed in the praises of God, while they are under Affliction by Sickness, or otherwise.*

AS we should bless the Lord at all times, and keep up good thoughts of God on every occasion; so especially in the time of affliction. Hence we are commanded to glorify the Lord in the fire, Isa. xxiv. 15. And this the three children did in the hottest furnace. So Job blessed God when he had taken away his greatest comforts, Job i. 21. And this is agreeable to that command, 1 Thess. v. 18. "In every thing give thanks." I grant, indeed, we cannot give thanks for afflictions as affliction, but either as it is the means of some good to us, or as the gracious hand of God is some way remarkable therein towards us. In this respect, there is no condition on this side of hell, but we have cause to praise God in, even in the greatest calamities. Hence it was that David, when he speaks of his affliction, Ps. cxix. 67. adds presently, "Thou art good, and dost good." And he declares, ver. 65. "Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord, according unto thy word." Hence Paul and Silas praised God when they were scourged and imprisoned.

Well, then, O believer, obey the command of thy God, and imitate his worthies, by praising God under thy affliction. 1. This practice would be very pleasant and acceptable to God; for as music is sweetest on the waters, so praise is most agreeable to God from an afflicted soul on the waters of trouble. It is a sign of a noble and generous spirit, to sing the praises of God's goodness while his hand is afflicting us. Distress and danger will make the wickedest to pray; but it is a principle of love and gratitude that makes thy soul to praise. 2. It would bring credit to religion, to see saints thankful and praising God under the cross: It would make people say, surely they find sweetness in God and his ways, that we see not; they have meat to eat the world knows not of. And this would invite strangers to come and try a religious life. The joyful praises of the martyrs at the stake, and in the flames, made people go home with love to religion in their hearts. 3. If the issue of your affliction should be death, this employment of praise would be a sweet preparative to fit and dispose you for the work of heaven. Use yourselves much to this heavenly life, and be often trying to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb in time of sickness and trouble; and this would sweeten the thoughts of death, and make you incline to be there, where praise is their constant employment.

Quest. "What should be the subject of a believer's thanksgiving and praise under affliction?"

Ans. He hath manifold grounds of praise; as, 1. Upon the account of God's mercies to him through the by-past part of his life. His mercies to thee, O believer, cannot be numbered; compare thy mercies with thy crosses, and thou wilt soon see thy receivings are far greater than thy sufferings. Thou hast had many days of plenty for one day

of scarcity, many days of liberty for one day of straits, many days of health for one day of sickness. And are not these to be remembered with praise.

2. And, more particularly, in the greatest affliction, thou hast ground to praise God, O believer, that thou wast born in a land of light, where thou hadst the means of conversion to God, and acquaintance with Jesus Christ; and especially, that God of his free grace made these means effectual to work a saving grace in you, when others are past by. Is not this matter of praise, that he opened your eyes, humbled your soul, and renewed your heart; that he gave you Christ, forgave your sins, and adopted you into his family, and made you an heir of heaven? Oh, what a sad case would it be, if you were yet in your sins, and in the bondage of Satan? If you had conversion-work to begin to, if you had your faith and justification, and interest in Christ, all to seek, and all your preparation for heaven to make: if you had all this to do with a sick and pained body, and a disordered mind, that cannot command one settled thought, with the terrible views of death and eternity before your eyes! This is the case that God in justice might have left you to. Well, then, ought you not to praise God, that sent his Holy Spirit in time to determine your hearts to close with Christ, and be reconciled to that God you are shortly to appear before; and that those sins, which now would have been your terror, are all forgiven and washed away through the blood of Jesus Christ?

3. Is it not matter of praise, in thy greatest trouble, that thou hast a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, to provide a mansion with the Father for thee, and to receive thy soul when separated from the body; "that, where he is, there you may be also?"

4. You have cause to bless God, that he sends such suitable harbingers, as sickness and trouble, to tell you that death is approaching; and that he should take such pains on you, to wean you from the world, and make you willing to be gone. Many of God's people, that have been averse to dying at the beginning of a sickness, by the increase and continuance of it, have been brought to be well satisfied to depart, that they may be with Christ.

5. You have ground to bless God for timeing your afflictions so well, that he sent them not till he saw you stood in need of them; he saw a need before them, as 1 Pet. i. 6. and he would not let you want what was needful.

6. You ought to praise God, that he mitigates your trials, and proportions your burdens for your back; that when he takes a rod to you, he hath not made it a scorpion; that when he deprived you of one comfort and enjoyment, he did not strip you of all, and leave you wholly comfortless; that when you suffer in one thing, he hath not made you to suffer in every thing, in soul, body, estate, relations, and all together; that, instead of afflicting you for a few days, he hath not made your whole life a scene of misery and affliction. Bless God that he punisheth you less, unspeakably less, than your iniquities deserve; that your sick-bed is not hell, your fever is not everlasting burnings, your pain is not the gnawing of the worm that never dieth.

7. You have cause to praise God that you affliction is not so great as that of some others, and even of some that were very dear to God, and had not grieved him so much as you have done. Remember the trials that some have endured, of whom the world was not worthy, which I mentioned before as recorded, Heb. xi. Your's are nothing to their's, nothing to Job's, that eminent servant of God. Observe the difference with thanksgiving and praise.

8. You have reason to bless God for the strength and support he hath given you under affliction. You would soon sink and succumb under a small burden, if he did not support you by his grace: but when he bears you up, the heaviest trial shall not sink you. Have you not met with some afflictions, you have thought at a distance you would never have been able to bear up under them? yet, when they have come, you have found them light and portable, by reason of the strength God hath bestowed upon you.

9. You have ground of thanksgiving, that the mercies and blessings which God hath continued with you, are far greater than these he hath taken from you; for though he hath taken this and that temporal blessing from you, yet he hath not taken Christ from you, nor his Holy Spirit from you; he hath not separated you from his love, nor cut you off from all the hopes of heaven. However great your trials be, yet still there is a mixture of mercy in your lot, which should be matter of praise.

10. You have cause, O believer, to bless God, that all the afflictions he brings on you are in love, and for your profit. All his ways are mercy and truth to you. If he smile, it is in mercy; and if he smite, it is in mercy. God may change his dispensation towards his children, but never his disposition: his heart is still towards them, and the cords wherewith he scourgeth them are cords of love. Their profit is the great thing he aims at, in all their chastisements, Heb. xii. 10. He designs thereby to reclaim them from their wanderings, cut off provisions for their lusts, make them pant and long for a better state, and cause them mend their pace towards it. Hence David said, "It is good for me that I was afflicted: for before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I have learned to keep thy word." Ps. cxix. 67. 71. From all which it appears you have manifold ground of praise, even in the time of affliction.

DIRECT. IV.—*Let the children of God, when visited with sickness, set about actual preparation for death and eternity.*

EVERY believer hath his main work done, and is always in a gracious state, by reason of his union with Jesus Christ, his reconciliation with God through the merits of his blood, and the universal change that is wrought in him by regenerating and sanctifying grace; upon which account, every child of God hath habitual preparation for meeting with death. Yet, because frequently, when sickness cometh, there are many things out of order with them, that make death frightful and undesirable, they must set about actual preparation for death, and seek to have their souls made ready for the bridegroom's coming. And here I shall shew wherein this actual readiness of believers doth consist, which should be their proper work and exercise in time of sickness, especially when sickness is lingering, and doth not destroy the use of reason. But beware of thinking that this should be delayed till sickness come: No, no, the time of health is the main working season, and all should be then put by hand as far as possible. But seeing even the best generally find much to do at the very last, I shall give the following advices for your actual preparation:

1. Seeing sickness is a means appointed of God for his people's good, and particularly for fitting them for a better world, labour earnestly to reap the benefit of sickness, seek God's blessing upon it, that thereby you may be helped to discover more of the evil of sin; that you may hate and abhor it the more; and that you may see more effectually the vanity and vexation of the world; and get your heart loosed from all the things of time, and brought to a willingness to be dissolved that you may be with Christ.

2. Seeing a time of death and sickness is the time of your greatest need, beg earnestly of God, for your Redeemer's sake, such special assistance, influences, and operations of his holy Spirit, as he knows needful for you in your present low and weak condition, in order to carry on and complete your actual readiness for meeting with himself at death, and entering into the invisible world, and being fixed unalterably in your everlasting state.

3. Renew the exercise of repentance, and of faith in the blood of Christ, for removing all grounds of quarrel and controversy between God and your soul. And, in order thereto, review your bypast life, and look into your heart also, and search out every predominant sin and idol of jealousy; for if there be any iniquity regarded in your heart, and unrepented of by you, it may occasion no little anguish and bitterness of spirit in a dying hour. Well, when thou hast discovered sin, humbly confess and bewail it before the Lord, and ask forgiveness for it through the blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God, which cleanseth from all sin. Yea, make confession of all thy sins, and particularly reflect upon the fountain and spring of them, viz. thy original sin. Know the plague of thy own heart, and mourn over it, mourn for the loss and mis-spending, of such precious time. Mourn for the unprofitableness of thy life. Now, when the ax is laid to the root of the tree, by sickness, it is high time to mourn for your unfruitfulness under the means of grace and waterings of the holy Spirit. Mourn for your sinning against such light and love as have been many days displayed to you in the glorious gospel. And, in a special manner, mourn for your sins of omission, which commonly are but little minded by us. Thus mourn for all thy sins, till thou dost water thy couch with thy tears. It is most suitable that death should find every man, even every child of God, in the exercise of mourning and repentance; for they that thus sow in tears, shall eternally reap in joy. But see that your tears run much in the gospel-channel, and flow from the believing views of a crucified Christ, whom you have pierced in your sins. And, in the midst of your mourning, be still aiming to take faith's grips of the clefts of the rock, for sheltering thy soul from the guilt of past sins: say, "Lord Jesus, I have no refuge but thy wounds, no fountain but thy blood, no covert but thy righteousness. And seeing thou freely makest offer of thy merits for my protection, and invitest even the chief of sinners to come unto thee, saying, Look unto me, be ye saved: Lord, I embrace the offer, and flee to thee to cover me." O believer, do this, not once or twice, but do it a hundred times over; do it as often as thou hast breath to draw in the world. Be still breathing to the very last after a crucified Jesus, for relief against the guilt of sin, which thou art always contracting, and will be, till the earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved.

4. In order to your actual readiness to go forth to meet the bridegroom, when coming to you by death, you must do as the wise virgins, Mat. xxv. 7. "Arise and trim your lamps." As it is not enough to have a fair lamp of profession, so it is not sufficient to have only the oil of grace in the lamp; nay, or to have it burning in some degree. There is more requisite at this time, that the soul may be actually ready; the lamp must be trimmed, which imports, 1. A supplying it with more oil; you must seek to have your grace increased, to have new degrees, new strength, and new supplies of grace given from God, to fit you for the last conflict with your spiritual enemies, and especially the last enemy, death. 2. It imports a stirring up of the oil, raising the wick some higher: so there must be an excitation of grace, which may be in a low declining condition: you must endeavour to stir and raise it up to a more lively exercise, and more elevated acts. Stir up the gift that is in thee; make the oil burn clear and shine bright. Bring faith, love, repentance, and holy desires, to a lively exercise. 3. This trimming imports the cleansing of the lamp, by taking away the dead ashes that hinder the light, or prevent its burning so clearly as otherwise it would. So you must labour to take away the dead ashes of corruption, that hinder the shining of grace; remove all unbelief, earthliness, deadness, self, and formality, and whatever else doth suppress the exercise of faith, love, and heavenly-mindedness: let all these dead ashes be snuffed away by repentance and mortification. As you ought to strive earnestly against all those heart-evils in the time of health, so now labour to give them a dead-stroke when death's harbinger gives you a summons.

5. Be diligent in gathering and summoning up all your evidences for heaven and eternal life, that so you may not venture into the dark valley at an uncertainty. The comfort of dying will much depend on the clearness of your evidences; it is therefore your wisdom to examine them carefully, and see if you can say, "I know in whom I have believed; I have consented with my soul to the method of salvation laid down in the covenant of grace. I am desirous that the glory of it should be eternally ascribed to the free grace of God, and the creature be wholly abased in his sight. I have chosen God for my portion, and Christ for my only Saviour; and the happiness which I aim at is, to enjoy God in Christ for ever. And, in order thereto, I depend on the Holy Spirit to apply the redemption which Jesus Christ hath purchased to me, and to sanctify me perfectly. There is no sin but what I hate and desire to part with. I would rather have more holiness, than to have health, wealth, and all the pleasures in the world. I earnestly desire the flourishing of Christ's kingdom, and prefer Jerusalem to my chiefest joy." If these your evidences be clear, you may cheerfully take death by the cold hand, and welcome its grim messengers, and long to be gone that you may be with Christ. You may say, as Psalm xxiii. 4. "When I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me." You may go off the stage with the Psalmist's words in your mouth, Psal. xxxi. 5. "Into thine hand I commit my spirit, for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth."

6. Labour earnestly to overcome the love of life and fears of death, so as to be content to part with all things here at God's call. O believer, what is there in this earth to tempt thee to hang back, when God calls thee to depart? while you are here, you may lay your account with many losses, crosses, disappointments, griefs, and calamities, of all sorts. Friends will fail you, enemies will hate you,

lusts will molest you, Satan will tempt you, the world will deceive you. Death is the way that the dearest of God's saints, and all the cloud of witnesses, have gone before you; yea, the Lord Jesus your Head hath trod this path, and hath taken the sting out of death, and hath paved a way through its dark valley, that his people may safely follow him. Hath the Captain of your salvation gone before you, and will any of his soldiers shrink to follow him? Are you content to remain always at the same distance from him, and to enjoy no more of his presence than now you have? Are you satisfied to live for ever with no more knowledge of God, no more love to Christ, no more holiness or heavenly mindedness than at present you have? Do you not groan under your remaining ignorance, deadness, wanderings, pride, passion, unbelief, selfishness, worldliness, and other sins and lusts that here beset you? And are you not desirous to go to the place where you will be eternally free from them all, and where you never complain of a dull, dead, or senseless frame of heart, or of any heart weariness, or wandering in duty any more; for the heart shall then be as a fixed pillar in the temple of God, and shall go no more out; the eternal adoration and praises of God shall be the soul's delight and element for ever. By such considerations, strive to conquer the fears of death and desires of life, which are often great clogs to the people of God in their preparation for removing.

7. Be often meditating upon the heavenly glory which shortly all believers will see and enjoy. Be much in the contemplation of the glorious company above; behold Christ upon his glorious throne at the right hand of God, and Abraham, David, Peter, Paul, and all the rest of the faithful ones, with their crowns of righteousness, triumphing about their Redeemer.—Think, O believer, how happy will that day be, when thou shalt meet with thy father and thy brethren, and when thou shalt see thy elder brother on the throne, ready to pass sentence in thy favours. What melody will that sentence sound in thine ears, "Come, ye blessed of my father!" What frame wilt thou be in, when he sets the crown of glory on thy head? "O eternally free love!" wilt thou cry, "O Saviour, thou didst wear a crown of thorns, that I might wear a crown of glory: thou didst groan on the cross, that I might now sing. Wonderful free love, that chused me, when thousands were past by; that saved me from ruin, when my companions in sin must burn in hell for ever!" Think, how ravishing it will be to meet with your godly acquaintances in heaven, with whom you prayed, and praised, and conversed here! Will you not then cry out, "O my brethren, what a change is here! this glorious place is not like the poor dwellings we had on earth; this body, this soul, this state, this place, our clothes, our company, our language, our thoughts, are far unlike those we had then! the bad hearts, the body of death, the corruptions and temptations we then complained of, are all now gone. We have no more fears of death or hell, no more use for repentance or prayer, faith or hope; these are now swallowed up in immediate vision, eternal love, joy, and praise." And for thy help, O believer, in meditating on these things, read some parts of the book of Revelation, or cause them to be read to you; and suppose with yourself, you had been a companion with John in the Isle of Patmos, and had got such a view of the glorious majesty, the bright thrones, the heavenly hosts, the shining splendour which he saw, the saints in their white robes, with crowns on their heads, and palms in their hands, and heard them singing the song of Moses and the Lamb, and trumping forth their eternal Hallelujahs; what a heavenly rapture wouldst thou have been in! Well then, O believer, thou shalt shortly have clearer and more sweet sights than all those which John, or any of the saints, ever saw here upon earth. Surely that heavenly glory is a subject worthy of thy thoughts, and most suitable for thee to meditate on in time of sickness, and when in the view of death.

8. It would also be very suitable at this time, in order to your actual readiness for death, to be frequently looking out and longing for Christ's coming: as Abraham stood in his tent door ready to go forth to meet the angels that were sent unto him, so should the believer keep himself in a waiting posture at this time. He should be like the loving wife, that longs and looks for the coming of her absent husband, according to his letters to her; by this time (thinks she) he will be at such a place, and against such a time he will be at another place, and so in a few days I will see him. It is the character of believers, they are such as love his appearing, 2 Tim. iv. 8. They desire his coming, Cant. viii. 14. "Make haste, my beloved; even so come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Believers should look upon themselves as pilgrims here, wandering in a wilderness absent from home, and at a distance from their father's house; and, in time of affliction, it is very proper for them to be crying, as David doth, Psalms lv. 6. "O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest: I would hasten my escape from the windy tempest." "O when shall the time of my pilgrimage, and the days of my banishment be finished, that I may get home to my country and friends above? Oh! my Lord is gone, my Saviour hath left the earth, and entered into his glory: My friends and brethren are gone to their blessed rest, where they see God's face, and sing his praise for ever: and how can I be willing to stay behind, when they are gone? Must I be sinning here, when they are serving God above? Must I be groaning and sighing, when they are triumphing and dividing the spoil? Surely I will look after them, and cry, O Lord, how long? When shall I be with my Saviour and my God."

DIRECT. V.—*Let Believers, in time of sickness, endeavour all they can to glorify God, and edify those that are about them, by their speech and behaviour.*

IF ever a child of God be active to promote the honour and glory of God, it should be in the time of sickness, and when death may be approaching. And there is good reason for it; for 1. This may be the last opportunity that ever thou shalt have to do any thing for God, and therefore thou shouldst study to improve it to the utmost. Heaven, to which thou art going, is the place where thou shalt receive thy reward; but thou canst have no access there to advance God's glory, by commending God and Christ, and religion, to sinners, or weak believers. Upon this account, many of God's children have been content to suspend their heavenly happiness for a while, and to stay upon the earth for some longer time. I have read of a certain martyr, when going to suffer, who expressed some sorrow that he was going thither, where he should do his God no more service, to wit, in the sense above explained. And of another, that saith, "If it were possible there could be a place for any grief in heaven, it would arise from the

Christian's considering that he did so little for God while he was upon earth. Now is the working season, O believer, be busy while it lasts, according to the example of thy blessed Saviour, John ix. 4. "I must work the work of him that sent me while it is day; for the night cometh wherein no man can work." This consideration should make thee move thyself with the greatest activity, like Samson before his death, who, when he could have no more opportunity to serve God and his church, he cried to God and said, Judges xvi. 28. "O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me this once." And then he bowed himself with all his might, to pull down the pillars of Dagon's temple, being willing to sacrifice his life to the ruin thereof.

2. The holy speech and carriage of dying believers may, through the blessing of God, make deep impression upon the hearts of unregenerate men that are witnesses to them. Those who have derided the people of God for the strictness of their lives, and despised their counsels and reproofs, as proceeding from humour or preciseness; yet have begun to notice their words and actions, when they have seen them on sick-beds, and on the borders of eternity, and to have other thoughts of religion and holiness than formerly they had. Now they think the man is in good earnest, and speaketh the thoughts of his heart; and if ever he can be believed, it must be now. It is most convincing to carnal persons, to see believers bearing up with patience under their sickness;—to hear them speaking good of God,—commending his ways,—and rejoicing in God as their portion, in midst of their sharpest pains:—to see them behaving as those that are going to dwell with Christ, smiling and praising God, when friends are sighing and weeping about them. This inclines them to think, surely there must be a reality in religion, there is a visible difference between the death of the righteous and of the wicked. Hence a wicked Balaam wishes to die the death of the righteous, and to have his last end like his. It left a conviction upon that young man's conscience, who said to his loose companion, after they had visited godly Ambrose on his death-bed, and saw how cheerful he was, and triumphing over approaching death, "O that I might live with thee, and die with Ambrose!" Nay, such sights might draw them not only to desire to die the death of the righteous, but also to resolve to live their lives. If carnal men saw believers going off the stage with such confidence and joy, as becomes those that are entering into eternal rest with Christ, and those that are going out of an howling wilderness to a glorious Canaan; it might be a powerful invitation to them to go and seek after the same felicity.

3. This likewise would be very edifying and confirming to all that fear God. How much would it contribute to establish them in the practice of holiness, and to quicken them in their diligence in serving and glorifying of God in the days of their health, to hear a dying believer say, "Of all the time which I have lived, I have no comfort now in reflecting upon one hour but what I spent in the service of God. Were I to begin my life, I would redeem time more carefully than ever. One hour in communion with God is far sweeter than many years spent in worldly pleasures. Come here, then, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul. O taste and see that God is good!"

4. Consider the examples of God's children in former ages, how useful and edifying their words have been at such a time, to all round about them. But this head I intend to insist fully upon afterwards.

Quest. "But how shall I behave so as I may glorify God and edify others, when I am sick or dying? I would have some particular directions for it."

Ans. 1. You may do this by your patience under pain, and submission to God's will, with respect to the event, whether life or death. It is stumbling to others, to see believers fretful in trouble, and unwilling to leave the world, when God calls them. But it is most convincing and confirming, to see them frankly resigning themselves to God's disposal, saying, "Let God himself choose for me; he is wise, and knoweth best what is needful and most proper for me: I have no will, but God's will." For any man to desire to live when God calls him to die, or to desire to die when God calls him to live, is equally a sign of cowardice: for he that desires to live is afraid to look death in the face; and he that desires to die, would flee from some calamity, and take shelter in death. But he is the most valiant man that can die willingly when God would have him die, and live as willingly when God would have him live; this is true Christian valour.

2. By pious exhortations and warnings to those that are about you. It may be the last occasion you may have of glorifying God this way: O do not lose the season which may be usefully improven for the good of souls. For thus a believer may bring more honour to God, and more advantage to precious souls, by his sickness and death, than ever he did by all his health and life in the world; for their speeches have more weight with people at such a time, than at any other. Hence the patriarchs, knowing the prevalency of such words, do urge Joseph with Jacob's dying charge, Gen. l. 16, 17. "And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, thy father did command before he died, saying, so shall ye say unto Joseph, forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren," &c. And as we ought to be ready to give good counsel to all when we lie on sick-beds, so especially we should be concerned for children and near relations: they are more affected than others with our sickness, and so will they be with our sayings; our admonitions may do them good, when we are rotting in the dust.

Quest. "What ought to be the subject of our discourses and exhortations to others at such a time?"

Ans. 1. It is very proper to be much in commending the master you have served, and the excellency of his service, to those that are about you. Tell them of the equity and goodness of those laws which you have obeyed, and of the bounty and faithfulness of that Lord whom you have worshiped, loved, and praised; and of the greatness and eternity of that reward you are going to possess. Let the children of God extol their Father, and his care of them, and kindness to them. Let the ransomed of the Lord magnify their Redeemer, and his wonderful love and sufferings for them. Tell others what sweetness and satisfaction you have found in your own experience in attending God's ordinances, and in secret duties; what comfort you have found in Christ, and the promises of his covenant. And thus let your last breath be spent in exalting and commending Christ and his religion to others.

2. Be warning others of the vanity of this world, and of all its wealth and pleasures. Tell them that they may see, by your case, that these things which people are bewitched

with in the day of their health, can signify nothing to a sick or dying man; they cannot ease us in our pains, they can afford no peace to a troubled soul, they cannot lengthen our lives one hour, and far less can they save from the wrath of an angry God, "Oh," may you say, "what a miserable case had I been in at this time, if I had had no better portion than this world, and nothing else to look to but its riches and pleasures! Wherefore, sirs, set not your hearts upon it, but forsake it before you be forsaken by it, and make choice of that which will be supporting to you in the evil day."

3. Be warning them of the evil of sin, and what mischief and deceitfulness you have found in it. Tell them, that though the devil and the flesh would tempt you to look on sin as a harmless thing, yet the pleasure will soon be gone, and a sharp sting will be left behind. Sin will appear no light matter, when the soul is going hence into the awful presence of an holy God. You would give a thousand worlds then for Christ, and the blood of atonement to answer for your sins.

4. Tell them of the great difference between the godly and the wicked man's choice. The godly man chuseth the better part that cannot be taken from him; he lays up his treasure in heaven where none can reach it, so that it yields him rich supplies when sickness and death come upon him. But O how foolish is the wicked man's choice, that for one moment's fleshly pleasure, doth lose his immortal soul, and everlasting happiness; warn them to mind the one thing needful in time, and not to pamper their bodies for the worms, but to set themselves presently to close with the offers of Christ, and make sure an interest in his righteousness to cover them in the evil day.

5. Be telling them of the evil of sloth and negligence in the work of their salvation; and be exhorting them to mind it, and to do it with all their might. For however some may censure and deride God's people now, for their strictness, diligence, and zeal in the matters of religion; yet, when they come to die, they will be ready to wish that they had been more diligent in salvation-work; that they had loved God, fled to Christ, and had sought and served him with all their hearts and souls; and to cry, "O for a little more time! O if God would recover and try us once more with health, how diligent would we be! And tell them, that those who have been most serious, and painful in salvation-work, yet, when they come to die, do much lament their sloth and negligence; yea, those that have been most reproached by the world for their diligence and fervency, do often wish at that time, "O that we had been a thousand times more diligent and laborious in God's service!"

6. Labour to persuade others of the preciousness of time, the wisdom of improving the time of youth and of health, and the great folly of delaying repentance, and putting it off to a sick-bed. Say to them, "I find now, by experience, that a time of sickness is a most unfit season to do any thing to purpose for the soul; my mind is so diverted and indisposed for spiritual-work, by sickness and pain, that I cannot attain to any suitable composure for it. And, how miserable were I, if I had all my work to begin at this time! O take a warning, and improve precious time, and especially the day of the gospel, the time of the Spirit's strivings, and the time of youth, which is the most usual season of the conversion of souls, and of bringing sinners into acquaintance with Jesus Christ."

DIRECT. VI.—*Let God's children, when sick or dying, be expressing a great concern for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, and of true Religion in the rising Generation.*

ZEAL, and public spiritedness, for Christ's interest, is very becoming his people in all the periods of their life, but more especially at this time. When Christ is ready to take you into his kingdom in heaven, O be not unmindful of his kingdom on earth. It would be acceptable to God, and pleasant in the sight of men, to see you expressing a warm concern for the rising age, and for promoting the welfare of the souls of your children, and others that survive you; and seeing you can be no longer useful to those you leave behind, by your counsels, examples or prayers, as formerly; do your utmost for them now. And this concern, the children of God in time of sickness may evidence several ways.

1. By earnest prayers to God, both for the prosperity of his church and the flourishing of religion in general; and also for your children and relations in particular, that they may be a holy seed, and a generation to serve God, and show forth his praise in the world, when you are gone off the stage.

2. By intrusting the care of your children's education to such tutors and guardians as will be much concerned for their souls, and will set before them godly examples and instructions, in their young and tender years.

3. By filling your latter wills and testaments with many pious advices and solemn charges to your children and relations, with respect to their serving God, and worshipping him in their families and in secret, so as they can never look into your testament, and the legacies left to them, but they will hear something that may be affecting, upstirring, and edifying to their souls.

4. By honouring the Lord with your substance, and leaving something of what God hath blest you with, to pious uses: particularly for the religious education of the children of the poor, for buying bibles to them, and other excellent books; and for the propagating of Christian Knowledge in ignorant places, such as the Highlands and Islands, by erecting and maintaining of schools therein: which glorious work is happily begun, and pretty far advanced, by that honourable society at Edinburgh, whose treasurer is ready to receive donations from all such as the Lord pleaseth to move to make a free-will offering for promoting that pious design. Many pious persons have contributed already thereto; and it were desirable that others, whom God hath enabled for it, should mind it before they die: for by fatal experience we may observe, that the most godly parents do not know how their children will employ the estate they leave them, whether as fuel for their lusts, or as oil to feed the lamps in God's sanctuary. It is proper for themselves, then, before they go off the stage, to dispose of some part of their substance, for the glory and service of that God who gave it all unto them.

5. It might contribute to promote piety, and to make the deeper impressions upon the minds of your children and friends, if, under the warnings of death, you should imitate the example of the prophet Elijah, who in his lifetime made a writing, which he procured to be delivered to King Jehoram, after his death, 2 Chron. xxi. 12. So, in like manner, you might write letters and leave them in the hands of your friends, and executors, full of advices, charges, admonitions, consolations, or threatenings, to be

delivered to your children or friends, upon occasion either of their good or bad conversation after your death; which probably would be more regarded by them, than the counsels you gave them in the time of your life; for, in some respect, they would be received and read by them, as if they were letters from heaven.

Direct. VII.—*Let the children of God labour to fortify themselves what they can against all Satan's Temptations and Assaults, which they may expect to meet with in time of Sickness and Affliction.*

A TIME of affliction is commonly a time of temptation: for the old serpent knows the fittest season for assaulting the children of God; and he will not be wanting to improve this opportunity of advantage for setting upon the poor soul. When Pharoah heard that the people were entangled in the wilderness, he pursued them; so, when Satan sees a soul entangled with distress and troubles, he thinks it high time to make an attack. He seeks to winnow and sift away the believer's grace, and therefore he comes when the corn is threshing by the rod. When Jacob was smitten in his estate, health, and all other comforts, then this coward falls upon him, and tempts him to impatience, murmuring, and wrong thoughts of God.

At this time, O believer, you have special need to be on your guard, and look out. Reckon always, when sickness or trouble cometh, the prince of this world cometh also. Stand then to your defence, and put on your armour, especially the shield of faith, that you may be able to quench the fiery darts of the devil. You have need at this time to put in practice our Lord's direction, "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." Pray for wisdom and skill to counteract him, and that you may not be ignorant of his devices; and pray particularly for grace to make you proof against all his false representations of God and his Providence to you; for he that durst represent Job falsely to an all-seeing and all-knowing God, will, with much boldness, represent God falsely to you, who see and know so little. He will be ready to tempt you to think that God is angry with you, and dealing with you as an enemy; thus was Job tempted, Job xxxiii. 10, 11. "Behold he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy: he putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths." But observe what Elihu answers, "In this thou art not just: God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters." But seeing I spoke before of the wrong thoughts of God, which we are apt to harbour in time of affliction, Chap. II. Direct. III.—I shall proceed to speak of some other temptations wherewith Satan doth assault God's people when in distress; and furnish some answers thereto.

1. Saith the tempter, "Thou art nothing but a hypocrite; all thy religious performances have been done in hypocrisy, to be seen of men: thou never hast repented, or believed sincerely in the sight of God."

Ans. I acknowledge there hath been much hypocrisy in me, but I hope it is not allowed and reigning hypocrisy; I always wrestled against it, wherefore I am not an hypocrite. I regarded the esteem of men too much, but I hope I valued the esteem of God much more. My faith and repentance are weak, but I hope they are sincere. And, whatever defects and short-comings have formerly cleaved to these graces in me, I do now unfeignedly repent of all my sins, I look to him that I have pierced, and mourn. I am heartily willing to be justified by the righteousness of Christ alone, and to be cleansed and sanctified by his Spirit; and here I give up myself to Christ as my only Saviour. And this I hope is through grace, true repenting and believing, which God will accept, for Christ's sake, whatever my former defects have been.

Tempt. 2. But saith the tempter, "Thy repentance cannot be true; for thy heart is not broken, and thine eyes do not shed tears for sin."

Ans. It is my very great burden, and constant complaint to God, that I cannot attain to a greater measure of sorrow and contrition for sin; but yet it is my comfort that repentance is not to be confined to such degrees and symptoms of sorrow as some do get at. I hope, I can say through grace, that my heart is set against all sin great and small, and I would give all I have in the world to be wholly delivered from sin.

Tempt. 3. Saith the temper, "But thy day of grace is past, it is too late for thee to think of repenting or believing; God will not accept of thee now."

Ans. But I hope it is not so with me, seeing God gives me a heart that pants after God and Christ in the way of commanded duty. The offers of salvation through Christ are made to all who believe and repent; and late penitents are not excluded from the benefits of these gracious offers more than others.

Tempt. 4. But, saith the tempter, "Thou art none of God's elect; and, if thou be not chosen to salvation, thou cannot be saved."

Ans. Secret things belong unto God; and it were presumption in me to pry into his secret degrees; but one thing I am sure of, that every soul that is chosen to faith and repentance, is also chosen to salvation; but I trust God hath chosen me to the former, and therefore to the latter.

Tempt. 5 But, saith the tempter, "You overvalue your graces and duties, and so they cannot be true and real."

Ans. But I count them all but loss and dung in comparison of Christ. I desire always to be deeply humbled under a sense of my sinfulness and unworthiness, and to abhor every motion that would carry me away from Christ and his righteousness, and would tempt me to rely on my graces or duties, or put them in the least in Christ's room.

Tempt. 6. "The issue of thy sickness may be death, and thou art not ready, for thou hast no assurance of thy salvation."

Ans. A perfect certainty is not to be expected here; there will be still some questionings, some doubts and fears; but these I resolve not to indulge now, but to break through all, that I may embrace Christ, and be found in him. The desires of my soul are to Christ, and the remembrance of his name; and such, I believe, he will not suffer to perish. "I believe, Lord, help my unbelief."

Tempt. 7. "But thou art a stranger to the invisible world; how wilt thou adventure into that world of spirits, with which thou hast so little acquaintance?"

Ans. But Christ, who is my Head and best friend, is no stranger to it; he is the Lord of that land, and provides mansions for all his people there; and he will receive every one of them home, and lodge them safely. "The spirits of just men made perfect," were once what my spirit now is; they were strangers to that world before they came to

it, as well as I. But their Head being in it, encouraged them to go to it; and now they rejoice in it as the kindly dwelling-place of all the saints.

Tempt. 8. "But thou art vile, and God is infinitely pure and glorious; how canst thou think of approaching so near to him."

Ans. Though a weak eye be not able to look upon the sun, yet I hope to be fitted and strengthened for that glorious sight. Besides, God doth now appear to us in his Son Jesus Christ, where his infinite glory is pleasantly veiled so as saints may behold him. These glorified souls were once vile as well as others; but their Saviour did cleanse them, and present them to the Father without spot or wrinkle. And, whatever be my unworthiness, I am relieved by considering my union with Christ, and looking on the glory and dignity of my Head. Surely God will not despise the members of his dear Son, nor trample on any that are his flesh and bones.

Tempt. 9. "But what will become of thy wife and children, when thou art taken from them?"

Ans. If I trust God so willingly with my soul and my eternal concerns, why may I not trust him with my relations also? Have not I seen how wonderfully he hath provided for others? Doth not every thing in the world depend on his will and pleasure? How easy is it then for God to supply his own?

Tempt. 10. "But still death is terrible to nature, even the king of terrors."

Ans. But my Redeemer hath tasted death for me, and taken out its fearful sting; he hath conquered death, and keeps the keys of death and hell. Wherefore through him will I sing, "O death where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory?"

Tempt. 11. "But it is terrible to think of appearing before God's tribunal to be tried and judged."

Ans. But my friend and intercessor will be the judge there. Will Christ condemn the members of his own body, and those he hath so often comforted?

But, besides all these, a holy God may sometimes suffer the tempter to assault his own people in time of their affliction, with his fiery darts and his fiercest battering engines, such as temptations to atheism, blasphemy, despair, &c. whereby their souls may be terribly shaken and sore amazed.

Your relief, in this case, is to look to your Head, and remember how he was himself buffeted by this enemy, and assaulted with the most odious temptations, that he might thereby get an experimental touch and feeling of your condition, in order to his sympathizing with you, and relieving you from this enemy, whom he hath already conquered in your name. But for these things he will be enquired of by the house of Israel. You must act faith on your exalted head.

CHAPTER IV.

CONTAINING SOME SPECIAL DIRECTIONS TO UNREGENERATE PERSONS WHEN AFFLICTED WITH SICKNESS OR OTHERWISE.

DIRECT. I.—*Take a serious view of the miserable condition of a Christless person, under sickness or heavy affliction.*

1st, CONSIDER the vast difference between your case and that of a true believer; he hath ground of consolation in the greatest distress, but you have none. However sharp the rod of correction be to him, yet it is in the hand of a Father; but you have to do with an angry and sin-revenging God; and, who may stand in his sight if once he be angry; for he commands both the first and the second death, and he can send you both into the grave and hell at once, Rev. vi. 8. "Hell followed the pale horse." Death is the king of terrors, but hell is a thousand times more terrible. When God afflicts his children, he stands to them in the relation of a loving Father; but he deals with you as an incensed judge. Though he sees it necessary, for their good, to chastise them, yet he doth it with a relenting heart; yea, every stroke goeth as it were to his heart, Isa. lxiii. 9. "In all their afflictions he was afflicted." But when he ariseth to punish his enemies, he strikes them with hatred and detestation, as a man would do to a toad or venemous creature. Though they cry he hath no pity, Prov. i. 26. "I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh."

2dly, If your sickness threaten you with death, what a dark and melancholy prospect must you have of your approaching change? Why, O Christless soul, it is what you are wholly unprepared for. The old house falls down about your ears, before you have another lodging provided. When death casts you to the door, you have no where to lay your head, unless it be on a bed of fire and brimstone. O how surprising and fearful will the change be, that death will make on you! A change from earth to hell, from light to darkness, from comforts to terrors, from hope to despair, from the offers of grace to the revelation of wrath; a change from the society of the saints on earth, to the company of the damned in hell. Whatever fond hopes of salvation you have now, your hope shall lead you no further than to the king of terrors, and then "your hope shall be cut off, and your trust, like a spider's web," Job viii. 14. Though it cost you much pains to weave and support this web now, it will prove a weak and slender defence to your soul, when death comes with the besom of destruction, and sweeps both you and it away to hell. You will then be taken from all the means of grace you have abused, and be for ever deprived of an opportunity of buying oil; your lamp shall go out at death, and never be lighted any more.

3. In this extremity, you have no where to look to for comfort. O Christless sinner, what will you do in the day of visitation? To whom will you flee for help? Your houses, your lands, your money, your honours, your companions, your relations, will all be miserable comforters to you. Every thing will look black and dismal round about you. If you look without you for help, you may see your friends weeping and lamenting your case; but this will do nothing but increase your vexation and misery. If you look within you for relief, conscience, that before you would not suffer to speak, will meet you with bitter stings and upbraidings. It will bring to your view the sins you had forgot, the time you have mispent, the health you have misimproven, the offers of grace you have refused, the great salvation you have neglected. What folly was it for thee to provoke God and slight Christ, for a little worldly profit, or a little brutish pleasure? Can these relieve thee when the arrows of the Almighty stick within thee, and the terror of God do set themselves in array against thy soul? In the mean time, the devil that tempted you to your soul-ruining course, will step in and represent your sins in their blackest colours and aggravations, to render you altogether hopeless and desperate. O sinner, thou that refusest

rest from Christ, in the day of health and grace, shalt find no ease from the creature in the day of sickness and death. Your sickness will allow no rest to your body, and your sins will permit no ease to your soul. You may expect the fulfilling of that threatening, Deut. xxviii. 65. "The Lord shall give thee a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind. And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee, and thou shalt have fear day and night. In the morning thou shalt say, would to God it were even; and at even, thou shalt say, would to God it were morning," because of the pain of thy body, and anguish of thy spirit.

Direct. II.—*Let unregenerate Persons carefully improve their sickness and affliction, as means to further their Conversion; and pray that God may bless it for that end.*

MANY have begun their acquaintance with God and with themselves in the time of affliction; the furnace is frequently the spirit's work house where he forms his vessels of praise. There are many who, while health and strength continue, mind nothing but vain pleasures; one day they go to their games and sports, another to their cups and lascivious company; another day to visit their friends; and thus they spend the whole time of their health and prosperity in sin and vanity. All the warnings, counsels and exhortation of parents, friends, and ministers do them no good. They cannot endure to entertain a serious thought of God or Christ, of death, of heaven, of hell, or judgment to come. But, when God doth cast them into sickness or some great affliction, they, through the blessing of God, begin to come to themselves, like the prodigal, and think of returning again to their father. Several instances to this purpose might be given. The earl of Rochester is a late one, whose life was notoriously lewd, profane and atheistical, and who had wickedly employed his wit and parts to the ridicule of religion; yet, when he was afflicted with pain and sickness, and brought to the gates of death, he began to entertain quite other apprehensions than he had done before; he professed he had serious and reverent thoughts of religion and holiness, which before he laughed at; he most earnestly and affectionately warned others to abandon their evil courses, and to live religiously and soberly, and to look upon religion as the greatest reality in the world; he retracted all his impious and profane language, wherewith he used to reflect on the ways of godliness, and willingly attested all this under his hand.

Pray then for the Divine blessing on your sickness, that it may contribute to the conversion of your soul, which it doth several ways: 1st, By opening men's eyes to get a true sight of things, to behold religion in its true shape, and sin in its proper colours; hence the rod is said to give wisdom, Prov. xxix. 15. They who have mocked at religion, and made light of sin all their days, have been taught by bodily sickness to change their tune. Then they begin to have an esteem for the Bible, and to value and send for a pious minister, and to desire the prayers of the people of God; now they perceive sin to be bitter as gall and wormwood; they lothe and abhor that which they liked before; now the word of God makes a deep impression on them, and particularly such a word as that, Jer. ii. 19. "Know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God."

2. Sickness helps to set the word preached home upon the heart. When God speaks to us in the day of health and prosperity, we often give him a deaf ear, Jer. xxii. 21. But when distress comes, it brings the word of God and his ministers to our remembrance, as it brought Joseph to the remembrance of his brethren, Gen. xlii. 21.

3. Sickness contributes to loose a man's heart from the world, and to cool his love thereto: whereby a great hindrance of conversion is removed out of the way, and the man is made to say, "How vain and helpless are the world's comforts to me now! Those things I delighted in formerly, are tasteless to me at this time. There is no portion can suit my soul's needs, but God himself."

4. It spurs a man on to prayer that formerly neglected it. When the prodigal is brought to distress, he says, "I will arise and go to my Father." He forgot his father before, but now he will address him, Hos. v. 15. "In their affliction they will seek me early." Thus the Lord frequently begins and promotes the conversion of souls to himself. And, O sinner, if this be the fruit of thy sickness, it will not be unto death, but the glory of God.

Direct. III.—*Be careful to obey God's voice in the Rod, and beware of slighting it.*

EVERY sickness hath a message from God, and his voice you ought to hearken to with reverence and attention, Mic. vi. 9. What saith he to you at this time? O sinner, he saith, "Retire from the world, think on death and eternity, abhor those lusts and idols which God is smiting you for, flee speedily to the strong-hold: repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." This is God's voice to you, and consider how provoking it will be to him, if you slight it.

1. You will provoke God to slight your voice when you cry to him, and stop his ear against the voice of your supplications, Zech. vii. 13.

2. You will provoke God to cease from being a reprover to you, so that he will speak to you no more.

3. You will provoke him to bring heavier judgments on you; yea, so to draw his sword of justice against you, that he will sheath it up no more, as he threatens, Ezek. xxi. 5.

4. God may break off all intercourse and correspondence with you, as with those Ezek. xx. 31. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I will not be enquired of by you."

5. He may seal you up for ever under your sins, hardness and pollution; and say to you, as some we read of, Ezek. xxiv. 13. Hos. iv. 7. Rev. xxii. 11. "Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee. Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone. He that is filthy let him be filthy still." He that is hardened against the voice of my rods, let him be hardened still. Well, then, O sinners, while God is in speaking terms with you, hearken to his voice, and obey it; say, Lord, "What wilt thou have me to do?"

Direct. IV.—*Cast back your eyes upon the Sins of your bypast life, and labour to be deeply humbled for them before the Lord.*

SEEING you are summoned to prepare for going to the judgment-seat of God, where your soul is to receive its final sentence; labour to prevent the terror of that appearance, by your judging yourself before-hand. And this

you must do, by summoning yourself before the bar of conscience, examining narrowly into your state, accusing and condemning yourself for your sins. And see that you be impartial in this work, willing to know the truth, and discover the worst of your case. You must see and be duly sensible of your danger, otherwise you cannot think to escape it. Take a narrow view of your sins in their nature, number, aggravations, and deservings. And, in order to this, if thou hast any measure of strength for it, let the exposition of the ten commandments in our Larger Catechism be distinctly read over unto thee. Make a pause upon every question, and say within thyself, "Have I not omitted what is here required by God? And, have I not committed what is here forbidden by God? How often have I repeated these sins? How long have I lived in the practice of them? O! do not so many years sins need a very serious repentance, a very deep humiliation? O! doth not such a vile sinner as I, stand greatly in need of Christ to be my cautioner and ransomer for such a vast number of sins? Will not their weight press me eternally down to the lowest hell, if they remain unpardoned, and be laid upon my back?" Wherefore view them closely, and confess them particularly before God."

1. In the first place, bewail thy orignal sin, the fountain of all thy actual transgressions, as did David, Psal. li. 5. "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

2. Acknowledge and mourn over the sinful out-breakings of thy life, whereby thou hast dishonoured God, and grieved his Holy Spirit; and especially sins against light.

3. Be humbled for thy sins of omission, for neglecting of commanded duties, particularly for the neglect of prayer in secret, and of family-religion.

4. Mourn for the loss of precious time. Alas for the time of youth mis-spent, many Sabbath-days trifled away!

5. Lament thy long slighting of Christ, and salvation through his righteousness, which so pressingly hath been offered to thee in the gospel.

6. Bewail thy stifling the convictions, and quenching the motions of the Spirit, and thereby provoking him to depart from you.

7. Mourn for thy unthankfulness to God for mercies and deliverances, which might have allured you to repentance and newness of life.

8. Confess thy stubbornness under former afflictions, which hath provoked God to send new trials upon you.

9. Be humbled for thy earthly mindedness, in that thou hast all thy days been careful and cumbered about many things, and hast neglected the one thing necessary.

10. Mourn for the lateness of thy repentance, and thy prodigious folly in delaying so long to bethink thyself, and turn to the Lord. "Oh how unwisely have I acted, to mis-spend the time of health, and delay so great a work till now, that I am laid on a sick-bed! And now, if I die before I am converted, I am lost for ever. O Lord, I am ashamed and confounded at my madness and folly, and have no excuse to plead for myself, but must stand afar off, with the poor publican, and smite upon my breast, and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Direct. V.—*Flee presently to Jesus Christ by a true faith, and close with him as offered to you in the gospel.*

ART thou sensible, O sinner, of thy grievous guilt and ill-deservings before God? then do not despair; for Jesus Christ, who has offered to Divine justice an all-sufficient sacrifice for sin, is offering himself to thee, saying, O distressed sinner, "Look unto me and be saved; turn unto me, why will you die? Come unto me, heavy-laden soul, and I will give you rest. He that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out." Will not so gracious words, such moving calls, melt thy heart within thee, and make thee cry to him, "Lord Jesus, I flee to thee as my refuge, for deliverance from sin, and protection from the wrath to come; I look to thy wounds, I trust in thy righteousness, I depend on thy merit, I lie at thy feet, and this I am resolved to do as long as I have a breath to draw in the world."

Direct. VI.—*Call for the Elders of the Church, that they may pray over you in your Sickness.*

THIS is the Apostle James's directions to the sick, James v. 14. He doth not say, if any be sick, let him send for the physicians, but for the elders or ministers.

It is true, physicians are to be called, but not in the first place. It was Asa's fault, that in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians; and, alas! how many follow his example? ministers are only called for in the last place, and very often when the time is past, the sick being at the point of death, and scarce capable to speak or hear. But if you desire to reap benefit by the instructions and prayers of ministers, call for them timeously, and open your case unto them; seek their counsel, and beg for their prayers. It is their office to teach and pray for you, and they have authority to offer salvation to you through Christ, and to minister comfort to them that are cast down; wherefore a blessing may be expected on their administrations and performances more than others. Hence God said to Abimelech of Abraham, Gen. xx. 7. "He is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee." And to Job's friends, concerning Job, Job xlii. 8. "Go to my servant Job, and he shall pray for you, for him will I accept; lest that I deal with you after your folly." And,

Lastly, Remember, that as the apostle James enjoins the sick to call for the elders to pray over them, so at the same time he directs you, James v. 16. to confess your faults one to another, Christian to Christian, one friend to another, the people to their minister. Not that this gives any warrant for the Papists their auricular confessions, which they force upon all men, to their priests, as a satisfaction for sin, and whereby they rack their consciences (when they feel no distress) to confess their most secret sins, to enumerate them all under pain of damnation, and which they use as a politic to dive into the secrets of princes, states, and all private persons: but, as Luther, Calvin, Beza, and many others of orthodox divines do teach, it is very profitable and necessary for those that are inwardly troubled with a sense of their sins, to ease and disburden their consciences, by confession of them to the faithful ministers of Christ, in order to their receiving suitable counsels and consolations from them, such as Christ has left in his word for contrite-hearted penitents.

Thus let every man in sickness use all appointed means for preparing his soul for a future state. Thy preparation will by no means hasten death, but sweeten it to you. Death must surely have a most formidable aspect to an unprepared sinner; he may salute it, as Ahab did Elijah. "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Why? it brings

heavy and doleful tidings to him. But a prepared soul may salute death, welcome, O my friend! thou bringest me tidings of great joy; everlasting deliverance from sin, and all the bitter fruits of it. I shall never complain of these any more.

CHAPTER V.

CONTAINING DIRECTIONS TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD, WHEN THE LORD IS PLEASED TO RECOVER THEM FROM SICKNESS AND DISTRESS.

DIRECT. I.—*It is very proper, both under sickness and after it, to examine if the affliction be sanctified to you, and hath come from the love of God.*

IT would be very comfortable for us to know that the afflictions which God visits us with, are not the punishment of a judge, but the chastisement of a father; that they do not proceed from wrath, but from love; that they are not curses, but blessings to us. Now the best way of knowing this is by the effects which they work and produce in us, through the blessing of God.

1. Canst thou say, that thy affliction hath humbled thee in the sight of God, and made thee confess and bewail thy sins and strayings from God as the procuring cause thereof? hath it been like Moses's rod, that smote the rock, and brought out much water? Did you water your couch with tears, and mourn humbly before God, for all thy God-provoking sins? then it is a good sign sickness is sanctified.

2. Doth thy affliction drive thee nearer God, and cause thee aim at closer communion with God in duty than formerly, saying, "however careless and overly I have been in duty in time past, it is surely good for me now to draw near to God?" Then thy sickness is a blessing to thee.

3. Affliction is sanctified, when the corruption and deceitfulness of the heart is the more discovered and laid open to the view of the soul; so as the man is made to abhor himself in dust and ashes, and cry out as the leper, "unclean, unclean." I never could have thought my heart so wicked as now I see it.

4. It is a sanctified sickness that purgeth the heart, and changeth the life, and gives a dead stroke to thy sins and idols, and makes thee to lothe and abhor thee more than ever, saying, with Ephraim, "What have I do any more with idols?"

5. It is a blessed rod, when grace is more quickened and stirred up thereby, and the man turns more fruitful in holy duties and good works; when it is a budding and blossoming rod, like to Aaron's, Numb. xvii. It is recorded there of Aaron's rod, that it brought forth buds, bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds. So it is happy with us, when our rods and sicknesses do produce in us, not only the buds of a profession, or the blossoms or some beginnings of a reformation, but even cause us to yield almonds, fruit savoury to God. Is conscience become more tender with respect to sin? Are we more jealous over our hearts? Are we more fervent in prayer, more lively in praise, more mortified to the world, more desirous of communion with God? then may we say with David, "It is good for us that we have been afflicted;" and with Hezekiah, "thou hast, in love to my soul, delivered it from the pit of corruption."

DIRECT. II.—*Make concience of offering to God the sacrifice of Thanksgiving, upon his recovering thee from sickness, or any distress.*

THE Psalmist gives us this direction from God, Ps l. 14, 15; and he shews us that it was his own practice in such a case, Ps. cxvi. 17. Ps. ciii. 1, 2, 3, &c. The commands is just, let us obey it;—the example is excellent, let us imitate it. Praise is comely for the upright. Here I shall give some motives and advices.

1. God, who is the author of all thy mercies and deliverances, gives you tongues for this very end, that you may bless and praise him for those mercies, James iii. 9. Hence man's tongue is called his glory above the rest of the creatures, Ps. lvii. 8. There is none in this creation so endued and qualified for praising God as man is. Angels have reasons and minds whereby they adore and admire God's goodness and excellency, but have no tongues to praise him; beasts have tongues without speech or reason to use them: but man hath both reason and speech, that he may both admire God's goodness, and with his tongue sound forth God's praise. See then, O believer, that you use your tongue to answer the end of your creation. God loseth his due rent of praise from the rest of the world, but he expects it from his children, whom he hath formed for this end, and on whom he hath bestowed many distinguishing favours.

2. The sacrifice of thanksgiving is most pleasing and acceptable to God. He loves your tears and prayers, O believer, but much more your praises. How well pleased was our Lord with the poor leper Samaritan, that returned and gave him thanks for curing his bodily distemper? Luke xvii. He dismissed him with a special blessing, and cured him of his soul's diseases, as well as of his body's. And, therefore,

3. Consider that thankfulness for thy mercies received is a more profitable course for yourself; for it is the way to get more and better blessings bestowed upon you, according to Ps. lxvii. 5, 6. "Let the people praise thee, O God. Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us." Thanksgiving for former mercies is a kindly way of petitioning for new favours, and God will understand it in this sense.

4. God is so well pleased with the duty of thanksgiving, that he honours it to be the eternal work of heaven. Whereas other graces, such as faith, hope, and repentance, will then be melted into love and joy for ever; so other duties of worship, such as reading, hearing, and prayer, will then be changed into that of praise and thanksgiving: The glorified company above will never be weary of this work; and shall we not delight in it now; when God is calling us to it by so many new mercies?

In the next place, that thou mayest offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving to God for thy recovery, with gracious acceptance, I shall lay before you the following advices:

1. See that your heart be touched with a sense of the greatness of the mercy and of the goodness of God manifested therein. We must put a due value upon our mercies, and have our hearts affected with God's kind dealing towards us in them, if we would be rightly thankful to God the author of them. Hence it was that David called upon his heart and all within him, to bless the Lord for his benefits, Ps. ciii. 1. and in Ps. cxxxviii. 1. he saith, "I will praise thee with my whole heart." As, in an instrument of music, the more the sound comes out of the belly of it,

it is the more sweet, so our praise is the more acceptable to God, when the heart is full of gracious affections.

2. Let your praise be the native result of faith and love in your soul, otherwise it will be but an empty sound. Faith is necessary to draw by the veil, and show us the perfections of the visible God, who is the spring and author of all our mercies; love gives a deep sense of his goodness, enlargeth the heart towards God, and opens the lips to show forth his praises.

3. Study to have a deep sense of your own unworthiness and ill-deservings at the Lord's hand, upon the account of your sins and ill-improvement of former deliverances, saying, with Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 10. "I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies."

4. Look above instruments and second causes, and do not ascribe your recovery to physicians or outward means, but to the Lord, the prime author of it, whose blessing alone it is that gives efficacy and success to the appointed means, and by whose mercy only we are spared and brought back from the gates of the grave. To this the Apostle attributes Epaphroditus his recovery, Phil. ii. 27. "Indeed he was sick nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him." Hence we are told, 1 Sam. ii. 6. "The Lord bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up."

5. Observe narrowly the remarkable circumstances of the Lord's goodness, and the sweet ingredients of thy mercies: As, for instance, (1.) How discernible the Lord's hand was in thy deliverance, which obligeth thee to say, Surely this is the finger of God? This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in mine eyes. (2.) How thy deliverance came to thee as the return of prayer, that makes thee say, Surely he is a prayer-hearing God. (3.) How deliverances came when there was but little ground to hope for it. See how Hezekiah observed this ingredient in his recovery from sickness, Isa. xxxviii. 10, 11. "I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years. I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world." Ver. 15. "What shall I say? He hath both spoken to me, and himself hath done it." Some times God sends deliverances to his people when they are most hopeless, and saying with the captives in Babylon, Ezek. xxxvii. 11. "Behold our bones are dried, and our hopes are lost, and we are cut off for our parts. (4.) Remember how the extremity of thy distress was God's opportunity of sending relief. Abraham never forgot the seasonableness of God's appearing for him in his extreme need upon mount Moriah, when he called the name of the place Jehovah Jireh for preserving the memorial of it: "in the mountain of the Lord it will be seen." So doth David, Psal. cxxvi. "I was brought low and he helped me."

6. Let the present deliverance bring all former mercies to thy remembrance, that so thou mayest praise God for them all, whether they be national or personal mercies, public or private, spiritual or temporal. New mercies should revive the memory of the old, and all of them should come above board at such a time; so doth the Psalmist direct, Psal. cv. 2. "Sing to the Lord, talk ye of all his wondrous works." And what he directs others to, he practiseth himself in such a case, Psal. cxvi. 12. "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?"

7. Be ready to communicate to others an account of the Lord's kind dealings towards you, and the sweet ingredients of his mercies; and particularly of his sending spiritual deliverance to your soul, as well as outward deliverance to your body, when he is pleased to do so: and do this in order to recommend the service of God to others, and to engage and invite them to assist you in blessing and praising the Lord. We see how David observed his soul's deliverance, Psal. cxvi. 7, 8. and declares his experience to others, Psal. xxii. 22. "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee." Psal. lxvi. 16. "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul."

Lastly, Remember always to give thanks for mercies to the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, as directed, Eph. v. 20. Your spiritual sacrifices are only acceptable to God, when you offer them up by Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 5. As we must seek all our mercies in Christ's name, so we must give thanks for them also in his name. He is the Mediator of our praises as well as of our prayers. Believers have not one mercy, but what comes swimming to them in Christ's blood, and is the fruit of his death and purchase to them; and therefore he is to be owned and looked to in the receiving of every mercy. And as Christ is the only Mediator for conveying blessings and mercies from God to us, so he is the sole Mediator for conveying all our services and spiritual sacrifices to God. God accepts of them only as they are perfumed by Christ's meritorious sacrifice and potent intercession.

DIRECT. III.—*When the Lord is pleased to grant thee any signal mercy of deliverance from trouble, beware of forgetting the Lord's kindness towards thee.*

FORGETTING of God's remarkable kind providences, is an evil we are naturally prone unto, when we are in a prosperous state. Hence it is, that the spirit of God gives so many cautions against it in his word; and the saints of God do so solemnly charge their own souls to beware of it, as in Psal. ciii. 2. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction." Forget not his benefits, but carefully preserve and treasure them up in thy memory. It was usual for saints under the Old Testament, to set up some visible monument to remind them of God's singular favours to them; they erected stones, and built altars, to be memorials of the mercies they received, and put names on the places for this end. Let all this teach you to guard against this evil of forgetting the Lord's kind providence in recovering you from sickness.

You are guilty of this evil, when you do not duly value the mercy, but let it pass as a turn of common providence. When you let the impression of the mercy wear soon off your hearts; when you make a bad use of it, or do not rightly improve it to God's glory, and your own soul's good; when you do not put on new resolutions to walk more exactly, live more fruitfully, and serve God more holily and humbly; then are you guilty of forgetting his benefits.

This is an evil most grievous and provoking to a good and gracious God, as is evident from the many heavy complaints he makes of his people for it, as in Judg. viii. 34. Psal. lxxviii. 11. Psal. cvi. 13. Wherefore watch and pray against it.

DIRECT. IV. *Enquire after the fruits of righteousness, which are the genuine effects of affliction in the children of God, who are duly exercised thereby.*

THE Apostle speaks of these fruits, Heb. xii. 11. as natively following upon sanctified afflictions, and a kindly exercise of spirit under them. And therefore it is your duty to enquire if they be produced in you.

1. The increase of true repentance is one of those fruits which is the product of sanctified trials. Job found it in himself on the back of his afflictions, Job xlii. 6. "Now I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." It would be happy if we could find our hearts more soft and melting upon the view of sin, after we have been in the furnace of affliction.

2. Another fruit is the improvement of faith. The afflicted believer is taught to look to, and depend more upon God, for help in time of need, and less upon the creature. He now sees that vain is the help of man in the day of calamity, and that God in Christ is the only proper object of the soul's trust. This was the fruit of the Apostle's affliction, 2 Cor. 1. 8. 9. 10. "We were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life. We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God that raiseth the dead: who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver."

3. Humility, and low thoughts of ourselves, is one of the fruits of righteousness which sanctified affliction doth yield. How proud and lofty was Nebuchadnezzar before his affliction, Dan. iv. 29. 30. But afterwards he is made to own God, and humbly submit to him as his supreme and uncontroulable sovereign, and to acknowledge, that those who walk in pride, he is able to abase, ver. 27. This was God's design in the various trials of his people Israel in the wilderness, Deut. viii. 16. "That he might humble thee, prove thee, and do thee good at thy latter end." See then, O believer, if this fruit be produced in thee.

4. Another fruit is the spirit of prayer and supplication. This was visible in the Psalmist's case, after God had delivered him from the sorrows of death, and heard his voice, Psal. cxvi. 2. "Therefore, says he, will I call upon him as long as I live." O, saith a true believer, God's mercy to me in trouble, and his sending me relief when I cried to him, will make me love prayer the better, and engage me to be more diligent in it all my days; for I still see I have daily need of his helping hand.

5. Heavenly-mindedness is a fruit of sanctified affliction. Before the man was inclined to that language, it is good for us to be here, let us build tabernacles in this lower world, but now he turns his tongue, and changeth his thoughts, and saith, with the Psalmist, "It is good for me to draw nigh to God. Arise, let us depart, this is not our rest. This world is nothing but the house of our pilgrimage, heaven only is our home."

6. Another fruit of sanctified trials, is greater love to God than formerly. How much was David's heart warmed with love and gratitude to God, upon the back of his affliction, so that he wants words to express the affections of his soul? Psal. cxvi. 1. 8. 12. "I will love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice, I was brought low, but he helped me. Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me."

7. Learning and keeping of God's word, is a fruit of sanctified affliction, Psal. cxix. 67. 71. Let us enquire if this fruit be produced in us after sickness: Do we attend to the word more closely? Do we believe it more firmly? Do we embrace its offers more earnestly? Do we rely on its promises more stedfastly? And, do we live more in the expectation of that glory which the word doth reveal to us? Then it is good for us that we have been afflicted, for we have learned more of God's word.

8. Tenderness of conscience is a happy fruit of sanctified trouble, when the believer, after it, becomes exceedingly afraid of sin, and of making new wounds in his conscience. He cannot think of adventuring again upon any known sin, for the smart of former wounds, and the pain they occasioned in his soul, when distress lay upon him, makes deep and lasting impression on his mind, as it did on the afflicted church, Lam. iii. 19. 20. "Remembering mine affliction, and my misery, the wormwood and the gall, my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled within me." Now, such fruits of righteousness are an evidence we have been suitably exercised under affliction. O to find them produced in us after sickness is over!

DIRECT. V.—*Be careful to perform those Resolutions, Engagements or Vows, you have come under in the time of Sickness; and walk suitably to them.*

AS a time of sickness and affliction is a proper season for making vows to God, and binding our souls with resolutions to mortify sin in the heart, and purge it away from the life, and to be diligent in duty, and walk more humbly with God; so a time of recovery from sickness, is a proper season for paying and performing these vows. This was the royal Psalmist's practice in such a case, Psal. cxvi. 6. 16. 17. 18. "I was brought low, and he helped me. Truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant. I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people." Now, for your assistance in this matter, I offer you these few advices.

1. Defer not to pay your vows, but be speedy, and take thy first opportunity to pay them. Delays in this case are most dangerous: Solomon, that wise man, was sensible of this, which made him give this advice, Eccl. v. 4. "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it."

2. Be still jealous of thy heart, which is prone to deal treacherously with God after affliction is over: the Israelites practice is a sad instance of this truth, Psal. lxxviii. 34. &c. "When he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned and enquired early after God, &c. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouths, and they lied to him with their tongues: for their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant." The purposes of many in affliction, are like the vows of mariners in a storm; they are the first things which they forget and break, when once they win safe ashore. However penitent some seem to be in sickness, yet, when they recover from it, they soon return to their old sins again. They are like metals in a furnace; they melt and turn liquid, while in it, but when out, they soon return to their old hardness. There is good reason for that caution the Lord gives us, Mal. ii. 16. "Therefore take head to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously."

3. Cry continually for strength from above, to enable

you to perform your vows. The Psalmist took this course, and found it successful, Psal. cxxxviii. 3. "In the day when I cried to thee thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul." And forget not, O believer, that God has treasured up strength for thee in thy Head and Surety, Christ Jesus; wherefore be still borrowing from him, for the performing of all thy engagements, 2 Tim. ii. 1. "My son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." Put thy treacherous heart in thy Surety's hand; for though thou art weak, yet thy Redeemer is strong. Whenever then you first perceive your heart begin to start aside from God, be sure to check it, and look up to God in Christ, for strength to secure it against treachery and perfidious dealing: Cry with the Psalmist, "Be surety for thy servant for good."

4. Guard diligently against thy predominant sin, the sin that hath most easily beset thee, the sin that was most bitter and uneasy to thee in the day of distress. Keep a narrow eye upon it now; for if once that sin be got vanquished, the rest will the more easily be put to flight.

5. Be frequently meditating on thy vows, and on the condition thou wast in when they were taken on, and study to keep alive in thy heart the same apprehension of things after sickness, which thou hadst in the time of it. How vain and comfortless did the world and its vanities then appear to thee! How awful were the truths of God on thy spirit! How far preferable was the loving-kindness of God to thee, than life! How precious was Christ then in thy eyes! O that your judgment, thoughts and impressions of these things may continue still the same!

6. Keep up the impressions of the preciousness of time, that you may diligently improve it; and shake off sloth and idleness. Remember what a view you got in the time of sickness of long lasting eternity, and what a trouble it was to you to look back, and see how much time you had lost in sin and vanity. When sometimes we are brought to the brink of eternity, the near views we then get of its vastness and unchangeableness, are sometimes so awful and amazing to us, that we are ready to think, though we had Methusalem's years to live, it would be unreasonable wilfully to mispend one hour of them all. Well then, is sickness over, our time so short, and so little of it remaining behind? Will we be so foolish, as to be lavish of it still, and trifle it away as before?

7. Set a special mark upon all these sins, whether of omission or commission, that made death look grim and ghastly upon you in the time of sickness, and against which you resolved; and see to get every one of them amended and removed. Remember and consider how sad it will be for you, if sickness find you again in the very same sins which formerly stung you. What will you say to conscience, when it shall challenge you? How will you look death in the face, if it should find you living in the very same sins you formerly mourned for, and promised against? death would then be the king of terrors to thy soul indeed.

O then mind thy vows, and say, with the Psalmist, Psal. lvi. 12. 13. "Thy vows are upon me, O God; I will render praises to thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death; wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the land of the living?"

CHAPTER VI.

CONTAINING DIRECTIONS TO THE UNREGENERATE, WHEN THEY ARE RECOVERED FROM SICKNESS, AND RESTORED TO HEALTH.

DIRECT I.—*Seeing the afflictions of the wicked are unsanctified, it is necessary you examine what sort of affliction yours hath been, and what fruits it hath produced in you.*

I HAVE, in the preceding chapter, showed that the afflictions of believers are fatherly chastisements, proceeding from love; that they are sanctified, and yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness. I have given the marks of sanctified afflictions, and mentioned the happy fruits which they produce in the children of God.

On the other hand, it is necessary to let Christless persons know, that their afflictions are of a different kind; they are even punishments from God as a judge, proceeding from wrath: they are unsanctified to them, and produce no fruits, but what are bitter and unsavoury.

Well then, O Christless soul, thou hast reason to suspect the worst concerning thy sickness, that it hath not been sanctified, and its fruits are not good. O then, labour to know the truth of the matter, that thou mayest be humble under a sense of thy misery, and flee to Jesus Christ for relief. And, for thy assistance in this enquiry, I shall give some marks of unsanctified afflictions.

1. If sickness hath not humbled thee under a sense of thy sins, the procuring cause thereof, nor any wise hath weakened sin in thee, nor reclaimed thee from it, but it remaineth in thee as strong as ever; it is a sign thy affliction is unsanctified. This was the case of those of whom God complaineth, Jer. ii. 30. "In vain have I smitten your children; they received not correction." As if he had said, the physic I gave them did not purge out sin; nor weaken corruption in the least. They have been stricken, but not grieved for sin: the fire hath burnt round about them, but they have not laid sin to heart, that kindled the flame.

2. It is a mark of unsanctified affliction, when it hath no influence upon a sinner to bring him to a serious communing with his own heart concerning the state of his soul, and to enquire in what terms he stands with God that afflicts him. God's voice by affliction is that in Haggai, i. 7. "Now consider your ways." In the day of adversity consider where you are, what you are, what you have done, what is the meaning of the rod, what will be the issue of it through eternity, in case it hath a commission to cut the thread of life. Now when a man remains stupid and careless about these important matters, and never noticeth the voice of affliction, so as to enquire seriously about his soul's condition; "Am I under a covenant of works, or a covenant of grace? Am I a child of God, or an enemy of God? Have I fled to the city of refuge, or am I still in a shelterless state? Am I still under a cloud of wrath, or am I brought under the banner of love?" I say, where there are no such enquiries, the affliction is unsanctified.

3. It is a certain sign of unsanctified affliction, when a person grows worse by it, and revolts the more he is stricken, like these, Isa. i. 5.

Quest. "When may it be said that a person grows worse by affliction?"

Ans. When the sinner's heart turns harder than it was before; so every plague in Egypt increased the plague of hardness in Pharoah's heart. It fares with many hearts as with iron that is often heated in the fire, and quenched in the water, it still increaseth in hardness. 2. When a

person giveth way to impatience and murmuring against God while he afflicts him. 3. When the lust of the heart grow more strong and impetuous, and afterwards rage the more, that they have been stopt in their course by affliction. In such cases a person grows worse by the rod.

DIRECT. II.—*Consider the great danger of not being bettered by sickness, and of not complying with the voice of God's rod.*

GOD'S voice by his rod doth loudly call sinners to repentance, and fleeing to the Lord Jesus Christ for refuge from wrath. Now, when this voice is not hearkened to, but men go on in their secure and sinful course as before, God is highly provoked, and the issue will be terrible: For,

1. Though sickness be removed, and the furnace of affliction be cooled for the time; yet the wrath that kindled it continues still to burn. And you have ground to fear lest you be ranked among those who are the generation of God's wrath, against whom he will have indignation for ever.

2. If lesser rods do not awaken you, you may expect greater and sorer judgments are coming on you. Yea, God may cause them to come rolling thick upon you, as waves and billows in a storm, one upon the neck of another. The great depths, both above and below, may be opened together; the displeasure of God, and wrath of men, may conspire and meet to pour out themselves as water spouts upon you at once; and to whom then will ye look for help?

3. The Lord may give over dealing with you, or using any further means to reclaim you; he may refuse to correct you any more, or bestow a rod upon you for your good, and say of you, as of Ephraim, Hos. iv. 17. "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone."

4. The Lord may give you up to spiritual plagues and judgments; and indeed this commonly is the result of obstinacy and incorrigibleness under outward rods. When Israel would not hearken to God's voice, he gave them up to their own hearts lusts, Psal. lxxxi. 11, 12. Now, these plagues are the severest of all others. External judgments are God's rods, but spiritual judgments are his swords, which pierce the very soul. Blindness of mind, hardness of heart, searedness of conscience, vile affections, and a reprobate sense, are the very forerunners of hell and damnation. Those who are impatient and unfruitful under outward afflictions, have cause to tremble, lest God be provoked to inflict those spiritual judgments.

5. Be assured, though God spare you long, yet the glass of his forbearance will at length run out. God's patience towards sinners hath a term and bound, over which it will not pass. The time will come when a long suffering God will at last say, My Spirit shall no longer strive; and the angel will cry, as Rev. xiv. 7. "The hour of God's judgment is come." You that abuse God's patience, and presume upon it, his treaty of peace will end with you in a little, and the master of the house will rise up and shut to the door. Then patience will come down, and justice will ascend the stage, and trample upon, and triumph over all that abuse Divine patience. Sodom was a wonder of God's patience for a long time, but now it is a lasting monument of his anger.

6. If you be not bettered by God's rods or sparing mercies, then your preservation at present will be nothing but a reservation for the day of God's wrath. And the longer your cup of sin is a filling, the fuller shall the cup of God's wrath be for you: by your impenitence and abuse of God's patience, you treasure up wrath for yourselves against the day of wrath, Rom. ii. 4. And though you be delivered from some judgments, you are reserved for worse; yea, for seven times worse, according to Lev. xxvi. 23, 24. Nay, there is a ruining blow designed against you, both soul and body, as soon as your cup is full; and the ax is already laid to the root of the tree, Mat. iii. 10. One blow of God's ax will cut off for ever.

Remember this, O sinner, though God's hand be lifted off you at present, and his messenger, Death, be for a little recalled, yet he will quickly return, and knock so loud at your door, as not to be refused. And, what will you do in the day of visitation? how ghastly must the pale horse be, when hell follows him at his heels? and, how hot and fiery must that hell be, which is inflamed and blown up by so long impenitence and abuse of patience?

DIRECT. III.—*Wonder at the patience of God in sparing such hell deserving sinners as you are, and be thankful for it.*

HATH a long-suffering God preserved the thread of your life, when it was almost snapt asunder by the violence of sickness? hath he freed you from racking pains under which you are groaning? nay, saved you from the grave and hell, into which you were falling? and have you not cause of wondering and thanksgiving? To move you to it, consider these few things:

1. How miserable had you been through all eternity, if your sickness had carried you off to another world in your sins? You had been howling with damned spirits, under endless and ceaseless torments, and for ever cut off from these hopes and offers of mercy you now have. Then the master of the house would have had the door so barred against you, as it could never have been opened again to you, knock as you would, Luke xiii. 25.

2. Consider how heavily you had burdened his patience with your heinous sins, and frequent relapses thereinto: and that after convictions, calls, and various rods sent to reclaim you; so that he was put to say, as in Amos ii. 14. "Behold, I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves." He was overburdened with your sins, so that the axle-tree of patience was ready to break, and let you fall into hell; and yet, behold he bears with you still.

3. Consider how soon he could have eased himself of the load, and shaken you off into the pit of destruction. In a moment could he have done it, and yet he bears many years with your sins, that are so grievous to him. Yea, it is with a sort of reluctance that he eases himself of sinners, after he gets the utmost provocation, Isaiah i. 24. "Ah, I will ease me of my adversaries."

4. How ready is he to turn away his anger, and reprieve sinners from destruction, when in their distress they make but a show of repentance and turning into God! as we see in Psal. lxxviii. 36, 38. He, like a tender-hearted prince, calls back the warrant for their execution after it was gone forth.

5. Consider how much many Christless sinners are beholden to Jesus Christ for sparing mercy. He is represented by the dresser, Luke xiii. interceding that the fruit-

less fig tree might be spared and tried some time longer, after orders given to cut it down. Were it not for Jesus Christ, O sinner, however much you forget and slight him, you had surely been in hell long ere now. How often doth he obtain another year, and after that another, for the unfruitful sinner, and unthankful abusers of Divine patience!

6. Consider how sparing mercy hath distinguished you from many others, who lived not so long, nor sinned so much as you have done. God hath wounded the hairy scalp of many, and taken them away in their youth; when he hath continued you to manhood, and perhaps to old age; though your sins and ill-deservings be greater than those of many, on whom he hath long since taken vengeance, God hath left many also tossing and groaning on beds of pain, when he hath eased and helped you up. O then return, like the thankful leper, and magnify the God of your health. Hath God distinguished you from others by his goodness? it becomes you to distinguish yourselves from others by your thankfulness. O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness! undeserved and distinguishing goodness!

To move you to this, let me set the example of Hezekiah before you, Isa. xxxviii. and there see how thankfully and affectionately he remembered the Lord's mercies in recovering and delivering him from the bitter affliction he had been under. "I said, I am deprived of the residue of my years, I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world. Like a crane or swallow, so did I chatter; I did mourn as a dove. Behold, for peace I had great bitterness; but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption. The living shall praise thee as I do this day." Yea, he was so overcome with a sense of the Lord's patience and mercy towards him, that he is at a loss how to express it, ver. 15. "What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it."

Let all, who are recovered from sickness, study to imitate that good king in holy admiration and thankfulness to the God of their life.

Direct. IV.—*Study to improve the sparing mercy and goodness of God to you in a right and suitable manner.*

O SINNER, hath God brought you back from the gates of death, and brink of hell, restored you to health, and given you a new offer of mercy and salvation through Christ in a preached gospel, which you formerly despised? Strive now to improve the Lord's patient and kind dealings towards you with the utmost care, and abuse his patience no longer. And, in order thereunto, take the following counsels.

1. Be deeply humbled for your former obstinacy and impenitency, notwithstanding of God's gracious and patient dealing. O let the sparing mercy and goodness of God toward thee, lead thee to repentance, which is the native design of it, according to Rom. ii. 4. "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness, forbearance and long suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? As if he had said, "Dost thou not see, O man, the kind providence of God in sparing and recovering thee from sickness, taking thee by the hand, and pointing out to thee to go to thy closet, and to mourn and weep for all thy bypast sins, and particularly for thy misspending the time of thy health, and abusing of the Lord's patience?" The consideration of David's goodness and forbearance towards Saul, melted Saul's heart, for as hard and rugged as it was, and made him to lift up his voice and weep, and say to David, 1 Sam. xxiv. 17. &c. "Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil." And thou hast shewed this day, how that thou hast dealt well with me; forasmuch as when the Lord had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not. For (says he) if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?" Oh, far more reason hast thou, O man, to weep and cry, "God hath found me his enemy, yea, in my enmity and sins, fighting against himself, he had me on a sick-bed, and on the very brink of hell, and the least touch of his hand would have thrust me in: But yet he hath spared his enemy, and let me go well away. Oh, will not these cords of love draw me, and this matchless goodness invite and hire me to repent? Can any consideration in the world be more powerful than this to melt my hard heart into tears of holy shame and sorrow for my stiffneckedness and rebellion against a gracious and long-suffering God? Away with these cursed God-provoking sins of mine? Down with these weapons of rebellion! Let me never lift them more against such a merciful sovereign!

II. Zealously improve the time, which God in his long suffering hath lengthened out to you, in working out the salvation of thy soul. Have you so long been loading the patience of God with your sins? Have you many a day been grieving his Holy Spirit, by trifling away your time, slighting his motions, and venturing on sins against light? O then, beware of burdening his patience any more; but diligently hearken to every motion of God's Spirit, and of your own conscience, for the time to come. You have much work to do, and but little time to do it in; therefore lay hold on every opportunity for carrying it on. The consideration of the much time you have already lost and mispent, should make you the more diligent in what remaineth. How much of it have you lost in youth? How much in ignorance? How much in negligence? How much in worldliness? How much in pastimes? How much in idle words? How much in actual sins and provocations against God? And now it may be near the evening of your day. And will you not spend the evening (which God is mercifully lengthening out), with extraordinary care and diligence? If a traveller lose the beginning of the day, he must travel the faster, in the evening, otherwise he may fall short of his journey, and have his lodging to seek when night comes. Paul had mispent much of the beginning of his life; and this consideration (when his eyes were opened) did stir him up to be the more diligent in the service of God, so that he was more zealous than any of the rest of the Apostles. O man, follow his example, and trifle no longer in the work of God. Art thou not convinced thou hast squandered away enough of this precious treasure of time already? And, wilt thou also mispend and throw away the little that remains? Oh be not so foolish.

III. Be careful to raze all false foundations, and build your hopes of salvation upon the only sure rock, Jesus Christ. Let it not discourage thee to dig to the foundation, that so much of thy day is lost; for it is better to do it late than never. Remember how miserable is the condition of that house which is built upon the sand, Mat. vii. 27. "For when the flood comes, and the storm arises and beats upon it, great and dismal will the fall of that

house be." Do not build your hopes of heaven upon God's absolute mercy, upon your convictions, upon your freedom from gross sins, upon your prayers or tears, upon your morality and just dealings with men: Though these be necessary and excellent in themselves, yet they are false foundations for you to build the hopes of your justification and salvation upon, seeing they are wholly insufficient to bear such a weight. However much these things have been esteemed and valued by you formerly, in the matter of justification; yet if you resolve to be a wise builder, you will let them all now go, yea, count them all but loss and dung that you may win Christ (our only hope), build on him alone, and be found in him, not having on your own righteousness, which is but filthy rags.

Well, then, raze and tear up every false foundation, dig deep, till you get to the rock Christ. Dig deep into the holy law and nature of God; dig till you see the infinite strickness of Divine justice, the unspeakable evil that is in sin, the hidden vileness and abominations of the heart, your own inability to do any thing for your help and relief. Dig yet further, till you see the infinite fullness and freeness of God's grace in Jesus Christ, that suitable remedy that answers all a poor sinner's needs. Dig deep, and dig still on, till you get to this rock; let your cry be still to God, Lord lead me to the rock Christ, and his all-sufficient righteousness, only. Act faith upon this rock, rely on it, build all your hopes on it, and say, "this is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it. Lord, the desire of my soul is only to Christ, and to the remembrance of his name. His name is a sweet ointment poured forth; therefore do the virgins love him."

IV. If you would rightly improve the sparing mercy and goodness of God, let it lead you to repentance and reformation of life. Turn from all these sins, whether of omission or commission, now in the day of health, which conscience challenged you for in the time of sickness. Mind Christ's caution and warning to healed sinners, John v. 14. "Behold thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing befal thee." O let sin die with thy sickness; and do not relapse into thy former security and former ways. Beware of returning with the dog to thy vomit, and like the sow that is washed to the wallowing again in the mire of thy former sins and uncleanness; lest being entangled and overcome again with the filthiness which thou now hast escaped, thy latter end prove worse than thy beginning.

Lastly, And to sum up all I shall say in this chapter, be careful to redeem time, and active in providing for an eternal state. O prize and value the mercy of health and strength, more than ever. Sympathize with those who are still lying on sick-beds, and under languishing distempers; neglect not to pity and pray for them. Remember the distressed case you were in yourselves, when you had no rest in your bones, when wearisome nights were appointed to you, and you were full of tossings to the dawning of the day. Consider how slippery is your standing. Though the late storm of trouble be over, yet the clouds will return after rain.

CHAPTER VII.

CONTAINING DIRECTIONS TO THOSE SICK PERSONS, WHO ARE APPARENTLY IN A DYING CONDITION, AND DRAWING NEAR TO ANOTHER WORLD.

I HAVE already, in the first, third, and fourth chapters, given several directions concerning our submission to the will of God, making preparation for death, calling for ministers, edifying others by our discourse, settling our worldly affairs, &c. which are very proper for dying persons; and therefore I shall not repeat them, but proceed to speak of other things. Only let me add this word; have you hitherto neglected to make your wills, settle your worldly affairs, send for the ministers to discourse with, and pray for you; delay it no longer, but do it speedily, while you have the use of your reason and understanding. And what I have more to say, take it in the following directions.

DIRECT. I.—*Consider, when Death stares you in the face, that now is the time, if ever, to exert the utmost activity in preparing to meet with it.*

ALAS, it is to be regretted that the most part of men neglect their souls, mispend their life, misimprove their health, and leave undone the work for which they were created, preserved, and enjoyed the gospel. Surely a near prospect of death and judgment cannot but be uneasy to such persons. What a melancholy thought must it be for a dying man? "Oh! I had all my time given me to make preparation for endless eternity; and, alas, I never minded it till now, that I must leave the stage of this world. Is there any hope for such a careless and miserable sinner." I acknowledge the case is sad, but yet it is not remediless nor desperate; seeing there is a sacrifice provided for your sins, and there is an all-sufficient Saviour in your offer, who never did cast out any humbled soul that came to him for mercy. You have great reason indeed to abhor and condemn yourself before God, for your sin and folly; yet despair not, but believe, whatever be your sins, your dangers, your fears, and temptations, that Jesus Christ is both able and willing to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, and that his grace aboundeth more than your sin aboundeth. O how glad would devils and damned souls in hell be, if they were but in your case, and had your offers and hopes! how diligently would they improve the time of mercy! O be persuaded then to spend the little time that now remains, with the utmost care, in making penitent confession of sin to God, and applying the blood of Christ for pardon. Nay, even the best of God's people have need to be diligent at this time in making actual preparations for dying. God is now saying to you, as Joshua did to the Israelites, Josh. i. 11. "Prepare you victuals, for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the Lord your God giveth you." Lay in provisions for your passing over this Jordan of death: you know not how rough this passage may be.

I shall give some motives to press this diligent and active preparation; and therefore consider,

1. The short time of your life that remains is all the time you have for working out your salvation. What you do for attaining heaven, or avoiding hell, must be done now, or never; for there is no work nor device in the grave whether thou goest, nor is there any coming back to this world to amend what hath been done amiss. Dying is a thing you cannot get a trial of, it is what you can only do once, and no more, Heb. ix. 27.

2. Be diligent now; for as soon as death gets commission to cut you off, it will execute it: it will not spare you, nor allow you one minute more time to prepare for eternity.

The most merciless enemies have sometimes been overcome by the prayers and tears of such as, on their knees, do beg a little more time to prepare for another world; and do hearken to their requests: but this enemy, death, will not grant one moment's respite.

3. Consider that your eternal state and condition will be according to the state in which you die. Death will open the doors either of heaven or hell to you, in one of which you shall take up your eternal abode. As the tree falls at death, so will it lie through eternity.

4. Consider what a serious and awful matter it is to die, and go into another world, for then you will have immediately to do with God your judge; there will be no veil then between him and your soul. You will then enter into a world of spirits, wherewith you are so little acquainted: you are frighted now to go into a room alone, that is said to be haunted by a spirit; how frightful then must the case of those be, who are hurried into a world of spirits, not knowing but devils must be their companions for ever! Surely then it is your interest to give all diligence now, to make your acquaintance with the Lord of that world, before you enter into it.

5. Put forth thy utmost activity for thy soul now; for, to be sure, Satan will put forth his utmost against it. If thou be in a Christless state at this time, he will use all his efforts and stratagems to keep thee from Christ; either by flattering thee that thy state is good, thereby to lull you asleep in sin and security, or by telling thee, it is out of time to help matters with thee, thereby to drive you into despair. The devil will leave no method unattempted to ruin thy soul, when death is near; for he knows his time is short: and, if he catch not the soul then, he will never get it: and neither can he hurt it hereafter; for, if once it enter heaven, he can trouble it no more.

If thou art a believer in Christ, Satan, thy malicious enemy, will not fail to attack thee, at this time, with all his might; for though he may know he cannot keep thee out of heaven, yet he will labour to render thy passage towards it as dark, tempestuous, and uncomfortable, as possibly he can. But it is the believer's happiness, this cruel enemy is under a strong chain, and cannot do all he would; for Jesus Christ is the good shepherd, that hath undertaken for all his sheep. Nevertheless, by his wise permission, this adversary may sometimes give great disturbance to a dying saint; which calls thee to the greatest diligence and watchfulness at this time. It is the observation of one, that as the devil is most busy at the conclusion of a duty, as of prayer, that the Christian may be most disturbed and distracted, when he is to close up all in the name of Christ, and so all his desires be frustrated; so he is most busy in the conclusion of our days, and when death is at hand, seeking by temptations, distractions, and false imaginations, to do us all the mischief he can, and all because he knoweth his time is short; according to that word, Rev. xii. 12. "The devil is come down, having great wrath, because that he knoweth he hath but a short time." He may fitly be called, the wolf of the evening, mentioned in Jer. v. 6. in regard he comes forth most fiercely in the evening of men's lives, to set upon their precious souls. Yea, so busy is he sometimes with believers under dangerous sickness, seeking to overthrow their faith and assurance, that it is the observation of a good man, that he seldom seeth a sick saint, followed close with temptations, recover of that sickness; for Satan, knowing he hath but a little time, proves as uneasy to him as he can. Hence that great man of God, Mr. Knox, said, when he came to die: "In my lifetime, the devil tempted me to despair, casting my sins in my teeth; but now, in my sickness, he tells me, I have been faithful in the ministry, and so have merited heaven: But blessed be God, who brought these texts into my mind, "Not I, but the grace of God in me. What hast thou that thou hast not received?" The children of Israel had never such hot work from their enemies, as when they just came to enter into the promised land.

What need then hast thou, O believer, to be diligent in thy preparations on a dying-bed to quicken grace, put forth thy utmost strength, bring all the assistance thou canst from the Captain of thy salvation, when thou hast such a cruel enemy to encounter with! Now is the time for action, though yet it will be your wisdom to leave as little to be done at this time as possible.

Direct. II. *Continue to the last in the exercise of true Repentance and Humiliation for Sin.*

POSSIDONIUS, who wrote the life of Augustine, said that he often heard him say in his health, that repentance was the fittest disposition both for dying Christians and ministers; and for himself, that he died with tears in his eyes, weeping for sin. When death approacheth nearest, we should thus stir up ourselves to give sin the most deadly blow of any we have given it all our life. As it is laudable to die forgiving sinners that have wronged us, so also taking revenge upon sin that hath injured a gracious God. The apostle tells us, 2 Cor. vii. 11. that indignation and revenge attend true repentance. Wherefore, as Samuel took vengeance on Agag a little before his death, and Moses (at God's command) avenged the children of Israel of the Midianites, just before he was gathered to his people, Numb. xxxi. 2. and dying Samson gave the most fatal blow to the Philistines, of any he had given them before; so a dying Christian should take the severest revenge on sin at last, which hath so often through his life dishonoured God, pierced Christ, and grieved his holy Spirit. It is the last opportunity you will have to show your indignation at it, and therefore do it effectually.

Again, consider, it is old sins unmourned for, that many times keep believers so much in the dark, when they come to die. These do raise many thick clouds about their evening sun, and hinder them from going off the stage with such comfortable assurance of God's love, as otherwise they might attain to. These did very much hinder Job's peace and settlement in the day of affliction, as he complains, Job xiii. 26. "He makes me to possess the iniquities of my youth." It is a sad thing when young sins and old bones meet together. O that young people would mind this in time! You are doing that now, which will abide with you to age, if not to eternity. Sin must be bitter sometime or other, for God calls it a root that bears gall and wormwood, Deut. xxix. 18. Israel could not have peace nor success while there was an Achan in the camp; so neither can you have consolation or assurance, while any sin lies unreckoned for in the conscience. Make a thorough search then into old sins, and mourn over them. We find Paul frequently calling over the sins of his life, and even those he was guilty of before conversion: "I was injurious, a blasphemer," &c. whereby he obtained much inward peace and consolation. Be often looking

back to old sins, with inward sorrow and faith in Christ's blood, if you would have a death-bed easy and soft to you.

Direct. III—*Be mindful of all acts of Justice and Charity which may be incumbent upon you at this time.*

IT is great wisdom in men to settle their worldly affairs in time of health, that so their minds may be free for spiritual exercises, and not disturbed with earthly cares and business when they come to a dying bed; but, if this hath been neglected hitherto, it must not be omitted now. I have given directions about it, Chap. 1. Direct. VI. so that I shall say little here, only be careful to do justice to every man, as much as in you lieth; and particularly 1. By making a just and rational provision for your wife and children. 2. By ordering the payment of all your just debts, without defrauding any of your lawful creditors. 3. By making restitution, in case you have wronged any man. If justice be not done in these matters, how can your souls be disburdened of guilt?

In the next place, forget not the acts of charity, which God requires of all the professors of the gospel.

1. Seek reconciliation with your neighbours, where any difference or mistakes have fallen in; that so you may die in peace and charity with all about you.

2. Be ready from the heart to forgive those that have done you any wrong. If the natural sun should not go down upon our wrath, much less should the sun of our lives; if you carry an unforgiving spirit with you into another world, how can you expect to meet with a forgiving God there? When he hath expressly declared, Matt. vi. 15. "If you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your father forgive you your trespasses." O then, imitate your glorious Saviour, and his martyr Stephen, who at their death begged mercy from God, for those that mortally hated them, Luke xxiii. 34. Acts vii. 60.

3. If the Lord hath given you substance, honour the Lord with it, by leaving some part of it to the poor, and to pious uses. I have pressed this once and again before; but I mention it frequently, because it is much forgotten by dying persons in our age. Remember, it is not left arbitrary to you to give or not, as you please: No, for God doth charge it upon you as a duty: yea, a debt that you owe to him, 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18. "Charge them that are rich in this world, &c. that they do good, be rich in good works, ready to distribute." And he pronounceth them blessed who consider the poor, Psal. xli. 1. I grant that people are not to leave all their works of charity to a death-bed: these should also be minded in our lifetime, so as to make our own hands our executors, and our own eyes our overseers of our charitable projects: but surely it is a proper season for shewing charity to God's poor, when we are leaving them, and cannot have occasion for showing it more. Remember what is recorded of Dorcas after her death, Acts ix. 36. that she was a woman full of good works and alms-deeds. And her friends, ver. 39. shewed the effects of her charity to Peter after her death. All which is written for our example and admonition, that we may be rich in such good works, that our friends may have them to show after our death. Surely it is a sign of the degeneracy of the age, and that religion is on the declining hand, when people generally fall so short of the zeal and piety of their fathers in these matters.

4. It would be a commendable work of charity in dying persons, to be giving many good counsels to their relations and children, and to be putting up many fervent prayers to God for them. So Christ, when near to death, committed his spiritual children to his Father, and earnestly begged his protection and care of them, John xvii. 11. "I am no more in the world, but these are in the world: keep them through thy name, keep them from the evil," &c. In like manner, cry to God for your children, "Lord, thou hast graciously given them to me, I now restore them back to thee. They were born to me once, O that they may be born to thee a second time! I am leaving them in the midst of snares and temptations, O that it may be their happiness to be the preserved in Jesus Christ! keep them by thy power, through faith unto salvation. O take them within the bond of thy covenant, and be thou their Father to protect, direct, and provide for them. Give them a name in thy house better than of sons and daughters, that I may meet with them at thy right hand with everlasting joy."

Lastly, Be suitably concerned also for the whole church of Christ, and especially for these that are in affliction, that God may loose their bonds, send them liberty and prosperity in his due time. "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion, build up the walls of thy Jerusalem. Peace be within her walls, and prosperity within her palaces."

Direct. IV.—*Labour what you can to overcome the Love of Life, and Fears of Death: that you may attain to willingness to die, and to leave the world, when God calleth you to it.*

IT is no wonder that a wicked man, or one that hath no interest in Christ, be unwilling to die: Why? He is affrighted with the guilt of past sins, and the fears of future torments; and it is impossible to be rid of these till he become a true believer in Christ. No man hath ground to welcome death but a true believer; yet it is to be regretted, that so many of them should appear unwilling to leave this world, which is nothing to them but a wilderness and weary land. Lot's soul was vexed and troubled in Sodom, and yet he was loth to leave it; so some believers, when called to leave a vexing world, do show much hankering towards it, and would linger behind. This proceeds partly from nature, which dreads dissolution, and partly from the weakness of grace. But, O let all God's children labour to overcome this aversion, and go forth to meet death half-way, and bid it welcome. And, for their help in this matter, I shall lay before them the following arguments.

1. Consider how little reason a believer hath to be much in love with this present life. 1. It is a sinful life; sin dwells in your nature, breaks out in your life, and pollutes all your duties. How often have you groaned under this burden; and should you not be glad to be eternally delivered from it? 2. It is a life of diseases and infirmities; and should you not be willing to be cured of them all at once? 3. It is a life of temptation: Satan is still harrassing thee; and should you not be desirous to be out of his reach? 4. It is a life of persecutions from the wicked: they hate, reproach, and injure you many ways; and is it not desirable to be "where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary be at rest?" 5. It is a life of clouds and darkness: your sun is often veiled, and your evidences obscured, which occasions many bitter complaints; and should you not desire that time,

when the day shall break, and all shadows fly away? 6. It is a life of calamities and fears: it is like a stormy sea, where one wave rolls upon the back of another; and when one calamity is past, we many time fear a greater is coming; and sometimes the heavens turn so black and gloomy, that we fear a hurricane of judgment is ready to blow. And, should you not bless God, when he comes by death to house your souls, and set you out of harm's way? It is in mercy that God takes away the righteous from the evil to come, Isa. lvii. 1. So dealt he with Josiah, 2 Kings xxii. 20. "I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be put into thy grave in peace, and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I shall bring upon this place." So it is observable, that Methusalah died the very year before the flood; Augustine a little before the sacking of Hieppo; Pareus just before the taking of Heidelberg. Luther observes, that all the apostles died before the destruction of Jerusalem. And Luther himself died before the bloody wars broke out in Germany. Thus God frequently hides his people from the temptations and troubles that are coming on the earth. Why? He sees many of them not in case to endure them; and, therefore, he in mercy takes them away from a tempting and sinning world, to a land of holiness and rest. While we are here, we live in a world that lies in wickedness; every sense of the body betrays the soul into sin; the poor soul can scarce look out at the eye, and not be infected, nor hear by the ear, and not be distracted, nor smell at the nostrils, and not be tainted, nor taste by the tongue, and not be allured, nor touch by the hand, and not be defiled.

O believer, what is this life that thou art so fond of? It is but a living death, or a dying life. It is full of grief for things past, full of labour for things present, and full of fears for things future. The first part of our life is spent in folly, the middle part is overwhelmed with cares, and the latter part of it is burdened with infirmities and age. And, what gain we by the prolonging of this life? Nothing but to do more evil, see more evil, and suffer more evil. And should a Christian be unwilling to be rid of those grievances?

2dly, Consider that dying is appointed as the way, and the only way, to glory: there is no way to enter the promised land, but by crossing the Jordan of death. And should not a stranger desire to be at home with his friends, though he hath a rough way and stormy sea to pass? Is there any home like heaven, where your incomparable friend Christ is? O what a happiness is it to be with Christ, and to see him as he is! How happy do you think Peter, James and John were, in being taken up to mount Tabor, to be eye-witnesses of their Saviour's transfiguration. But, O believer, death procures a greater happiness to you; it ushers you to Mount Zion, where you shall not only see your Saviour whiter than the snow, and brighter than the sun, but yourself transfigured with him, made like him, and eternally secured of his presence. The three Apostles saw but two Prophets; but you shall see all the Prophets, all the Apostles, all the Patriarchs, all the Martyrs, all the holy persons you once conversed with on earth, and in general all the saints in heaven, each of them shining as the sun; and how sweet will their company be? O how soon will the trifles of the world vanish, and all its pleasures be forgot, when once the believer gets a view of that captivating glory above! When the shepherds heard but some few notes of the angels' songs, who praised God at the nativity of our Saviour, they presently left their flocks, and ran to Bethlehem to behold the child Jesus lying in the manger; but much more cause hath a believer to leave all the pleasures of the world, and run to behold an exalted Jesus sitting on the throne of his glory, with all his saints and angels singing praises around him.

If Cato and Cleombrotus, two Heathens, after reading Plato's book of the immortality of the soul, did voluntarily, the one fall on his sword, the other break his neck from a precipice, that they might the sooner come (as they fancied) to partake of those joys; what a shame is it for Christians, who have a far surer and clearer discovery of these things from God's own book, to be found unwilling to enter into these heavenly joys, when their blessed Redeemer calls for them thither.

3. Consider how willing Christ was to come from heaven to earth for you; and, should you be unwilling to remove from earth to heaven for him? Yea, for yourselves, for the gain is yours. O did Christ assume your nature, become obedient to death, and purchase an inheritance for you with his blood; and, will you be backward to go and take possession of it? O for a Christ-like obedience at death!

Lastly, Consider what a reproach is cast on Christianity by a believer's unwillingness to die. For Christians to pray, and speak much of Christ, of heaven and glory, and yet be unwilling to enter into that glory; what is it but a misbelieving of God and a tempting of strangers, to think there is no reality in religion?

Quest. "Since death is not easy to grapple with, how shall I attain to this blessed disposition, and a willingness to die?"

Ans. 1. Be frequently putting forth the acts of faith upon the righteousness of Christ; and believe that Christ died to bring in a perfect righteousness for believers, that they all may be complete in him. Now, why should a believer be afraid to appear before God in Christ's righteousness, which is so pleasing and acceptable to him? Rev. xiv. 4, 5. They are said to be without fault before the throne of God. If a believer were to appear before God, in his own righteousness, clothed with his own duties and performances, it would be dreadful to think of dying; but to have the white garment of an elder brother to put on, gives another view of death. Alas, it is our neglecting the daily exercise of faith, in the righteousness of Christ, that makes the thoughts of death so unwelcome.

2. When you attain to peace and reconciliation with God, labour to preserve it. Be stating and clearing counts with God every day, and watch against these sins that wound conscience, waste comfort, and grieve the Spirit of adoption. When we think God is displeased with us, we will be afraid of going to him.

3. Study to be more denied to the enjoyments of this life, and to use them with a holy indifference; otherwise there will be an unwillingness to leave these things.

4. Labour to be deeply sensible of the burden of indwelling sin and corruption, and the workings thereof in your hearts; and this will make the thoughts of death welcome, because it eternally delivers you from it.

5. Seek further discoveries of the loveliness of Christ, and the daily exercise and increase of your soul's love to him: for it is the nature of love to long after communion with the person that we love.

6. Make death familiar to you, by the frequent fore-

thoughts of it. Retire often from the world to think of dying, when you are in best health.

7. Be much taken up in the sweet employments of praising God, and exalting the worthy Lamb that was slain; and this will incline you to be there, where this is the continued work.

Lastly, Be often thinking of these warnings and forerunners of death, which God sends to wean your heart from the love of life, and dispose you to a willingness to die. For this end, God sends manifold diseases, pains, infirmities, wants, straits, losses, crosses, disappointments, &c. And, in a special manner, let old people view the forerunners and harbingers of death, which God sends to prepare his way: such as the decays and infirmities of old age, which we have elegantly described in figurative expressions, Eccles. xii. ii. "Then the light of the sun, moon and stars shall be darkened; i. e. in old persons, the intellectual powers and faculties, which are as lights in the soul, shall be weakened. And then do "the clouds return after rain;" i. e. their distempers are frequent, like a continual dropping in a very rainy day, and the ending of one is but the beginning of another." Ver. 3. "Then the keepers of the house do tremble;" i. e. the head and hands, which were employed for the preservation of the body, do shake. "The strong men bow themselves;" the legs and thighs, which are the pillars of the house, become weak and feeble. "The grinders cease, because they are few;" i. e. the teeth, which, like the upper and nether millstone, do grind our meat, and prepare it for concoction, then cease to do their part. "Those that look out of the windows are darkened," i. e. The eyes wax dim, whereby God calls us to turn them away from beholding vanity, and to look after the things that are not seen, ver. 4. "The daughters of music are brought low:" i. e. They have neither voice nor ears; they can neither sing themselves, nor take pleasure in the voice of singing men or singing women. Then death pulls us, as it were, by the ear, to think on the music above, ver. 5. "The almond tree flourisheth;" i. e. The hair grows white, like an almond tree in the blossom. And as the outward parts of the body do weaken and decay, so also do the inward parts: Therefore it is said, ver. 6. "The silver cord shall be loosed, the golden bowl broken, the pitcher broken at the fountain, and the wheel broken at the cistern:" i. e. The silver cord of the sinews is loosed, which carries the faculty of sense and motion from the head through the body. The head, which, like a golden bowl or box, contains the brain, that is the fountain of sense and motion, through age is broken, and turns crazy. The many pitchers of the veins, which carry the nourishing blood from the well of the liver unto each part of the body, become like broken vessels. And the wheel of the arteries, which convey the vital spirits from the heart to the several members for quickening them, begin to turn faint and languid. All these things do warn old persons to take their affections off time's things, and set them on things above, that they may be helped to say, we "desire to depart, and to be with Christ."

But, after all, some believers will have objections against willingness to die, some whereof I shall consider.

Object. I. "I am threatened to be cut off in the flower of mine age."

Ans. Instead of fretting on this account, you ought rather to adore and praise a gracious God, that is willing to bestow the reward of the whole day upon thee, who hast only laboured some hours of it. Praise him, that is willing to take you soon home; whereby you will prevent much sin and sorrow in the world.

Object. II. "I have houses and lands, and a comfortable dwelling on the earth."

Ans. These are only needful in your passage through the world; above there is no use for these comforts. There God provideth mansions for his people, a thousand times more comfortable, John xiv. 2.—2 Cor. v. 1. Surely houses of God's building, and of Christ's furnishing, are preferable to the cottages built by mens' hands.

Object. III. "But I am loth to leave God's ordinances, and the sweet communion I have had with him therein."

Ans. Above there will be no need of ordinances, sacraments, Bibles, or ministers; for the Lamb will be the light of the heavenly temple, and all hid things in religion will be discovered in Christ's face. There you will celebrate an eternal Sabbath, drink the fruit of the vine new with Christ, be ever with the Lord, without any cloud or interruption of your communion with him. Is it any loss to be taken from the shallow streams, and set by the fountain that is ever full and running over.

Object. IV. "I am loth to leave the company of godly friends and relations."

Ans. Death will take you to your friend Christ, that is far better than them all. And for one friend you lose upon earth, you shall find an hundred in heaven; and these godly relations you leave here, you shall soon meet with them again there; where you will have far more sweet communion than possibly you can have upon earth with them, or the best of them, who, while here, have several infirmities and passions, that many times make their converse uncomfortable.

Object. V. "But I would fain see the glory of Zion upon earth, when God's promises to her shall be accomplished."

Ans. So Moses would fain have seen Israel's happiness in the promised land: But his dying in the firm belief of God's fulfilling all his promises to them there, was more acceptable to God, than his beholding the preformance. And the glory of the church militant, is a sight nothing comparable to that of the church triumphant above.

Object. VI. "But I would incline to stay to do God more service in his church below, whose necessities are claimant."

Ans. 1. You will not want opportunity for serving and glorifying God above, and where you will be in a far better case for it. Here, our hearts are often out of tune for God's work, and we are forced to hang our harps upon the willows; but above there are no willows to hang them on; no saint there will ever complain of any indisposition of heart or tongue.

2. God knows the necessities of his church, and is more concerned for them than thou canst be; and it is easy for him to raise up instruments to carry on his work when thou art gone.

Object. VII. "I am afraid of the pain and pangs of death. The thoughts of these make me shrink back."

Ans. 1. Many die without much seeming sense of pain, and it is probable have less pain at the hour of death, than they have felt under several former diseases.

2. If they be sharp, they are soon over; and each pang of death will set sin a step nearer the door, and thy soul a step nearer home: And therefore, it becometh a Christian to die cheerfully, and to be glad when he can find the grave.

Now, what I have said in this chapter, is to the believing soul: For it is no wonder though the souls of the ungodly, at death, shrink back into the body, and tremble to go forth, when they can have no prospect of any better lodging than utter darkness.

DIRECT. V. *Study to imitate the ancient worthies, by dying in faith.*

THIS was the character and epitaph of the Old Testament saints, Heb. xi. 13. "These all died in faith." As they had lived in faith, so they died in faith. They not only continued true believers to the last, dying in the state of faith, but they died in the exercise of faith also. Now, the exercise of faith in dying, includes several things worthy to be imitated by all dying believers.

1. An open and professed adherence to the doctrine of faith, and truths of Christianity. This faith all Christians should zealously own in the view of death, and persevere in it to the last, without wavering. This would be to die like martyrs, though we die in our beds. How stedfastly did old Polycarp adhere to Christ and his truths to the last, and so died in faith? When he was urged by the Proconsul to deny Christ, he answered, "These fourscore and six years have I served him, and he never once offended me: and how shall I now deny him."

2. Dying in faith imports an inward, hearty, and firm belief of the fundamental articles of the Christian faith; and improving them so, as to make them the foundation of our comfort and hope at the hour of death. As, for instance, we must yield our departing souls, in the firm belief of their living and existing in a separate condition after this life, and of that future state of blessedness and rest which God hath prepared for all believers. Again, we must dismiss the body to the grave, in a firm belief and hope of a joyful resurrection at the last day. Thus that holy man Job both lived and died in faith, Job xix. 25, 26. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." A Christian then dies in faith, when he believes these truths so, as cheerfully to obey God's call, and venture into the invisible world, upon the testimony which God hath given concerning it; as Abraham did in going out to an unknown land, Heb. xi. 8. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."

3. The believer dies in faith, when he makes fresh application to Christ as his only hope and Saviour, takes him in his arms of faith, as old Simeon did before his death, saying, "In the Lord Jesus Christ I have righteousness and strength;" though I have neither righteousness nor strength in myself, yet I have both in him, my blessed Surety and Redeemer. We have many uses for faith in Christ at the hour of death. By faith we must depend upon Christ's blood for making atonement, and washing away the guilt of all our bypast sins. By faith we must put on the righteousness of Christ, for covering our naked souls, when they are to appear and stand before God. By faith we must rely on Christ for strength to suffer pain, resist temptations, to conquer death and all our enemies. By faith we must look to Christ as our leader, and trust him for our safe conduct through the dark valley of death, and for our safe landing on the shore of glory.

4. The believer dies in faith, when he trusts his departing soul with confidence in his Redeemer's hand, saying with Paul, 2 Tim. i. 12. "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." This was the Psalmist's practice, Psal. xxxi. 5. "Into thy hand I commit my spirit; for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." So the man who dies in faith, commits the jewel of his soul to his Redeemer's keeping, and confides in his care of it. Why? He made it, he hath redeemed it, he loves it, it is his own, a member of his body, and he will not hate his own flesh. He loves his dying saints much better than we love an eye, a hand, or any other member of our body, which, to be sure, we will not lose, if it be in our power to save it.

5. Dying in faith imports, that the dying saint confides in God's faithfulness and truth for making good all his promises to his church and people after his death, which are not yet accomplished. We should go off the stage in the firm belief of God's fulfilling all his promises concerning the prosperity of his church, the calling of the Jews, the destruction of Anti-Christ, and the second coming of our Lord; and likewise concerning our families, that God will be as good as his word, and be a father to the fatherless, and a husband to the widow.

Would we then be so happy as to die in faith, let us take these advices:

1. Let us be careful to get faith before-hand; for death is a time to use faith, not to get it. They were foolish virgins who had their oil to buy when the bridegroom was come.

2. Study to live every day in the exercise of faith, and be still improving and making use of Christ in all his offices, and for all these ends and uses for which God hath given him to believers.

3. Be frequently clearing up your evidences for heaven, and beware of letting sin blot them to you.

4. Record and lay up the experiences of God's kind dealings with you, and be often reflecting upon them, that you may have them ready at hand in the hour of death.

Lastly, Meditate much on these promises, which have been sweet and comfortable to you in the time of straits; and beg that the Lord may bring them to your remembrance when you come to die.

DIRECT. VI.—*Set the Examples of other dying Saints before you, and study in like manner to shine in Grace, and be exemplary in Piety and Heavenly Discourse, for the Glory of God, and Good of Souls, when you are going off the Stage.*

THIS is the last opportunity you have of doing service to God, and the interest of religion; wherefore, strive to improve it diligently for the honour of God, and the edification of those that survive you. How pleasant is it to see God's people leaving the world, commending Christ and his service, and perfuming the place they lie in with their last breath? I have, Chap. III. Direct. V. and VI. adduced several motives to press this point, and given directions concerning the speech and behaviour of the children of God when on sick-beds, which I shall not repeat.

That which I design here is, to set before you the examples of some eminent saints, and their exemplary, pious,

and holy speeches and sayings, when they were a-dying; and that, in order to confirm and establish others in religion, and also to excite them to imitate those shining worthies, when they also come to die. Surely it is for this very end that God hath ordered us to be compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, Heb. xii. 1. Thus doth the Apostle improve their example, Heb. xi. 1. And how earnest is he in this matter? Heb. vi. 11, 12. "And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end; that ye be not slothful, but followers of them, who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises."

I shall begin with some examples from the Sacred History; and, in the first place, with the King of Saints, our Lord Jesus Christ. O how sweet and comfortable were his discourses unto his disciples, when his death drew nigh! and, what a heavenly prayer did he make for them and all his elect ones at that time! These we have recorded in the xiv. xv. xvi. and xvii. chapters of John; which are most seasonable at all times for us to read and meditate upon, but especially when death is approaching. And, likewise, let us read the history of our Lord's passion, in which we may observe the wonderful expressions of his faith in God, his patience under sufferings, his pity to his enemies, his love to his mother and his disciples, his concern for his Father's glory, his obedience in his death, and his willingness to be offered up. Thus the blessed Sun of Righteousness did shine forth most gloriously at his setting, with the radiant beams of his heavenly graces and virtues: and herein he hath set himself a pattern to all dying saints to the end of the world.

Jacob, when he was on his death-bed, called his sons together, and gave them many special charges and blessings; we have his excellent words recorded in Gen. xlviii. and xlix. chapters. And, in particular, how sweetly doth he speak of the coming of the Messiah to them? Gen. xlix. 10, 18; and how affectionately doth he commend God's goodness and kind providence towards him through his life? Gen. xlviii. 15, 16. "The God which fed me all my life long unto this day," &c.

Joseph, when he was a-dying, spoke lovingly to his brethren, who had dealt cruelly with him; and assured them of the Lord's faithfulness in keeping his promise to their fathers, Gen. l. 20. "I die, and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land."

Moses, when he was to go up to Mount Nebo, to die there, left many blessings, and gave many weighty charges to the children of Israel; we have his holy and ravishing words recorded, Deut. xxxii. and xxxiii. chapters. And, particularly, how pleasantly doth he commend God and his ways to the people! Deut. xxxii. 4. "He is the rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment; a God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he."

Joshua, when he was near his end, gave many solemn charges and exhortations to the people, which we have narrated, Josh. xxiii. and xxiv. chapters. And there we may see the remarkable methods he takes to rivet impressions and convictions upon them, now when he can instruct them no longer. And particularly, he appeals to their consciences concerning the faithfulness of God in keeping his word to them, that so he might engage them to fidelity to him, Josh. xxiii. 14. "And behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth, and you know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you."

David, when his end was near, assembled the people, and solemnly charged them as in the audience of God, to keep his comandments, 1 Chron. xxviii. 8, 9. And particularly he charged his son and successor Solomon, to "know the God of his father, and to serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind."

The Apostle Paul, when taking his last farewell of the elders of Ephesus, most solemnly charges them, to "take heed to themselves, and the flocks over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers," Acts xx. 28. And how sweetly doth he sing in the view of approaching death, 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8, "I am now ready to be offered, the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto them also that love his appearing."

In imitation of those scripture-saints, the people of God, in all ages, have studied to glorify God and edify men at their death, by commending God and godliness to their friends and families. Those we ought to teach by our example, both how to live and how to die, as others have done before us. Thus, said once a dying saint to his family, "I have formerly taught you how to live, and now I teach you how to die."

Now, because in all ages the speeches of dying Christians have been much observed, that God hath remarkably blessed them to the establishment and confirmation, quickening and exciting, of others to imitate them; I shall bring several examples from human histories and writings, and mostly from Clark's Lives, of sundry eminent saints, whose graces have shone brightest, and their speeches were most heavenly, when the sun of their life was at the setting.

1. That old disciple, Polycarp, when he came to the stake at which he was burnt, desired to stand untied, saying, "Let me alone; for he that gave me strength to come to the fire, will give me patience to endure the flame without your tying."

2. So holy Cyprian triumphed over death, saying, "Let him only fear death, who must pass from this death to the second death. When he heard the sentence of death pronounced against him, he said, "I thank God for freeing me from the prison of this body."

3. Basil, when the Emperor Valens sent his officers to tempt him with great preferments to turn from the faith, he rejected them with scorn, saying, "You may offer these things to children." And when they threatened him with sufferings, he said, "Threaten your purple gallants with these things, that give themselves to their pleasures."

When Modestus the prefect threatened Basil to confiscate his goods, to torment him, to banish him, or kill him, he answered, "He need not fear confiscation that hath nothing to lose; nor banishment, to whom heaven only is a country; nor torments, when his body would be dashed with one blow; nor death, which is the only way to set him at liberty." The prefect telling him he was mad, he said, *Opto me in æternum sic delirare*, "I wish I may forever be thus mad."

4. Ignatius being led from Syria to Rome to be torn in pieces of wild beasts, he expressed his fear lest it should

happen to him as to some others, that the lions, out of a kind of reverence, would not dare to touch him. And therefore he often wished, "That their appetites might be whetted to dispatch him. For (says he) the lions teeth are but like a mill, which, though it bruiseth, yet wasteth not the good wheat, only prepares and fits it to be made pure bread. Let me be broken by them, so I may be made pure manchent for heaven."

5. The great Mr. Knox, our Reformer, when he lay a-dying, was much in prayer, ever crying, "Come, Lord Jesus; sweet Jesus, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Being asked, by those that attended him, if his pain was great? he answered, that "He did not esteem that a pain, which would be to him the end of all trouble, and the beginning of eternal joys." Oft-times, after some deep meditations, he said, "O serve the Lord in fear, and death shall not be terrible to you: blessed is the death of those that have part in the death of Jesus."

After a sore temptation from Satan (which I formerly mentioned) over which he triumphed at length, he said, "Now the enemy is gone away ashamed, and shall no more return. I am sure now my battle is at an end, and that without pain of body, or trouble of spirit, I shall shortly change this mortal and miserable life, with that happy and immortal life, which shall never have an end." After one had prayed for him, he was asked, whether he heard the prayer? He answered, "Would to God you had heard it with such an ear and heart as I have done!" Adding, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." With which words, without any motion of hands or feet, as one falling asleep, rather than dying, he ended his life.

6. Dr. Gouge, when he was old and dying, was sore afflicted with the stone, and other painful maladies; yet though, by reason of his pains, he was often heard to groan, he never once grumbled against the dispensations of God: He never cried out, *A great sufferer*, but often, *A great sinner:* Yet still comforted himself, that there is a great Saviour. In his greatest torments he would say, "Well, yet in all these there is nothing of hell, or of God's wrath. O my soul, be silent, be patient. It is thy God and Father that thus orders thine estate. Thou art his clay, he may tread and trample upon thee as he pleaseth, thou hast deserved much more. It is enough that thou art kept out of hell, though thy pains be grievous, yet they are not intolerable, thy God affords some intermissions; he will turn it to thy good, and at length put an end to all; and none of these comforts can be expected in hell." In his greatest pains, he often used holy Job's words, "Shall we receive good from the hands of the Lord, and not evil also?" When any of his friends would have comforted him, with telling him of his eminent gifts and service in the ministry, he would answer, "I dare not think of any such thing for comfort: Only Jesus Christ, and what he hath done and endured, is the ground of my sure comfort." The thoughts of death were pleasant to him, which he often termed his best friend, next unto Jesus Christ. And he would bless God, that he had nothing to do, but to die.

7. I have read of another minister under the like extreme pains. When he was asked how he did? His frequent answer was: "The bush always burning but not consumed; though my pains are above the strength of nature, yet they are not above the supports of grace. He would pray, Lord, drop comfort into these bitter waters of Marah. Let the blood of sprinkling, which extinguisheth the fire of thine anger, allay my burning pain. Oh, if my patience were more, my pains would be less; Lord, give me patience, and inflict what thou wilt. This is a fiery chariot, but it will carry me to heaven. O my God, break open the prison-door, and set my poor captive soul free: I desire to be dissolved, but enable me willingly to wait thy time." He would cry again, "when shall the time come, that I shall neither sin more nor sorrow more: Lord, keep me from dishonouring thy name by impatience. Oh, who would not, even in burnings, have honourable thoughts of God! Lord, thou givest me no occasion to have hard thoughts of thee. Blessed be God, for the peace of mine inward man, when my outward man is so full of trouble. This is a bitter cup, but it is of my Father's mixing; and, shall I not then drink it?"

8. Mrs. Jane Askew, who was a martyr in King Henry's reign, to her confession in Newgate, she thus subscribed: written by me, Jane Askew, that neither wisheth death, nor feareth its might, and as merry as one bound towards heaven. When the Chancellor sent her letters at the stake, offering her the king's pardon, if she would recant; she, refusing to look upon them, gave this answer; "that she came not thither to deny her Lord and Master."

9. Mr. James Bainham, when he was at the stake, in the midst of the burning fire which had half consumed his legs and arms, spake these words: "O ye Papists! behold ye look for miracles, and here now ye may see a miracle; for in this fire I feel no more pain than if I were on a bed of down; it is to me as a bed of roses."

10. John Lambert, as he was burning in Smithfield, and his legs were quite consumed with the fire, he lift up his hands, his fingers flaming like torches, but his heart abounding with comfort, crying out, "None but Christ, none but Christ."

11. Mr. Robert Glover, a little before his death, had lost the sense of God's favour, for which he was in great heaviness and sorrow; but when he came within sight of the stake at which he was to suffer, he was on a sudden so filled with divine comfort, that, clapping his hands together, he cried out to his servant, "He is come, he is come;" and so died most cheerfully.

12. It was a saying of Augustine, "Boughs fall off trees, and stones out of buildings; and, why should it seem strange that mortal men die!"

13. Mr. John Dodd had so violent a fever, that there was but little hope of his life: yet at length his physician coming to him, said, "Now I have hope of your recovery." To whom Mr. Dodd answered, "You think to comfort me with this, but you make my heart sad. It is as if you should tell one, who had been sore weather-beaten at sea, and conceiving he was now arrived at the haven where his soul longed to be, that he must go back again to be tossed with new winds and waves."

He would often say in his last sickness, "I am not afraid to look death in the face. I can say, Death, where is thy sting? death cannot hurt me."

He used to say, "The knowledge of two things would make one willing to die, viz. What heaven is, and that it is mine." "Yes," said one, "if a man were sure of that." To whom he answered, "Truly assurance is to be had; and, what have we been doing all this while?"

Some others of the sayings of this holy man, were so pithy and remarkable, I cannot pass them here.

Once Mr. Dodd coming to visit a godly minister on his death-bed, who was much oppressed with melancholy, and complained to him, saying, "O Mr. Dodd, what will you say of him, who is going out of the world, and can find no comfort?" To whom Mr. Dodd answered, "What will you say of our Saviour Christ, who, when he was going out of the world, found no comfort, but cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He said of afflictions, they are God's portions, which we may sweeten by faith and faithful prayer; but we, for the most part, make them better, putting into God's cup the evil ingredients of our impatience and unbelief. He called death the friend of grace, though it be the enemy of nature; for, whereas the word, sacraments, and prayer, do but weaken sin, death kills it." He used to say, "A man is never in a hard condition unless he have a hard heart, and cannot pray." He instructed Christians how they should never have a great nor lasting affliction, and that was, by looking upon the things that are not seen, which are eternal, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. For, what can be great to him, that counts the world nothing? And, what can be long to him, that counts his life but a span long? When he saw a Christian look sad, he would say, as Jonadab did to Amnon, "Art thou a king's son, and lookest so ill?" And, when such complained to him of their crosses and losses, he would use the words of Eliphaz to Job, "Do the consolations of God seem small to you? God hath taken from you your children, your goods, &c. but he hath not taken from you himself, his Christ, nor his Spirit, nor heaven, nor eternal life."

To a friend of his, that rose from a mean to a great estate, he sent word, "That this was but as if he should go out of a boat into a barge or ship; but he ought seriously to remember, that, whilst he was in this world, he was but upon the floating sea."

He often said, that if it were lawful to envy any, he would envy those that turn to God in their youth, whereby they escape much sin and sorrow, and are like Jacob, that stole the blessing betimes. He used to compare reproofs given in passion, to scalding potions, which the patient could not take down; in reproofs we should labour for meekness and wisdom, using soft words, and hard arguments.

He was a most popular minister, but much persecuted. Once he took a [illegible] to see his father in-law, Mr. Greenham, and to [illegible]self to him, upon account of his crosses and [illegible] Mr. Greenham, having heard all he could say, [illegible] him thus: Son, son, when affliction lieth heavy, [illegible] light." Mr. Dodd used often to bless God for this speech, saying, if Mr. Greenham had bemoaned him as he expected, he had done him much hurt. He forgot not this saying in his old age, but made excellent use of it for himself and others.

14. Œcolampadius, that famous divine of Switzerland, when lying on his death-bed, and being asked, Whether the light did not offend him? He answered, pointing to his breast, "*Hic sat lucis*, Here is abundance of light," meaning of comfort and joy. He asked one of his friends, What news? His friend answered, None. "Then," saith he, "I will tell you some news; I shall presently be with my Lord Christ."

15. A certain godly man, passing through his last sickness with extraordinary calmness of conscience, being asked by some of his friends anent it, he answered, that he had stedfastly fixed his heart upon the sweet promise, Isa. xxvi. 3. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee." And my God (saith he) hath graciously made it fully good unto my soul.

16. Mr. Robert Bolton, minister at Broughton, well known by his writings, in time of his last sickness, which was long and sharp, often breathed out these words: "Oh, when will this good hour come? When shall I be dissolved? When shall I be with Christ?" Being told, that to be dissolved was indeed better for him, yet it would be better for the church that he would stay here; he answered, "If I have found favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me both it and his habitation; but, if otherwise, lo, here I am, let him do what seemeth good in his eyes." Being asked by another, if he would not be content to live, if it pleased God? He answered, I grant that life is a great blessing of God, neither will I neglect any means that may preserve it; and do heartily submit to God's will; but of the two, I infinitely desire more to be dissolved, and to be with Christ." He bade all that came to see him, make sure of Christ before they came to die, and look upon the world now as a lump of vanity. He encouraged the ministers that came to him, to be diligent and courageous in the work of the Lord, and not to faint nor droop for any affliction that should arise thereupon.

When he found himself very weak, he called for his wife and children. He desired her to bear his dissolution, which was now at hand, with a Christian fortitude; a thing he had been preparing her for by the space of twenty years; and bade her make no doubt but she should meet him again in heaven. He exhorted his children to remember those things he had frequently told them before; adding, "That he hoped and believed, that none of them durst think to meet him at the great tribunal in an unregenerate state.

Some of his parish coming to watch with him, it was moved, that as by his doctrine he had discovered to them the exceeding comforts that were in Christ, so he would now tell them what he felt in his own soul. Alas! (said he) do you look for that of me now, that wants breath and strength to speak? I have told you enough in my ministry; but yet, to satisfy you, I am, by the wonderful mercies of God, as full of comfort as my heart can hold; and I feel nothing in my soul but Christ, with whom I heartily desire to be." And observing some weeping, he looked to them, and said, "Oh, what a deal ado there is before one can die."

When the pangs of death were upon him, being told that some of his dear friends were about him to take their last farewell, he caused himself to be raised up in his bed: And, after a few graspings for breath, he said, "I am now drawing on a pace to my dissolution; hold out, faith and patience, your work will speedily be at an end." And then, shaking them all by the hands, he prayed heartily and particularly for them; and desired them to make sure of heaven, and to bear in mind what he had formerly told them in his ministry; protesting that the doctrine he had preached to them for the space of twenty years was the truth of God, as he should answer it at the tribunal of Christ, before whom he should shortly appear.

When he was struggling with death, a very dear friend taking him by the hand, asked him, if he felt not much pain? "Truly no (said he) the greatest I feel is your cold hand."

17. Mr. John Holland, a godly minister, continued his usual practice of expounding the scriptures in his family to the last; and the day before his death, he called for the Bible, and, causing another read the eight chapter of the Romans, he discoursed upon it verse by verse; but on a sudden, he said, "O stay your reading; what a brightness is this I see! Have you lighted up any candles?" A stander by said, no, it is the sun-shine (for it was about five o'clock in a clear summer's evening.) "Sun-shine! saith he, nay, it is my Saviour's shine. Now, farewell world; welcome heaven; the day-star from on high hath visited my heart: O speak it when I am gone, and preach it at my funeral; God dealeth familiarly with man, I feel his mercy, I see his majesty; whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell, God he knoweth; but I see things that are unutterable." And in this rapture he continued till he died.

18. I knew, not long ago, an eminent godly man G. M. that fell into several such extraordinary raptures sometime before his death, such as his bodily strength and spirit were not able to support under, though he had no sickness. Sometimes he was so swallowed up and overcome by the manifestations of God's love to his soul, that his words could not be well understood; his natural colour, heat, and strength, would so go off, that all about him would conclude him to be dying: but, when he was able to get words uttered, they were so heavenly and ravishing concerning the love of Christ, and freedom of grace, that by-standers could not hear him without weeping. Sometimes ministers, when they came to visit him, and found him in these raptures, were forced to turn all their prayers in his behalf into praises, except some petitions they would put up to God, "that he might graciously spare and be tender of his weak body, and enable him to bear that load of loving-kindness God was pleased to let out to him, and which his present bodily strength was not sufficient for." Yea, they would be put to cry, "Lord, if it be thy will, hold thy hand, for he is but a clay vessel; this new wine will burst the old bottle; preserve him in life as a monument of the rich grace of God, for the conviction of atheists and carnal people, and for the confirmation of the faith of the children of God." Sometimes he would cry, in abrupt expressions, "O angels, help me to praise him! O saints, admire his love, and wonder at him. Again, O flames of love! My soul seeth Christ! The heavens open! I see a throne, and the Lamb in the midst of the throne! O what think ye of Christ? My soul breathes,—breathes towards him! My spirit is exhaled out of me by the manifestations of God." He used frequently to say, with a heavenly air, to his friends, "O what think ye of Christ?" When his extasy did somewhat abate, so that he attained a pleasant calmness of thought, and freedom of speech, he would discourse of the mysteries of religion, the electing love of God, the freedom of grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ, and the glorious contrivance of redemption through his death and sacrifice! I say, he would talk of these things more like an angel than a man. For such was his heavenly eloquence, fluency of words, and facility of speaking upon these subjects (which otherwise was not natural to him), that those who came to see him were exceedingly surprised and astonished to hear him. His body gradually weakened under these raptures of spirit, and he longed much to be off the world, because he could be so little useful in it for advancing God's honour. He reckoned himself bound to improve the short time he was like to have here, in commending Christ and religion to all that he had access to, and also to admonish them of any thing he knew amiss in them, which he did most convincingly. And having occasion to see some who vilipended the established church, and the ordinances dispensed in it; he highly commended the ordinances, and told them, that from his own sweet experience he could say, that God was to be found in them. He seemed to have sin wonderfully mortified: for he complained of no other heart-plague but self, and it was his great exercise to get self wholly subdued; he pursued it through many of its windings and lurking places, and, after all, he would regret his little success against it. "For," said he, "when I am in my most elevated frames, and admitted to the nearest access to my Redeemer, that subtile enemy, self, will enter in with me and offer to pull the crown off his head before my face."

Once, after hearing a sermon on Psal. lxxxv. 8. "I will hear what God the Lord will speak," he broke out in a rapturous discourse to one that came to see him, blessing God that he had spoke to him in that sermon, "O (said he) what am I, that the rock of Israel should have spoke to me these three sermon-days bygone, assuring me that all my sins are forgiven? What am I, a vile worm, that he should be so kind and condescending, as to discover Christ and heaven in such a manner to me, and assure me that I will shortly be with him? Oh I thought that I had sinned him away from me, but I see he will not bide away! O admirable free grace? O help me to praise him!"

When death drew near, there was some alteration in his case; yet he never questioned his interest in Christ; but still asserted, "I know he is my God and Redeemer, and I shall be shortly with him." And once, when he was ready to complain for want of God's wonted manifestations, he said, the Lord knew his body was now weak, and could not bear what formerly he had met with, yet (said he) glory to his name, he hath given me three blinks since my last illness began.

19. Dr. Harris, head of Trinity-college in Oxford, in his last sickness used to exhort all about him to get faith above all things. "It is (said he) your victory, your peace, your life, your crown, and your chiefest piece of spiritual armour. Howbeit, get on all other pieces, and go forth in the Lord's might: stand to the fight, and thy issue shall be glorious. Only forget not to call in the help of your general: do all for him and under him. On the Lord's day he would not have any kept from the ordinances on his account; and, when they returned from the sermons, he would say to them, "Come, what have you for me?" And when any gave him an account of what they had heard, he would resume the heads thereof, and say, "O what excellent truths are these! Lay them up carefully, for you will have need of them." When friends came to visit him, he would say, "I cannot speak, but I can hear." Being asked, where his comfort lay? he answered, "In Christ, and in the free grace of God."

One telling him that he might take much comfort in his labours, and the good he had done; his answer was, "All is nothing without a Saviour; without him my best works would condemn me. Oh, I am ashamed of them, they are so mixed with sin. I have done nothing for God as I ought,——Oh, loss of time sits very heavy upon my spirits. Work, work apace; assure yourselves nothing will more trouble you when you come to die, than that you have

done no more for God, who hath done so much for you."

Sometimes he used thus to breathe out himself, "I never in all my life saw the worth of a Christ, nor tasted the sweetness of God's love in that measure, as now I do."——Being asked by ministers, what they should chiefly request for him? He answered, do not only pray for me, but praise God that he supports me, and keeps off satan from me, in my weakness; beg that I may hold out. I am now a great way home, near the shore, I leave you tossing on the sea; oh, it is a good time to die in.

In all his latter-wills which he made, he took care this legacy should still be inserted; "*Item*, I bequeath to all my children, and to their children's children, to each of them a Bible, with this inscription, NONE BUT CHRIST." He used to say, "it is a hard thing for a saint to forgive himself some faults, when God hath forgiven them."

20. David Chitræus, when he lay a-dying, lift up his head from the pillow to hear the discourses of his friends that sat by him, and said, "that he should die with the greatest comfort, if he might die learning something.

21. Mr. Cooper, when a-dying, said, "I saw not my children when they were in the womb, yet there the Lord fed them without my care or knowledge. I shall not see them when I go out of the body, yet shall they not want a father. Again, death is somewhat dreary, and the streams of that Jordan between us and our Canaan run furiously, but they stand still when the Ark comes."

22. The Rev. Mr. Halyburton, that shining light in St. Andrews, when a dying, commended Christ and godliness with great earnestness to all that came to see him. He exhorted his brethren to diligence in the ministry. "It was the delight of my heart (said he) to preach the gospel: I desired to decrease, that the bridegroom might increase, and to be nothing, that he might be all. I repent I did not more for him. O that I had the tongues of men and angels, to praise him." When he was advised to lie quiet, he said, "Whereupon should a man bestow his last breath, but in commending the Lord Jesus Christ, God clothed in our nature, dying for our sins."

He caused read one of Mr. Rutherford's letters; viz. that to Mr. John Main, and thereafter said, that is a book I would recommend to you all, there is more practical religion in that letter, than in a book of a larger volume."

He exhorted some ministers, that came to see him, to faithfulness. "As for the work of the ministry (said he) it was my deliberate choice: were my days lengthened out much longer, and days as troublesome as they are like to be, I would rather be a contemned minister of God, than the greatest prince on earth." He said, when taking farewell of his wife, children, and servants, "Here is a demonstration of the reality of religion, that I, a poor, weak, timorous man, as much afraid of death as any, am now enabled, by the power of grace, composedly, and with joy, to look death in the face. I dare look it in the face in its most ghastly shape, and hope within a little to have the victory. I cannot but commend the Lord Jesus. As far as my words will go, I must proclaim it, he is the best master that ever I saw." To his son, who was a child, he said, "If I had as many sons as there are hairs in your head, I would bestow them all on God." To some present he said, "O sirs, I dread mightily that a rational sort of religion is coming in among us; I mean by it, a religion that consists in a bare attendance on outward duties and ordinances, without the power of godliness; and thence people shall fall into a way of serving God, which is mere Deism, having no relation to Christ Jesus and the Spirit of God."——He expressed his fears of a storm coming on the church of Scotland; but he said, the day will break, and the Lord would arise, and he hoped the church would be made a wonder, and the Lord will say, "Lo this people have I formed for myself; he can make a nation to be born at once." He cried often with the spouse in the Song: "When shall the day break, and the shadows fly away? Turn my beloved, and be thou as a roe or a young hart on the mountains of Bether."

He said, "Shall I forget Zion? Nay, let my right hand forget her cunning, if I prefer not Jerusalem to my chiefest joy. O to have God returning to this church, and his work going on in this world! if every drop of my blood, every bit of my body, every hair of my head, were all men; they should all go to the fire to have this going on."——He said, "If I should say that I would speak no more in the name of the Lord, it would be like a fire within me. I am calling you to see a miracle, God is melting me down into corruption and dust, and yet he is keeping me in a calm.——I could not believe that I would have borne, and borne cheerfully, this rod so long; this is a miracle, pain without pain; and this is not a fancy of a man disordered in his brain, but of one lying in full composure. O blessed be God, that ever I was born. I have a father and a mother, and ten brethren and sisters in heaven, and I shall be the eleventh. I shall shortly be at that glory I have been long expecting: though I come not near Mr. Shield's glory, nor Mr. Anderson's, yet I will be well enough if I get in. Worthy is the Lamb to receive glory."

23. Mr. Hugh Mackaill, in his speech before his death, said, "I have esteemed the solemn engagements of this nation to the Lord's pregnant performances of that promise, Isa. xliv. v. where it is evident, that where church reformations come to any maturity, they arrive at this degree of saying, I am the Lord's, and subscribing with the hand unto the Lord. So was it in the days of the reforming kings of Judah, and after the restoration from the captivity of Babylon, in the days of Nehemiah. This same purpose did the Lord Jesus make yea and Amen to us, when he redeemed us from spiritual Babylon.——I glorify him that he hath called me forth to suffer for his name and ordinances, and the solemn engagements of the land to him. Hereafter I will not walk with flesh and blood, nor think on the world's consolations. Farewell all my friends whose company hath been refreshful to me in my pilgrimage. I have done with the light of the sun and moon. Welcome, eternal life, everlasting love, everlasting praise, everlasting glory. Praise to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever."

24. The famous Mr. Durham being visited by a minister in his last sickness, which was long and lingering, who said to him, Sir, I hope you have set all in order, and that you have nothing else to do but die. "I bless God (said Mr. Durham) I have not had that to do neither these many years."

25. Mr. Rowland Nevat his dying prayer for his children was, that the Mediator's blessing might be the portion of every one of them. Adding to them, I charge you all, see to it, that you meet me on the right hand of Christ at the great day. When he was sometimes much spent with

his labours, he would appeal to God, that, though he might be wearied in his service, he would never be weary of it. Being often distempered in his body, he would say, he was never better than in the pulpit, and that it was the best place he could wish to die in.

26. Mr. Philip Henry, when a dying, his pains were very sharp; he said to his neighbours who came in to see him, O make sure work for your souls, by getting an interest in Christ, while you are in health; or if I had that work to do now, what would become of me. A little before his last illness he wrote to a reverend brother, "Methinks it is strange, that it should be your lot and mine to abide so long on earth by the stuff, when so many of our friends are dividing the spoil above; but God will have it so; and to be willing to live in obedience to his holy will, is as true an act of grace, as to be willing to die when he calls." One asking him how he did, he answered, "I find the chips fly off apace, the tree will be down shortly." He was sometimes taken with fainting fits, which when he recovered from, he would say, "Dying is but a little more." Once he said, after a little recovery, "Well, I thought I had been putting into the harbour, but I find I must go to sea again."

27. Mr. Matthew Henry his death was somewhat sudden: he said a little before it to some about him, "You have been used to take notice of the sayings of dying men; this is mine, that a life spent in the service of God and communion with him, is the most comfortable and pleasant life, that any one can live in this world.

28. Holy and learned Mr. Rutherford, a little before his death, left a written testimony to our covenanted work of reformation; and therein he proves the warrantableness of nations entering into covenant with God under the New Testament times, and shews that this practice is the accomplishment of several Old Testament prophecies, such as Jer. l. 4, 5. Isa. ii. 3. Zech. viii. 2. Isa. xix. 23, 24, 25 which relate to gospel times. And when he was a-dying, he sent several messages to the presbytery of St. Andrew's, desiring them to adhere to God's cause and covenant. In his sickness he often broke out in sacred raptures, extolling and commending the Lord Jesus, whom he often called his blessed Master, his kingly King. When his death drew near, he said, "I shall shine, I shall see him as he is, I shall see him reign, and all his fair company with him, and I shall have my large share: my eyes shall see my Redeemer, those very eyes of mine, and no other for me." When exhorting one to be diligent in seeking God, he said, "it is no easy thing to be a Christian; but for me, I have gotten the victory, and Christ is holding out both his arms to embrace me." He was wonderfully strengthened against the fears of suffering and of death; for, says he, "I said to the Lord, if he would slay me five thousand times, I would trust in him, and I spoke it with much trembling, fearing I should not make my boast good. But as really as ever he spoke to me by his spirit, he witnessed unto my heart, that his grace should be sufficient for me." He said to some ministers that came to see him, "My Lord and Master is the chief of ten thousand of thousands! none is comparable to him in heaven or in earth. Dear brethren, do all for him, pray for Christ, preach for Christ, feed the flock committed to your charge for Christ, visit and catechise for Christ; do all for Christ, and beware of man-pleasing. Feed the flock out of love, the chief shepherd will appear shortly." Once when he recovered from a fainting fit, he said, I feel, I feel, I believe, I enjoy, I rejoice, I feed on manna." As he took a little wine in a spoon, Mr. Robert Blair said to him, you feed on the dainties of heaven, and think nothing of our cordials on earth. He said, "they are all but dung, yet they are Christ's creatures, and, in obedience to his command, I take them." After some discourse, Mr. Blair said to him, What think you now of Christ? To which he replied, "I shall live and adore him: Glory, glory, to my Creator, and to my Redeemer for ever. Glory shines in Emmanuel's land." Afterwards he said, "O that all my brethren did know what a Master I have served, and what peace I have this day? I shall sleep in Christ, and when I awake, I shall be satisfied with his likeness." Then he said, "This night shall close the door, and put my anchor within the veil, I shall go away in a sleep by five o'clock in the morning;" which exactly fell out. That night, though he was very weak, he often had this expression, O for arms to embrace him! O for a well-tuned harp!

When some spoke to him of his former painfulness and faithfulness in the work of God, he said, "I disclaim all that; the port I would be in at, is redemption and forgiveness of sins through his blood." His last words were, "Glory, glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's land."

29. Hugh Kennedy, provost of Ayr, when he was a dying, a minister said to him, you have cause, Sir, to be assured, that the angels of God are now waiting at the stoops of this bed to convey your soul to Abraham's bosom; to whom his answer was, "I am sure thereof; and if the walls of this house could speak, they could tell how many sweet days I have had in fellowship with God, and how familiar he hath been with my soul." He was one of the greatest wrestlers with God that was in the age wherein he lived, and he had most remarkable returns of prayer. The great Mr. Welsh, in a letter from France, said of him, "Happy is that city, yea, happy is that nation, that hath a Hugh Kennedy in it; I have myself certainly found the answers of his prayers from the Lord in my behalf."

30. The great Mr. Robert Bruce, minister of Edinburgh, when dying through weakness and old age, being asked by one of his friends, how matters stood now between God and his own soul? answered, "When I was young I was diligent, and lived by faith in the Son of God, but now I am old, and not able to do so much, yet he condescends to feed me with lumps of sense." That morning before he died, he came to breakfast at his table; and having eat, as he used, one single egg; he said to his daughter, I think I am yet hungry, you may bring me another. But presently he fell into a deep meditation; and having mused a while, he said, "Hold, daughter, hold, my Master calls me." With these words his sight failed him, whereupon he called for the Bible: but finding his sight gone, he said, "Cast me up the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, and set my finger on these words, "I am persuaded that neither death nor life, angels, &c. shall be able to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord." Now, said he, is my finger upon them? they told him it was. Then, without any more, he said, "Now God be with you, my children, I have breakfasted with you, and shall sup with my Lord Jesus Christ this night." And so gave up the ghost.

31. John Stewart, provost of Ayr, was a singularly pious man, yet when he lay a-dying, he said to some about

him, "I go the way of all flesh, and it may be some of you doubt nothing of my well being: yea, I testify, that except when I slept, or was on business, I was not these ten years without thoughts of God, so long as I would be in going from my own house to the cross; and yet I doubt myself, and am in great agony, yea, at the brink of despair." But a day or two before he died, he turned his face to the wall from the company for two hours. Then Mr. Fergusson the minister coming in, asked what he was doing? upon which he turned himself, with these words: "I have been fighting and working out my salvation with fear and trembling; and now I bless God, it is perfected, sealed, confirmed, and all fears are gone."

32. Luther, when he fell sick, made his will, in which he bequeathed his detestation of Popery to his friends, and to the pastors of the church, having before made this verse:

Pestis eram vivus, moriens ero mors tua Papa.

In his last will, he said, "O Lord God, I thank thee that thou wouldst have me live a poor and indigent person upon earth. I have neither houses nor lands, nor possessions, nor money to leave. Thou, Lord, hast given me a wife and children; them, Lord, I give back to thee. Nourish, instruct, and keep them. O thou, the Father of orphans, and judge of the widow, as thou hast done to me, so do to them."

In his last prayer, February 18, 1546, he hath these words, "I pray God to preserve his gospel among us; for the Pope and council of Trent have grievous things in hand. O heavenly Father, I give thee thanks that thou hast revealed to me thy Son Jesus Christ, whom I believe, whom I profess, whom I glorify, and whom the Pope and the rout of the wicked persecute and dishonour." Mr. Fox said of Luther, "that a poor friar should be able to stand against the Pope, was a great miracle; that he should prevail against the Pope, was greater; and, after all, to die in peace, having so many enemies, was the greatest of all."

33. Mr. Joseph Allen, a most painful and laborious minister, being deprived of the use of his arms and legs before his death, was asked by a friend, how he could be so well contented to lie so long in that condition? He answered, "What! is God my father, Jesus Christ my saviour, and the Holy Spirit my sanctifier and comforter; and shall I not be content without limbs and health? He is an unreasonable wretch that cannot be content with a God, though he had nothing else."

When his people of Taunton came to Dorcester to see him, where he lay; he was much revived, and would sit up in his bed, have the curtains drawn by, and desired them to stand round about the bed; and caused take out his hand and hold it out to them, that they might take it as he used formerly to do, when he had been absent from them. And though very weak, yet he spoke to them thus: "O how it rejoiceth my heart to see your faces, and to hear your voices, though I cannot speak as heretofore unto you. Methinks, I am now like old Jacob, with all his sons about him. Now, you see my weak estate, thus I have been for many weeks since I parted with you, but God hath been with me. My friends, life is mine, death is mine; in that covenant of which I preached to you, is all my salvation and all my desire; although my body do not prosper, I hope through grace my soul doth. I have lived a sweet life by the promises, and I hope through grace can die by a promise. It is the promises of God that will stand by us. Nothing but God in them will stead us in a day of affliction. My dear friends, I feel the power of those doctrines I preached to you on my heart, the doctrines of faith, of repentance, of self-denial, of the covenant of grace, of contentment, &c. O that you would live them over, now I cannot preach them to you. It is a shame for a believer to be cast down under afflictions, that hath so many glorious privileges, justification, adoption, sanctification, and eternal glory. We shall be as the angels of God in a little while; nay, to say the truth, believers are, as it were, little angels already, that live in the power of faith. O my friends, live like believers, trample this dirty world under your feet: be not taken with its comforts, nor disquieted with its crosses, you will be gone out of it shortly."

When they came to take leave of him, he would needs pray with them as his weak state did suffer him. Then he said, "Farewell, my dear friends; go home and live over what I have preached to you, and the Lord provide for you when I am gone. Now I cannot preach to you, but let my wasted strength and useless limbs be a sermon to you. I am afraid of some of you, after all I have spoken to you. There are many professors who can pray well and talk well, whom we shall find at the left hand of Christ another day. You have your trades, your estates, your relations, be not taken with these, but with God; O live on him. For the Lord's sake, go home, and take heed of the world, worldly cares, worldly comforts, worldly relations, &c. Oh! let not my labours and sufferings, let not my wasted strength, and useless limbs, rise up in judgment against you at the great day of the Lord." Then he said, "The Lord having given authority to his ministers to bless his people, accordingly I bless you in his name (using the words he always used after a sacrament). The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord cause his face to shine upon you, and give you peace. And the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant; make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

In the mornings, his first speeches would be (which he also used in his health), "Now we have one day more, this is one more for God, now let us live well this day, work hard for our souls; lay up much treasure in heaven this day, for we have but a few to live."

Being taken to the bath, where he met with extraordinary kindness from strangers, for many resorted to him, to see him and hear him speak, having heard what a monument of mercy he was: he did delight himself much in the consideration of the Lord's kindness to him, and the tokens of strangers their love, and would often say, "I was a stranger, and mercy took me in: in prison, and it came to me; sick and weak, and it visited me."

N. B. He had been much persecuted, and put in prison, for no other crime but preaching the gospel.

He had a most pious and affectionate wife that waited closely upon him, to whom he said, "Now, my dear heart, my companion in all my tribulations and afflictions, I thank thee for all thy pains and labours for me at home and abroad, in prison and liberty, in health and sickness." And he prayed that the Lord would requite her, fill her with all manner of grace and consolation, and support and carry her through all difficulties.

He had some conflicts with Satan a little before death; once he uttered these words, "Away, thou foul fiend, thou enemy of all mankind, thou subtile sophister, art thou come now to molest me? Now I am just going! Now I am so weak, and death upon me! Trouble me not, for I am none of thine, I am the Lord's; Christ is mine, and I am his, his by covenant; I have sworn myself to be the Lord's, and his I will be; therefore be gone." These last words he repeated often, as pleading his covenanting with God, as a mean to resist the devil and his temptations. When he looked on his weak consumed hands, he would say, "these shall be changed, this vile body shall be made like to Christ's glorious body. O what a glorious day will the day of the resurrection be? Methinks I see it by faith; how will the saints lift up their heads and rejoice? and how sadly will the wicked world look then? O come, let us make haste, our Lord will come shortly! if we long to be in heaven, let us hasten with our work; for when that is done, away we shall be brought. O this vain, foolish, dirty world: I wonder how reasonable creatures can so doat upon it! What is in it worth the looking after? I care not to be in it longer than while my master hath either doing or suffering work for me; were that done, farewell to earth."

This eminent saint had this testimony given him by one; it may be said of him, in as high a degree as of most saints on earth, that each thought was to him a prayer, each prayer a song, each day a Sabbath, each meal a sacrament; and so his life on earth a foretaste of that eternal repast to which he hath now arrived.

34. The noble Marquis of Argyle, being a zealous friend of our covenanted Reformation, was put to death May 27th, 1661. His friends contrived methods for making his escape out of the castle of Edinburgh, but he thanked them, and told them, he would not disown the good cause he had so publicly espoused, but resolved to suffer the utmost. When the sentence of death was past by the Parliament, on Saturday May 25th, he said, "I had the honour to set the crown upon the king's head, and now he hastens me to a better crown than his own." Then he was sent to the Tolbooth. His excellent Lady embracing him when he entered, wept bitterly, saying several times, the Lord will requite it. Not any in the room could restrain from tears; but the Marquis himself was perfectly composed, and said, "Forbear, forbear; truly I pity them, they know not what they are doing: they may shut me in where they please, but they cannot shut out God from me. For my part, I am as content to be here as in the castle, and as content in the castle as in the tower of London" (where he was first put), " and as content upon the scaffold as any of them all."——He added, that he remembered a scripture passage cited to him by an holy minister in the castle, and endeavoured to put in practice, when Ziklag was taken and burned, and the people spoke of stoning David, *he encouraged himself in the Lord his God.* All his short time, till Monday, he spent with the greatest serenity and cheerfulness, and in the proper exercises of a dying Christian. He said to some ministers, allowed to be with him in the prison, that "shortly they would envy him who was got before them." And added, "Mind that I tell you, my skill fails me, if you who are ministers will not either suffer much, or sin much; for though you go along with those men in part, if you do it not in all things, you are but where you were, and so must suffer; and if you go not at all in with them, you shall but suffer."

The Marquis was naturally timorous, but he desired those about him to observe, as he could not but do, that the Lord had heard his prayer, and removed all fears from him. And indeed his friends work was to restrain and qualify his fervent longing after his dissolution, and not to support him under the near views of it. The Lord was exceeding kind to him at this time; for upon Monday morning (that day he suffered) when he was in the midst of company, and thronged in subscribing papers relating to his estate, he was so overcome with a singular manifestation from God, that he broke out in a rapture and said, "I thought to have concealed the Lord's goodness, but it will not do; I am now ordering my affairs, and God is sealing my charter to a better inheritence, just now saying to me, "Son, be of good chear, thy sins are forgiven thee." After he had retired sometime alone, when he opened the door, Mr. Hutchinson, one of the ministers that attended him, said to him, what cheer, my Lord? He answered, good cheer, Sir, the Lord hath again confirmed and said to me, from heaven, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." And he gushed out in abundance of tears of joy, so that he retired to the windows and wept there. Afterwards he said, in a perfect rapture, to Mr. Hutchinson, "I think his kindness overcomes me; but God is good to me that lets not out too much of it here, for he knows I could not bear it: get my cloke, and let us go." But being told that the town clock was kept back, so that the hour was not yet come, he answerd, they are far in the wrong; and presently kneeled down and prayed before all present, in a most sweet and heavenly manner, to the ravishment of all that were there.

When he was going out to the scaffold, he said, *I could die like a Roman, but I choose rather to die as a Christian. Come away, gentlemen, he that goes first goes cleanest.* When going down, he called Mr. James Guthrie to him, and embracing him in the most endearing way, took his farewell of him. Mr. Guthrie at parting, addressed the Marquis, "My Lord, God hath been with you, he is with you, and God will be with you; and such is my respect for your Lordship, that if I were not under the sentence of death myself, I could cheerfully die for your Lordship." So they parted for a very short season, in two or three days to meet in a better place.

The Marquis, in his speech on the scaffold, hath these words, "God hath laid engagements upon Scotland; we are tied by covenant to religion and reformation. Those that were then unborn are engaged to it, and it passeth the power of any under heaven to absolve a man from the oath of God."

35. Mr. John Welsh, minister of the gospel at Ayr, whom Mr. Rutherford (in his preface to his survey of Antinomianism) calls that apostolic, heavenly and prophetical man of God, and there tells us, that he had it from those that were witnesses of his life, that of every twenty-four hours, he gave usually eight to prayer, and that he spent many nights in prayer to God, interceding for suffering Protestants abroad, as well as for his mother church. This holy man, when prisoner in the castle of Blackness, and in the view of death (being condemned to it for maintaining the liberties of this church, though afterwards the sentence was changed into banishment), in his letter to a Christian lady, hath these words:

"I long to eat of that tree which is planted in the midst of the Paradise of God, and to drink of the pure river, clear as crystal, that runs through the street of the new

Jerusalem. I long to be refreshed with the souls of them that are under the altar, who were slain for the word of God, and the testimony that they held; and to have those long white robes given me, that I may walk in white raiment with those glorious saints, who have washed their garments, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Why should I think it a strange thing to be removed from this place to that where my hope, my joy, my crown, my elder brother, my head, my father, my comforter, and all the glorious saints are, and where the song of Moses and the Lamb is sung joyfully; where we shall not be compelled to sit by the rivers of Babylon, and hang up our harps on the willow trees, but shall take them up, and sing the new Hallelujah, blessing, honour, glory, and power, to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever? What is there under the old vault of the heavens, and in this old worn earth, which is groaning under the bondage of corruption, that should make me to desire to remain here? I expect that new heaven and new earth, wherein righteousness dwelleth, wherein I shall rest for evermore. I look to get entry into the new Jerusalem at one of those twelve gates, whereupon are written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. I know that Jesus Christ hath prepared them for me. Why, may I not then, with boldness in his blood, step into that glory, where my Head and Lord hath gone before me? Jesus Christ is the door and the porter; who then shall hold me out? O thou fairest among the children of men, the delight of mankind, the light of the Gentiles, the glory of the Jews, the life of the dead, the joy of angels and saints, my soul panteth to be with thee. I refuse not to die with thee, that I may live with thee; I refuse not to suffer with thee, that I may rejoice with thee. O when shall I be filled with his love! Surely, if a man knew how precious it is, he would count all things but dross and dung to gain it. I long for that scaffold, or that axe, or that cord, that might be to me that last step of this my wearisome journey, to go to thee, my Lord. Who am I, that he should first have called me, and then constitute me a minister of the glad tidings of the gospel of salvation these many years, and now, last of all, to be a sufferer for his cause and kingdom? These two points, 1. That Christ is the head of the church. 2. That she is free in her government from all other jurisdiction, except Christ; yea, as free as any kingdom under heaven, not only to convocate, hold, and keep her meetings and assemblies; but also to judge of all her affairs among her members and subjects: these are the cause of our sufferings. I would be most glad to be offered up as a sacrifice for so glorious a truth; but, alas! I fear that my sins, and the abuse of so glorious things as I have found, deprive me of so fair a crown: Yet my lord doth know, if he would call me to it, and strengthen me in it, it would be to me the most glorious day, and gladdest hour I ever saw in my life; but I am in his hands, to do with me whatsoever shall please him," &c.

This eminent saint spent much of his time in the mount of prayer and wrestling with God, was admitted to very intimate nearness with him, and had many secret things revealed to him from God. He used to say, "He wondered how a Christian could lie in bed all night, without rising to spend some of the night in prayer and praise."

In his last illness he had a great weakness in his knees, caused by his continual kneeling at prayer, the flesh thereof became insensible, and hard like a sort of horn; but, when in his weakness he was desired to remit somewhat of his former painfulness, his answer was, he had his life of God, and therefore it should be spent for him. During his sickness he was so filled with the sensible enjoyment of God, that he was sometimes overheard in prayer to have these words: "Lord, hold thy hand, it is enough, thy servant is a clay vessel, and can hold no more."

36. Mr. Christopher Love, minister of Laurence-jury in London, who was beheaded on Tower-hill, Aug. 22, 1651, in time of Cromwell's usurpation, and for suspected plotting against his government, his words on the scaffold were most pathetic and weighty: "Although (said he) there be but little between me and death, yet this bears up my heart, there is little between me and heaven. It comforted Dr. Taylor, the martyr, when he was going to execution, that there were but two stiles between him and his Father's house: there is a lesser way between me and my Father's house, but two steps between me and glory. It is but lying down upon that block, and I shall ascend upon a throne. I am this day sailing towards the ocean of eternity, through a rough passage to my haven of rest, through a Red sea to the promised land. Methinks I hear God say to me, as he did to Moses, Go up to Mount Nebo, and die there: So to me, Go up to Tower-hill, and die there. Isaac said of himself, that he was old, and yet he knew not the day of his death; but I cannot say so. I am young, and yet I know the day of my death, and I know the kind of my death, and the place of my death also. I am put to such a kind of death, as two famous preachers of the gospel were put to before me, John the Baptist, and Paul the Apostle. They were both beheaded. I read also in Rev. xx. 4. "The saints were beheaded for the word of God, and the testimony of Jesus." But herein is the disadvantage which I lie under in the thoughts of many; they judge that I suffer not for the word of God, or for conscience, but for meddling with state matters. To this I shall briefly say, that it is an old trick of Satan, to impute the cause of God's peoples' sufferings, to be contrivements against the state; when, in truth, it is their religion and conscience they are persecuted for. The rulers of Israel would have put Jeremiah to death upon the civil account, though indeed it was only the truth of his prophecy that made the rulers angry with him: and yet, upon a civil account they pretended he must die, because he fell away to the Chaldeans, and would have brought in foreign forces to invade them. The same thing is laid to my charge, of which I am as innocent as Jeremiah was. So Paul, though he did but preach Jesus Christ, yet his enemies would have put him to death, under pretence that he was a mover of sedition. Upon a civil account my life is pretended to be taken away; whereas, it is because I pursue my covenant and will not prostitute my principles and conscience to the ambition and lust of men. I had rather die a covenant-keeper, than live a covenant-breaker. Behold I am this day making a double exchange: I am changing a pulpit for a scaffold, and a scaffold for a throne: And I might add a third, I am changing the presence of this numerous multitude on Tower-hill, for the innumerable company of saints and angels in heaven, the holy hill of Zion; and I am changing a guard of soldiers for a guard of angels, which will receive me, and carry me to Abraham's bosom. This scaffold is the best pulpit that ever I preached in: In my church pulpit, God, through his grace, made me an instrument to bring others to heaven; but in

this pulpit he will bring me to heaven." Afterwards he said, "Though my blood be not the blood of nobles, yet it is Christian blood, minister's blood; yea more, it is also innocent blood. I magnify the riches of God's mercy and grace towards me, that I who was born in Wales, an obscure country, and of obscure parents, should be singled out to honourable sufferings. For the first fourteen years of my life, I never heard a sermon preached; yet, in the fifteenth year of my age, it pleased God to convert me. Blessed be God, who not only made me a Christian, but also a minister, judging me faithful, and putting me into the ministry, which is my glory. I had rather be a preacher in a pulpit, than a prince upon a throne: I had rather be an instrument to bring souls to heaven, than that all nations should pay tribute to me. Formerly (said he) I have been under a spirit of bondage; yea, sometimes I have had more fear in drawing out a tooth, than now I have for cutting off my head. When fear was upon me, death was not near; now, when death is near to me, my fear is evanished. I am comforted in this, though men kill me, they cannot damn me; though they thrust me out of the world, yet they cannot shut out of heaven. When I have shed my blood, I expect the full declaration of the remission of sins through the blood of Jesus Christ. I am going to my long home, and ye to your short homes; but I shall be at my home, before you be at yours." He prayed, that, seeing "He was called to do the work which he never did, he might have the strength which he never had."

Dr. Wild, in his Elegy, hath these lines:

Methinks I heard beheaded saints above
Call to each other, Sirs, make room for Love.
Who, when he came to tread the fatal stage,
(Which prov'd his glory, and his en'mies rage),
His blood ne'er ran to's heart; Christ's blood was there
Reviving it; his own was all to spare;
Which, rising in his cheeks, did seem to say,
Is this the blood you thirst for? Tak't, I pray.
Spectators in his looks such life did see,
That they appear'd more like to die than he.
Light'nings, which fill'd the air with blazing light,
Did serve for torches at that dismal night;
In which, and all next day, for many hours,
Heav'n groan'd in thunder, and did weep in show'rs;
Nor do I wonder that God thunder'd so,
When Boanerges, murder'd, lay below."

37. Mrs. Joyce Lewis, being condemned to be burnt for the Protestant religion, in queen Mary's reign, when she heard that the writ for her execution was come, she said to her friends, "As for death, I fear it not; for, when I behold the amiable countenance of Jesus Christ my dear Saviour, the ugly face of death doth not much trouble me."

38. Bullinger of Zurich, in his sickness, said to his friends, "If the Lord will make any farther use of me and my ministry in his church, I will willingly obey him; but if he please (as I much desire) to take me out of this miserable life, I shall exceedingly rejoice that he pleaseth to take me out of this corrupt and wretched age to go to my Saviour Christ. For (said he) if Socrates was glad when his death approached, because (as he thought) he should go to Homer, Hesiod, and other learned men, whom he expected to meet with in the other world; how much more do I joy, who am sure that I shall see my Saviour Jesus Christ, as also the Saints, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and all the holy men who have lived from the beginning of the world? Now when I am sure to see them and to partake of their joys, why should I not willingly die to enjoy their perpetual society and glory?"

39. Mr. Theodore Beza, a famous pastor in Geneva, when he apprehended the approach of death, revised his will, and so, easing himself of all worldly thoughts, wholly betook himself to expect the time of his departure, which he had much longed for. He often used the Apostle's saying, "We are his workmenship, created in Jesus Christ unto good works." And that of Augustine, *Domine, quod cæpisti perfice, ne in portu, naufragium accidat.* "Lord perfect that which thou hast begun, that I suffer not shipwreck in the haven." And that saying of Bernard; *Domine, sequemur te, per te, ad te. Te, quia veritas; Per te, quia via: Ad te, quia vita.* "Lord, we will follow thee, by thee to thee. Thee, because thou art the truth; by thee because thou art the way: to thee, because thou art the life."

40. Melancton of Wittemberg (Luther's dear companion), said, "That he much longed to be dissolved, and that for two reasons: *First*, That he might enjoy the much desired presence and sight of Christ, and of the heavenly church: *Secondly*, That he might be freed from the cruel and implacable discords of divines."

41. Mr. John Bradford, a minister and martyr in queen Mary's reign, when the keeper told him that the next day he was to be burnt in Smithfield, he put off his cap, and, lifting up his eyes to heaven, said, "I thank God for it, it comes not now to me on a sudden, but as a thing waited for every day and hour; the Lord make me worthy thereof." One Cresswell offering to interpose for him, and desiring to know what his request was; he said, "I have no request to make; if the queen give me my life, I will thank her; if she will banish me, I will thank her; if she will burn me, I will thank her; if she will condemn me to perpetual imprisonment, I will thank her." The chancellor pressing him to do as others had done, in hopes of the queen's mercy; he said, "My lord, I desire mercy with God's mercy; that is, without doing or saying any thing against God and his truth. But mercy with God's wrath, God keep me from. God's mercy (added he) I desire, and also would be glad of the queen's favour, to live as a subject without clog on conscience; but otherwise, the Lord's mercy is better to me than life. Life in his displeasure is worse than death, and death in his favour is true life."

In his letter to Dr. Cranmer, Dr. Ridley, and Dr Latimer, he had these words: "Our dear brother Rogers hath broken the ice valiantly. This day, or to-morrow at the utmost, hearty Hooper, sincere Saunders, and trusty Taylor, will end their course, and receive their crown. The next am I, who hourly look for the porter to open me the gates after them to enter into the desired rest. God forgive me my unthankfulness for his exceeding great mercy. Though I suffer justly (for I have been a great hypocrite, unthankful, &c. the Lord pardon me, yea, he hath done it, he hath done it indeed), yet, what evil hath he done? Christ, whom the prelates persecute, his truth which they hate in me, hath done no evil, nor deserved death. O what am I, Lord, that thou shouldst thus magnify me? Is it thy will to send for such a wretched hypocrite in a fiery chariot, as thou didst send for Elias?"

In one of his meditations, after confessing of sin, he said, "O what now may we do! despair? No, for thou

art God, and therefore good; thou art merciful, and therefore thou forgivest sin: With thee there is mercy and propitiation, and therefore thou art worshipped. When Adam sinned, thou gavest him mercy before be desired it; and wilt thou deny us mercy, who now desire the same? Adam excused his fault, and accused thee; but we accuse ourselves, and excuse thee: and, shall we be sent empty away? How often in the wilderness didst thou spare Israel, and defer the plague at the request of Moses, when the people themselves made no petition to thee? Now we do not only make our petition to thee, but also have a Mediator, far above Moses, to appear for us, even Christ Jesus thine own Son; and shall we, dear Lord, depart ashamed? O merciful Lord, for thine own glory, suffer not the enemy of thy Son Christ, the Romish Anti-Christ, thus wretchedly to delude and draw from thee our poor brethren, for whom thy dear son once died, &c. Suffer him not to seduce the simple sort with his fond opinion, that his false gods, his blind, mumbling, feigned religion, or his foolish superstition, doth give him such conquests, such victories, and such triumphs over us. But, O Lord, this is thy righteous judgment to punish us with the tyrannical yoke of blindness, because we have cast away from us the sweet yoke of the wholesome word of thy Son our Saviour."

In his letter to Mrs. Anne Warcup, he said, "My staff standeth at the door. I look continually for the sheriff to come for me; and I bless God I am ready for him. Now I go to practise that which I have preached; now I am climbing up the hill; it will cause me puff and blow before I come to the cliff. The hill is steep and high, my breath is short, and my strength is feeble. Pray therefore to the Lord for me, that, as I have now, through his goodness, even almost come to the top, I may, by his grace, be strengthened, not to rest until I come where I should be."

He was singular for humility and self-abasement, though a most eminent saint. He subscribed some of his letters, The most miserable, hard-hearted unthankful sinner, John Bradford. A very painted hypocrite, John Bradford. *Miserimus peccator*, John Bradford. The sinful John Bradford.

42. Mr. Edward Deering, a little before his death, said to his friends, "As for my death, I bless God I feel and find so much inward joy and comfort to my soul, that, if it were put to my choice whether I would die or live, I would a thousand times rather choose death than life, if it may stand with the holy will of God."

43. Mr. Robert Rollock, when a-dying, prayed, "Lord, I have hitherto seen but darkly in the glass of thy word; now grant that I may enjoy the eternal fruition of thy countenance, which I have so much desired and longed for. Haste, Lord, and do not tarry: I am weary both of nights and days: Come, Lord Jesus, that I may come to thee. Break these eye-strings, and give me others. I desire to be dissolved, and to be with thee; haste, Lord Jesus, and defer no longer. Go forth, my weak life, and let a better succeed. O Lord Jesus, thrust thy hand into my body, and take my soul to thyself. O my sweet Lord, set this soul of mine free, that it may enjoy her husband."

44. Galeacius Carracciolus, marquis of Vico, when a-dying, took his leave of his wife and all his Christian friends, telling them that he would lead them the way to heaven. And he cried to Jesus Christ, that "as he had sought him all his life, so now he would receive and acknowledge him as his own."

45. The famous Lord Duplessis in France, when a-dying, was much concerned for the church of God in distress, praying earnestly for her deliverance. He particularly blessed such of his grand-children as were following the studies of learning, saying, that "he was assured they should be blessed with the blessings both of heaven above, and of the earth beneath." When a minister spoke of the service he had done the church by his writings, he said, "Alas, what was there of mine in that work? Say not that it was I, but God by me." Then, lifting up his hands above his head, he cried three times, "Mercy, mercy, mercy." Adding, that he did it, to show that it was alone the mercy of God to which he had recourse. And declared, that his "faith was altogether founded upon the goodness of God in Jesus Christ, who, by the Father, had been made unto him, as to all others that believe in him, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. "Away (said he), away with all merit; I call for nothing but mercy, free mercy:" When one was blessing God for giving him such peace and comfort at his end, he said, "I feel, I feel what I speak." As to his faith of the truths of God, "He said he was entirely persuaded thereof, by the demonstration of God's Holy Spirit, which was more powerful, more clear, and more certain, than all the demonstrations of Euclid." When secretly praying, he was overheard saying, in broken sentences, "I fly, I fly to heaven. Let the angels carry me to the bosom of my Saviour." Afterwards, he said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and I shall see him with these eyes, *Hisce occulis*;" which words he repeated four or five times.

46. Jerome of Prague, when he was fastened to the stake, and the executioner began to kindle the fire behind him, he bade him kindle it before his face. "For (said he) if I had been afraid of it, I had not come to this place, having had so many opportunities offered me to escape it."

47. Mr. Hooker, a minister in New England, when one that stood weeping at his bed side, when he lay a-dying, said to him, "Sir, you are going to receive the reward of all your labours;" he replied, "Brother, I am going to receive mercy."

48. Mr. Heron, another minister there, when dying and leaving a family of many small children; his poor wife fell a-weeping, and said, alas! what will become of all these children? He presently and pleasantly replied, "Never fear; he that feeds the young ravens will not starve the young Herons." And indeed it came to pass accordingly. It was an ancient observation concerning the English martyrs under the bloody Marian persecution, "That none of them went more joyfully to the stake than those who had the greatest families to commit unto the Lord."

49. Chrysostom, when the empress Eudoxa (an Arian) sent a threatening message to him, he said, "Go tell her, *Nil nisi peccatum timeo*, I fear nothing but sin." When he was sentenced to banishment, he said, "None of these things trouble me; for I said before within myself, if the empress will, let her banish me; the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. If she will, let her saw me asunder; Isaiah was so used: if she will, let her cast me into the sea; I will remember Jonah: if she will, let her cast me into a burning fiery furnace, or to the wild beasts; the three children and Daniel were so served: if she will, let her stone me, or cut off my head; I have St. Stephen and the Baptist for my companions: if she will, let her take

away all my substance; naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither again."

But I must break off, for time would fail me to enumerate the many instances of the faith, love, patience, hope, courage, and constancy of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, when in the view of death. Some have told the persecutors, "That they might pull the hearts out of their bodies, but they could never pluck the truth out of their hearts." Others have said, "That if every hair of their heads were men, they should all suffer for Christ and his truths." "Oh (said one of them) can I die but once for Christ?"

To conclude, let these examples prompt us to seek grace from God, and make it our earnest study to imitate and follow such a cloud of witnesses, that we may die martyrs in resolution, our graces may be most lively at the last, our evening sun may shine brightest, and we may go off the stage glorifying God, and leaving a sweet savour behind us, as these famous worthies, whose praise is in the churches, have done before us.

DIRECT. VII. *Let Dying Persons be much in Prayer and Ejaculations to God.*

PRAYER is the native breath of renewed souls; it is as necessary to their spiritual life, as breath is to the natural life, Lam. iii. 59. "Hide not thine ear at my breathing." The first thing a child of God doth, when he is new-born, is to breathe by prayer, Acts ix. 11. "Behold he prayeth." And it is also his last work in the world to pray, Acts vii. 59, 60. "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep." A dying Christian hath many to pray for; he is to pray for the church of God, for his friends and relations, and also for his enemies, as Stephen did, of whom I spoke before. But especially he must pray for himself, that sin may be forgiven, and that he may have safe conduct through the dark valley. I have heard of some that have been found dead upon their knees: A noble posture to die in! How agreeable is it to enter praying into the land of praise? So did Stephen; yea, so did our blessed Saviour himself: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." The last words that holy Usher uttered were, "But, Lord, in a special manner forgive my sins of omission." "Lord (said dying Beza), perfect that which thou hast begun, that I suffer not shipwreck in the haven." I remember to have read of an old minister, when he found death approaching, he said, "I desire to die like the poor thief, crying to the crucified Jesus for mercy. I am nothing, I have nothing, I can do nothing, except what is unworthy. My eye, and hope, and faith, is to Christ on his cross. I bring an unworthiness like that of the poor dying thief unto him, and have no more to plead than he. Like the poor thief crucified with him, I am waiting to be received, by the infinite grace of my Lord, into his kingdom." Let us in like manner die, crying to a crucified Jesus for mercy, Lord, remember me, now thou art in thy kingdom.

O dying Christian, remember the time of prayer is near an end, after death there will be no more occasion for prayer. O then beg that the spirit of prayer may be so poured down upon you at this time, that you may be enabled to pour out your heart before God, both for yourself and others. O how earnestly should you pray then, when you are taking your leave of prayer! mind the example which your Redeemer gave you; it was before his death that he offered up prayers and supplication with strong crying and tears unto God. I acknowledge, sick and dying persons are frequently out of case for making prayers of any great length or continuance (which consideration should excite us to the greater diligence in prayer in the time of health), and therefore they ought to be the more frequent and fervent, in short and suitable ejaculations and petitions to God, as their exigencies do require.

Some Meditations and Ejaculations, proper for sick and dying persons, and especially for a dying Believer.

O LORD, thou art the God of my life, and hast the keys of death in thy hand. Thou hast measured the length of my life, and appointed the hour of my death. The number of my months and days is with thee, and thou hast appointed the bounds, over which I cannot pass.

What is my life but a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away? at the longest, how short is it; and at the strongest how weak! "What man is it that liveth here, and shall not see death? When a few days are come, I will go the way whence I shall not return." God hath decreed it, sin hath deserved it, my frailty demonstrates it, death's harbinger proclaims it, and I must expect it.

There is no discharge in this war, no exemption from death's stroke. Death's messengers are come to warn me, that my last day and hour draweth nigh. The sound of their master's feet is behind them. This clay-house must be dissolved, my soul dislodged, and my place here shall know me no more; I will be quickly as water spilt on the ground, that cannot be gathered up again.

O that I may be suitably exercised in my present weak and dying condition! when my flesh faileth, and my heart fainteth within me. O that God may be the strength of my heart, and portion for ever! When the keepers of the house do tremble, let God watch over it, and be the keeper of my soul. When the grinders do cease, because they are few, let my soul be fed with manna from heaven. When the daughters of music are brought low, let my soul be disposed for hearing the song of Moses and the Lamb in the temple above. When those that look out at the windows are darkened, let the eyes of my soul be enlightened to behold with the dying martyr Stephen, the heavens opened, and the glorious Jesus standing on the right-hand of God, making intercession for me, and ready to receive me. Let my hope and desire look out at the windows, and say, "Why is his chariot so long a-coming? and why tarry the wheels of his chariot? Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart on the mountains of Bether."

O that I may observe the afflicting hand of God in my present sickness! Surely affliction cometh not out of the dust, nor doth trouble spring out of the ground. O Lord, rebuke me not in thine indignation, nor chasten me in thine hot displeasure. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak; and heal me, for my bones are vexed. When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: Surely every man is vanity. The sorrows of my heart are enlar-

ged. O bring me out of my distresses. Look upon my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins. I look for sympathy to my great High Priest, who is touched with the feeling of my infirmities. My help and strength is in him.

O that, when I am afflicted, I may not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when I am rebuked of him! Let me hear the rod, and him that hath appointed it. Let me kiss the rod, and accept of the punishment of mine iniquity. O that in my affliction I may be helped to humble myself greatly before the God of my fathers, and make a true and penitent confession of my sins!

Oh! what shall I say to thee, O thou preserver of men? I will say, Lord, be merciful to me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee. I acknowledge, that, through an evil heart of unbelief, I have many a time departed away from the living God, O how vainly and foolishly have I lived in the world! How lavish of my precious time! How unmindful of my latter end! How careless of my immortal soul! How little in preparation for eternity! Oh! my own heart condemns me, my sins testify against me; and thou, who knowest them better than I do myself, together with their several aggravations, mightest justly condemn me too. But my comfort is, that with thee the Lord there is mercy that thou mayest be feared, and with thy Son there is plenteous redemption: Wherefore, for his sake be pleased to forgive me all my bypast transgressions, whether in thought, word or deed, those I remember, and those I have forgotten, and let them neither be charged on me to my shame and confusion in this world, nor to my everlasting ruin in that which is to come. Lord, forgive the follies of my childhood, the extravagancies of my youth, and the iniquities of my riper years.

Oh I am polluted with sin, and dare not appear before God with my own filthy rags upon me. When Adam lost the garment of original righteousness, he fled from God, and dreaded the summons of offended justice. Now, there is no appearing before God with acceptance, but in the garment of his Son, my elder brother. None can have boldness to enter into the holiest of all, but by the blood of Jesus. O enable me to disclaim whatsoever duties I have performed, or graces I exercised, and to rely on a crucified Christ alone for pardon and life. Though thou slayest me, let me die trusting in and cleaving to a crucified Jesus.

Now the powers of darkness will seek to raise tempests to shipwreck the vessel of my soul, when it would enter into the eternal haven; O that like the wise mariner, when the storm approacheth, I may endeavour to secure the vessel with the anchors of faith and hope fastened on the rock Christ!

O that, when the time of combat with my last enemy cometh, I may above all take the shield of faith, whereby I may be sheltered from the sting of death, and may quench the fiery darts of the wicked one!

O that the Lord of hosts, the Captain of my salvation, may be with me in my last conflict, and may help me to put on the whole armour of God, and give me skill to use it, that I may be able to stand in the evil day. Teach my hands to war, and my fingers to fight, that through thee I may do valiantly, and tread down all mine enemies. O that now I may so finish my course, and fight the good fight of faith, that at death I may receive the crown of righteousness, which the righteous Judge will give to all that love his appearing. O that my faith may ripen into a full assurance, that I may go off the stage with joy, and an abundant entrance may be administered unto me into the kingdom of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

O that the night of my death may shine bright with the sparkling stars of heavenly grace! Lord, increase my faith? Let the pilgrim's staff of faith be never out of my hand, till I come to my journey's end. O let me get Christ all in my arms, like old Simeon before his death, that I may say like him, "Now let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Kindle the fire of heavenly love in my soul, and give me a taste of heavenly joys. O for one beam of thy light, to banish away all my doubts and fears! Lord, let in something of heaven to my soul, before itself go into heaven.

Lord, take me not out of this life till thou hast fitted me for a better. May I be fitted for heaven before I leave the earth, and finish my work before I finish my course! Make me ready to meet thee at thy coming, that so thy coming may not be the matter of my terror, but the matter of my hope, desires, and joyful expectations. O that I may be in a longing frame for that blessed time, when he will come and put a period to all my sins, sorrows, troubles, and temptations here, and when I shall exchange my present being in the body, for an everlasting being with the Lord! Lord, strengthen my faith and hope, that so neither the sweetness of life, the pain of death, nor apprehensions about my future state, may make me unwilling to die. Is my Redeemer ascended and gone before to prepare a place for me; why then should I be slothful to go in and possess the good land!

Mercy hath filled up all my life, and brought me near to the end of it; O let it not leave me now, when all the enjoyments of the world are as nothing to me, and I am to take an everlasting farewell of them all. Now one smile of thy face, one taste of thy love, would be strength and joy to my departing soul. O remember the word to thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope; hast thou not said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee?" O fulfil this word to me in the time of my need. O let me never go off the stage with a heavy heart or a guilty conscience; but may I depart in peace and sleep in Jesus. Let me breathe out my departing soul to thee, and trust it in thy hand and safe keeping: And let my flesh rest in hopes of rising gloriously at the last day, through him who is the resurrection and the life, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Love and praise is the exercise of saints for ever; may I be acquainted with it here! O shall I not love and praise him who hath forgiven all mine iniquities, healed all my diseases, redeemed my life from destruction, and crowned me with loving kindness and tender mercies? He hath caused goodness and mercy follow me all the days of my life; and shall I not follow him with praises at the end of it?

Now the time of my departure is at hand, and the lamp of my life is ready to be extinguished. O that I may die in faith, that whether the lamp go out of its own accord, or by some sudden blast, it may be lighted again by the immortal beams of the Sun of righteousness! And though I be overtaken with the sleep of death, and lie down in the bed of the grave; yet I shall awake again in the morning of the resurrection, that morning which shall never be succeeded by an evening; when I shall behold thy face in righteousness, and be eternally satisfied with thy likeness.

Now I am going the way of all the earth, ready to launch forth into eternity, where I shall be fixed in my everlasting condition. Grant me, Lord, the perfect use of my senses, of my reason and understanding, that I may glorify thy name, and edify my neighbours to the last moment of my departure. And now, when I am to conflict with the king of terrors, O support and assist me in my sorest extremities and last agonies! O mercifully mitigate death's pangs, and let my passage be easy, and my landing safe. Stand by me in my dying moments, and secure my soul in thy hands from all its deadly enemies. And, when I am numbered among the dead, let me also be numbered among the redeemed and blessed of the Lord for ever.

O Lord, thou determinest both the bounds of man's life, and the bounds of his habitation. If a hair of my head cannot fall to the ground without thy providence, far less can my whole body fall into the grave without it. Thou hast told me plainly that I must die, but mercifully hast thou concealed the time, place, and manner, that I may always stand upon my guard, every hour expect thy coming, and have my accounts in my hand, and always prepared to give them up to thee my Judge. Justly mightest thou have snatched me away by a surprising call and sudden stroke: but in thy goodness thou gavest me warning, and time to set my house and soul in order. O graciously finish what is now wanting of the work of grace in my heart and soul, and thoroughly accomplish and furnish me to appear in thy blessed presence. May I now die to sin every hour, that I may not die for sin hereafter. Cause sin wholly to die before me, that it may not rise in judgment against me after death.

O God, be thou my refuge and strength, and a very present help in trouble; and then I will not fear though the waters of affliction rage and be troubled, and though all the mountains of earthly comforts shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God. O let my soul dwell beside these living streams, and drink of them for ever. In the valley of the shadow of death, Lord, be thou present as the good shepherd with thy guiding rod and supporting staff; and make my departure easy, and full of peace and hope. Lord, carry me safe through the dark passage upon which I am entering, and let me find it a gate of glory, a door opened into the everlasting kingdom and joy of the Lord. Lord Jesus receive my Spirit, and let it be presented justified and spotless to the Father, that it may come to the spirits of just men made perfect, and join with them in singing the new song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by his blood, to receive power, honour, glory, and blessing for ever.—Amen.

Some meditations for drooping believers, when death is near.

TRAVELLERS who have met with many storms, troubles, and dangers in their journeys, rejoice when they come near to their own country; and shall not I, a stranger and pilgrim, that have been long wandering in a wilderness, be glad when I come near my blessed home, my dear friends, and eternal habitation?

With what cheerfulness do some women endure the pains of child-bearing, being supported with the hopes of a child's being born in the world? And what is the joy of a man-child being brought into this sinful and miserable world, to the joy of a sanctified soul's being brought out of it into heaven for ever? It is pleasant when the hard winter goeth over, the messengers of the spring, the singing of birds doth come: and shall not I rejoice, when sickness and forerunners of death do tell me, that the winter of my darkness and trouble is past, and the summer of my eternal light and joy is at hand?

What though death be the king of terrors? Is not glorious Christ the King of comforts? Have not I met already with this blessed king; and why should I fear to meet with the other? O let my strength and support at this time come from Christ my covenanted Redeemer.

O Lord deliver my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling! O bring me out of the miry clay, set my feet upon a rock, and establish my goings, and put a new song in my mouth, even praises to our God?

If Jacob went down so cheerfully into Egypt, when God had said unto him, "Fear not to go down, for I will go down with thee, and I will bring thee up again?" Why should a believer fear to go down to the grave, when God hath undertaken to go down with him thither, and to bring him up again? His body may be turned into dust, but God is in covenant with his dust, and will not suffer the least particle of it to be lost.

Are not the righteous taken away from the evil to come? Do they not rest on their beds, and enter into peace? Why then should I grudge at dying? When the Lord is to bring heavy wrath and judgments on a land, he frequently houses many of his people in heaven before-hand: and how happy are those that get into the house before the sweeping hail-shower doth fall. A believer needeth not to look for any settled fair weather in this world: It will be nothing but one shower up, and another down, till he be housed in heaven. O why then should I linger in this wilderness!

How highly dignified is the believer, in being made an heir of God, and a joint heir with his own Son Jesus Christ! So that Christ and the believer do, as it were, divide heaven between them; they have the same Father, dwell in the same house, sit at the same table, reign on the same throne, and partake of the same glory. O what honour is this, which is put upon a worm of the earth! It is indeed but little that the young heir enjoys of the inheritance while in this world; no more than will serve to bear his charges to heaven, where he shall get all, forget his present straits, and remember his poverty no more. O why then should not I, like a young heir, be looking and longing for the expiring of my minority, when I shall arrive at ripe age, and enter upon the full possession of the inheritance! O that I could send out faith and hope, those two faithful spies, to survey the promised land, or at least to visit the borders of my elder brother's country! What an encouraging report would they bring back! My glorious Lord is gone; he hath left the earth, and entered into his glory; my brethren and friends have many of them arrived there also. How great is the difference between my state and theirs! I am groaning out my complaints, but they are singing God's praise. I am in darkness, and cannot see God: but they are in light, and see him face to face. O my Lord, I shall stay behind, when they are gone? Should I be satisfied to wander in the wilderness, far distant from my Father and my God; when

they are triumphing above, dividing the spoil? No: I will still look after them with a stedfast eye, and cry, O Lord, how long? I will wait now in hope, yea, rejoice in the forethoughts of the day, when my minority shall be expired, my pilgrimage finished, my banishment over, that I may get home to my country and friends above.

What though my days be dark and gloomy now, my winter be sharp and stormy? Why it is but short, and near over; the eternal summer approacheth! The long day, the high sun, and the fair garden of my well-beloved, above these visible heavens, will quickly make amends for all. Let me get up by faith and visit the new land, view the fair city, and behold the white throne, and the Lamb that sits thereon, that I may rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Shall many heirs of the wrath go singing and rejoicing to hell; and will an heir of God go drooping and sorrowing to heaven? Oh let not my bad behaviour on a death-bed, bring up a bad report upon Christ's good way, and the land which he hath purchased.

Have I such great and precious promises left me, and shall I not live and feed upon them in the time of my need? shall I not trust the word of him that is faithful and true? hath he not said to me, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee!" When thy disciples were sore tossed with winds and waves, thou camest to them in the fourth watch of the night, walking on the waters; and when their fears were increased, thou saidest, "It is I, be not afraid." Thou rebukedst the wind, and there presently followed a great calm. My Redeemer's compassion continues; his bowels are not shut up this day, more than in the days of his flesh. "Jesus Christ is the same to day, yesterday and for ever."

Ah! I have too little improven my acquaintance with precious Christ in the day of my life! How ready am I to misken and mistake him, when he changeth his dispensations towards me! though I have been long at Christ's school, what small proficiency have I made in the work and mystery of faith? how little have I learned to believe in the dark, and to drop an anchor at midnight upon the Rock of ages, and to look out for the dawning of the day?

Surely the day shall break, and the shadows flee away: my king cometh, my well beloved is on his way; he hath sent his letter before him to warn me of it, saying, "Behold, I come quickly." O that, like the cold and wearied night-watch, I may be looking out for the appearing of the morning star, and the breaking of the eastern sky; and may be still crying, "Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly."

Thou hast said, "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for all the upright in heart. Surely God's seed shall not lie always beneath the clods; the time is at hand, when it shall spring; and joyful will the crop be at last. O that like David in affliction, I could encourage myself in the Lord my God, and say, "The Lord liveth, blessed be my rock!" Why should I droop, while my Lord liveth and my rock standeth? My hopes may die, my comforts die, my gifts die, my riches die, my relations die, and my body die; but, good news! The Lord liveth, blessed be my rock." The disciples had a melancholy time while Christ was dead and lying in the grave; but that sad time is over, he is now risen and will die no more. Nay, he hath proclaimed it for my comfort saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last. I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death."

When my soul is cast down within me, let me remember God from the land of Jordan, and the hill Mizar; that I may reason myself out of all my fears and discouragements: For yet "the Lord will command his loving kindness in the day-time, and in night his song shall be with me, and my prayer to the God of my life."

Why then art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

Now, when death is at hand, let not my Saviour be far off. He who remembered the dying thief, and spoke comfortably to him, let him now remember me when he is seated in his kingdom, and say to my soul, "This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." When it is absent from the body, let it be present with the Lord. Let the angels now be ready to do their office, to carry my departing soul into Abraham's bosom. Let me now depart, that I may be with Christ; yea, be for ever with the Lord, that I may see his face. Let me dwell there, where they have no night, need no candle, no light of the sun for ever; where God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying.

Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit. By the hands of him who hath redeemed it, let it be presented to thee without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

An addition of some further Meditations proper for any sick person in the view of Death.

THE Lord is pleased sometimes to cast men down on beds of sickness, and draw the curtain between the world and them, that they may take a view of their by-past life and future state. Now is it time for me to look into my soul, and examine my state, Oh, how many do miss salvation when they think themselves sure of it? They mistake a form of godliness for the power of it, and thereby deceive themselves, thinking themselves something when they are nothing.

Some come the length as to shed tears, as Esau did; profess fair, yea fight for the Lord, as Saul and Jehu did; wish for the end of the righteous, as Balaam did; desire God's people to pray for them, as Pharaoh and Simon Magus did; walk softly, and mourn for fear of judgment, as Ahab did; joy in gospel-ordinances, and reform in many things, as Herod did; prophecy and speak well of Christ, as Caiphas and Judas did; be convinced and tremble at hearing a sermon, as Felix did; yea, taste the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, as apostates have done: and yet for all these attainments, remain strangers to the saving work of the Spirit on the heart.

O that the consideration of hypocrites' attainments might alarm me out of my security, and make me restless till I find the distinguishing marks of true grace and sincere faith in my soul? O that I could say, there is a principle in me that will not suffer me to build on any foundation in the world but Christ and his righteousness; that makes me content with Christ, with all his offices, with all his

precepts, and with his very cross for his sake! Doth the love of Christ keep me back from sin, more than the law or fear of hell? Have I aimed at God's honour in all my actions, civil, natural, and religious? Am I humble, and denied to my own will, wit, credit, ease and honour, and to all the enjoyments of the world? Am I acquaint with the throne of grace, and desirous to keep up a constant correspondence with it? O let me not rest till I perceive those things in my soul which accompany salvation.

O how comfortable would it be to me now, if I could say with good Hezekiah in his sickness, "Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight? O that I could pray, and say with Jesus my Saviour when in the view of death, "Father, I have glorified thee on earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do: and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which thou hast ordained for me before the world was?"

Alas, Lord, I must confess, my iniquities have gone up above mine head; my mispent time, my unfruitfulness under the means of grace, and waterings of ordinances, may cause me to cry out, Wo is me for the leanness of my soul, and barrenness of my heart? I have been an empty vine, bringing forth fruit only to myself. I have hid my Lord's money, and therefore deserve the doom of the wicked and slothful servant. But my relief is in my Surety's righteousness. Blessed be the Lord, who hath sent his Son to bless those who by nature lie under the curse, and to intercede for those who cannot speak for themselves. O how suitable is he to my soul's case! I have indeed a multitude of sins, but he hath a multitude of tender mercies; I have deep and heinous guilt, but he hath a deep fountain for washing it out; I am sold under sin, but he hath a ransom to buy me back again; my sore is broad, but his plaister is answerable; my wound is great, but his balm is excellent. Surely it is my wisdom to go to Christ with all my grievances, and always to lie and cry at my Redeemer's door.

O that now, when the sun of my life is setting, the blessed sun of righteousness may arise and shine upon my soul! Goodness and mercy hath followed me while I lived: O that Christ and glory may meet me when I die! I must acknowledge thy goodness; were this the last hour I had to live, and this the last word I had to speak in the world, I behoved to say, Lord, thou hast been a merciful and gracious God to me, my whole life hath been a continued tract of mercy; Lord, crown the end of it with mercy also. Surely the sea is not so full of water, nor the sun so full of light, as thou art full of grace and mercy. O let not my sins stop the current of thy tender mercies at this time. Lord, drown all my sins in the sea of Christ's blood, that my soul may not be sunk by them in the ocean of divine wrath. Lord Jesus, embrace my perishing soul in thy arms: let thy cross be my security, and thy wounds my refuge.

O thou that hearest the young ravens which cry, be not silent to me at this time, lest, if thou be silent to me, I be like them that go down to the pit.

Lord, I am now called to the work I never did: give me the strength I never had. Surely it is an important matter to die, and my eternal state dependeth upon dying aright. What I do amiss in my life one day, I may amend it in the next; but not so here, I can die but once: if I mar this piece of work, I cannot come back to mend it again; if I forget any thing necessary for my journey, I cannot return to fetch it. Oh, a wrong step in going out of this life is highly dangerous. In one respect, it is like the sin against the Holy Ghost, and can never be forgiven: For I cannot come back to mourn for it. Of all the business I ever undertook, I have most need to take care of my dying.

Oh, is death coming to take down this earthly tabernacle, and to put the one-half of me in the dark grave, and the other half of me in heaven or in hell; and shall I give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyes-lids, till I find myself in that case, that I dare look death in the face, and dare hazard my soul upon eternity?

O to have right impressions of the certainty of death and the uncertainty of life! What is my life but a vapour, a sand-glass of sixty or seventy years, which will soon run out? eternity and a judgment-seat are now hard upon me. The blast of the last trumpet is at hand. There will shortly be a proclamation by one (standing in the clouds), that time shall be no more. The world looks big in men's eyes in time of health; but when the eye-strings break, the breath turns cold, and the imprisoned soul looks out at the window of the clay house, ready to leap out into eternity, can the world give any satisfaction? No, no, a lamp full of oil will be valued then more than a house full of gold. The finest things on earth will then appear nothing but a piece of painted dust and gilded clay. How gladly would the greatest worlding, then, give all his gold and silver, riches and honours, for one sight of Christ's fair face, one smile of his countenance? O wherefore should men in health neglect the market of grace, and slight the pearl of great price? why should they spend their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not?

Lord, save me from the hypocrite's case at death, whose candle of profession and of hope burns and blazes fair all the way with him, but goeth out in the dark trance of death; and there he stumbles and falls, and shall rise no more. O that my profession and hope may be of God's creating! If God light my candle, then shall my feet be enlightened through the dark valley, and neither death nor hell shall be able to put it out.

Lord, subdue sin in me, and let it be continually dying now, that it may certainly be dead before me. God forbid that my sins should survive me!

Oh, that when the stroke of death dissolves my body, my soul may escape as a bird out of the snare of the fowler, and may ascend to the heavenly regions to enjoy God himself.

O let me look through the gates of mortality, and long for the jailor's coming to set me at liberty. God help me to overcome the love of life, and fears of death. If my neighbour lend me any thing, I pay it again with thanks, and shall I not restore my life to God with thanks, who hath been pleased to lend me it so long? Arise, and let me depart, for this is not my rest: Heaven is my home, Lord bring me to it; the joys of it are too great to enter into me, O make me fit to enter into them.

While I lie on a sick bed, Lord help me to patience in my sickness without murmuring.

How willingly would the damned in hell endure my pains a thousand years, if they had any hopes of being saved at last! Blessed be God that my sickness is not in hell, that my pains are not eternal.

O that I may look on my affliction as coming from the hand of him that is the Lord of health and of sickness, of life and of death; who killeth and maketh alive, bringeth down to the grave, and raiseth up again! That Sovereign and wise Lord hath determined the time when my affliction shall end, as well as the time when it began. Thirty-eight years were appointed the sick man at Bathesda pool; eighteen years the woman that Satan kept bound; twelve years to the woman with the bloody issue; ten days tribulation to those of Smyrna; three days plague to David. The number of the godly man's tears is registrated in God's book; yea, the hairs of his head are numbered.

When David got his choice of his own chastisements, he chose rather to be corrected by the hand of God, than by any other means, saying, "Let me fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercies are great." I was dumb and opened not my mouth, because thou didst it. Glory to God, that I am fallen into his merciful hand. Hath God appointed that man's coming into the world shall be attended with pain and crying, and his going out of it with grief and trouble; and shall I quarrel at it? No, I desire humbly to underly the correction of mine iniquity, and to bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him. O that the sickness of my body may be a means of health to my soul! May I be chastened of the Lord, so that I may not be condemned with the world!

It is good for the believer that he is afflicted. Why? It springs from Divine love, and it works for his soul's good. Affliction is a seal of his adoption, and no sign of reprobation. The purest gold is most often tried, the sweetest grape is hardest pressed, and the truest Christian is heaviest crossed. But O how soon will the Christian forget all his groans when he comes to heaven! As soon as Stephen saw Christ, though at a distance, he forgot all his wounds and bruises; he minded no more the terror of the stones about his ears, but sweetly yielded his soul into his Redeemer's hands.

I read of many in the gospel, that by sicknesses and diseases were driven unto Christ, who, if they had enjoyed health and prosperity, would have neglected, like many others, to come to him. O blessed is that cross, that draweth a sinner to Christ, to lay op n his own misery, and implore Christ's mercy. And blessed be that Christ, who never refuseth the sinner that cometh to him, though driven by affliction and misery. To whom shall such a distressed creature as I go, but to him who is the only physician, that can both cure my soul from sin, and my body from sickness?

Lord, thou never denied thy mercy to any sinner that asked it with a penitent heart. There were many sorts of sick sinners that came to thee in the days of thy flesh; the blind, the deaf, the lame, the lepers; those that were sick of palsies, dropsies, fevers, fluxes, and were possessed with devils: And yet never one of them came crying for mercy, that went away without his errand, were his sin never so great, his disease never so grievous. Nay, so merciful is my Redeemer, that he offered and gave his mercy to many that never asked it, being moved with the bowels of his own compassion, and the sight of their misery; so dealt he with the woman of Samaria, the widow of Nain, and the man that lay thirty-eight years at the pool of Bethesda. Oh, if he gave his mercy so willingly to them that did not ask it, and was found of them that sought him not, will he deny mercy to my soul that is crying for it.

There is but a step between me and death; Lord, seal my pardon to me, before I go hence and be no more. O draw nigh to me, and save me: for my soul is full of trouble, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. Thy loving-kindness is better than life; O make me sure of that, and I will willingly part with this mortal life.

O thou who willest not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance; be pleased to make use of the chastisement of my body, as a medicine to cure my soul, and bring me to a true and sincere repentance. One day is with thee as a thousand years; O work in me in this, which may be my last day, whatsoever thou seest wanting in me. Enable me to present unto thee the sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart, which thou hast promised not to despise. Give a true and lively faith in the blessed Jesus, who is the propitiation for our sins. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him; O heal me by his stripes. Let the cry of his blood drown the clamour of my sins. I am indeed a child of wrath, but Christ is the Son of thy love; O pity me for his sake, and let my soul find sanctuary in his wounds.

O Lord, the waters of affliction are come in even unto my soul; O let the Spirit of God move on those waters, that, like the pool of Bethesda, they may cure whatever spiritual diseases thou seest in me. O Lord, consider my affliction, accept my tears, assuage my pain, increase my patience, and finish my troubles. Correct me with the chastisement of a Father, and not with the wounds of an enemy, and though thou take not off thy rod, Lord take away thine anger.

Lord, the prince of this world cometh, O let him have nothing in me; but, as he accuseth, do thou absolve. I have nothing to say for myself, but be thou my advocate, Lord; and do thou answer for me. I am clothed with filthy garments, and Satan stands at my right hand to resist me; O Lord rebuke him, and pluck me as a brand out of the fire. Cause mine iniquities to pass from me, and clothe me with the righteousness of thy dear Son. I know, O Lord, that no unclean thing can enter into thy kingdom, and thou seest I am nothing but pollution; yea, my very righteousness is filthy rags: O wash me, and make me white in the blood of the Lamb, that I may be fit to stand before thy throne. O take me from the tents of Kedar to the mansions of light and purity. When my earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, O let me have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. O bring my soul out of prison, that I may eternally give thanks unto thy name. Amen.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONTAINING DIRECTIONS TO THE FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS OF THE SICK, WHO ARE THEMSELVES IN HEALTH FOR THE TIME.

WHEN the Lord sends sickness and affliction to our neighbours, we ought not to be idle and unconcerned spectators of his dispensations; but we should hearken to the voice of God's rod upon others, and consider what it is that the Lord is calling for at our hands. These following Directions may be useful to those that are in health.

DIRECT. I.—*Be very thankful to God for the great mercy of health and strength, and improve it to his glory.*

SURELY an healthful person hath still great cause to be a thankful person. Health is a mercy that doth season and sweeten every other temporal mercy; without it the greatest wealth and honours, nay, a king's crown, can give no satisfaction. It is far more eligible to be a healthy beggar than a sickly king. What comfort could it afford us, under tossing sickness and torturing pains, to have the greatest heaps of money to look to, or thousands coming to pay us homage; alas, for our unthankfulness to him who is the God of our health! How little do we prize his goodness, in continuing with us such a long tract of health and strength, together with the use of our reason and senses, when many others are deprived of them. Surely God were righteous, should he teach us to value the worth of those mercies by the want of them.

Let us consider how many miserable persons there are in the world, and who it is that maketh us to differ from them; how many diseased, distracted, deformed, lame, blind, deaf, and dumb people there are; and how easy it had been for God to have put us in their condition, and them in ours. The difference is not owing to any thing in us: their sins are not greater than ours. Had we a due sense of our sins and ill-deservings, we would acknowledge ourselves unworthy of the least of all God's mercies; we would reckon every common mercy a special blessing, and an unmerited favour to us.——Again, let us take a view of the fainting sickness, racking pains, and restless nights of others. Let us look upon our sick friends sweating and burning under fevers, let us hear them groaning and moaning under strong pain. "Their soul abhors all manner of meat, and they draw near unto the gates of death." Sometimes we see them panting and fainting, and not able to speak a word to us. And, what is the language of all this to us? is it not that we should thankfully adore our gracious God, and bless and magnify him, for his distinguishing goodness to us? O how much are we bound to the Lord, that it is not so with us as with others! While wearisome nights are appointed to them, and their bones are full of tossing; all the comforts of this life are tasteless to them, their friends are weeping about them, but cannot help them; "it is far otherwise with me (may you say) my mercies and relations are comfortable and helpful to me, I relish my food, my bed gives me ease, my sleep is refreshing; I have freedom to read and pray, meditate and attend the public ordinances. "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name." Forget not this benefit of health, that is the chief of all my outward blessings. Some would part with all their worldly wealth, to have so much bodily health as I have. Long have I undervalued and abused this choice mercy of health: O that I could mourn for my neglect, and resolve in God's strength to improve my remaining health, for the praise and service of that merciful God who is the author and preserver of it! let me spend and be spent for God, that gives me all my health and strength for his glory. Let me abhor the ingratitude of those who employ the health which God giveth in the service of his enemies; and make a sacrifice of it to the devil, the world and the flesh. O what prodigious folly are those guilty of, who, for satisfying their sensual appetite, do often deprive themselves of health, which is in itself a thousand times of more value than all their brutish pleasures! God help me to prize this mercy, that can never be prized enough."

DIRECT. II.—*Make conscience of visiting your sick Friends and Neighbours, believing that it is your duty and interest to do it.*

VISITING of the sick is not only the duty of the ministers of Christ, but likewise of all the members of Christ: for we are all enjoined to remember them that are in adversity, and to sympathize with the afflicted, as being ourselves also in the body. "To him that is afflicted, pity should be shown by his friends," said Job. And our Lord gives it as a character of those whom he will own and acquit at the great day, Mat. xxv. 36. "I was sick, and ye visited me." This is the way to be like him, who is the Father of mercies, and whose "soul was grieved for the miseries of Israel," Judg. x. 16. We read how tenderly David sympathized with his enemies when they were sick, Psal. xxxv. 13, 14. and much more ought we to visit and sympathize with our sick friends. To visit the prosperous and healthy, is an act of curiosity and civility, but to visit the afflicted and sickly, is an act of charity and Christianity.

And as it is your duty, so it is your interest and advantage to visit the sick. The wise man tells you, Eccl. vii. 2. "It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting." King Joash went to see Elisha in his sickness, and wept over him: and he lost nothing by so doing. 2 Kings xiii. 14. for he obtained thereby three famous victories over the Syrians. Though it be not warrantable to enquire at the dead, Deut. xviii. 11. yet we may learn many wholesome lessons from the dying, and even though they be speechless. As for instance, we may hereby be instructed how to prize health, mind our own frailty, and provide for the time of sickness. When we behold their strength languishing, their tongue faltering, their eyes failing, their countenance pale; we should think with ourselves, "This will be my case ere long; the next arrow that death shoots, may be levelled at me: how much is it my concern to prepare for it!" also we may think, what a bitter thing sin is, that it is the cause of all those pains and distresses; and how mad they are who love sin and take pleasure in it. We may see likewise the great folly of courting and trusting the world, which leaves the sick and dying man in the midst of his greatest extremity. And we may observe, how happy the man is that hath an interest in Christ, the peace of a good conscience, and a well-grounded hope of heaven, to yield support and confidence to him under his strugglings with sickness and death. When we hear the dying man's complaints of his sins, and his lamenting his neglect of duty, and mispending of precious time, we may learn repentance and reformation. When we observe their professions of love to Christ, and their hope in him to the last. It doth contribute to the quickening and strengthening of our faith. A right sight of dying persons, is a good mean to increase the spirit of grace and supplication in us. We may fitly allude here to the answer which Elijah gave to Elisha, when he sought a double portion of his Spirit, 2 Kings ii 10. "If thou seest me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee." A double portion of the Spirit shall be the allowance of those who make conscience of this duty.

DIRECT. III.—*Let the Friends of the Sick, and those who visit them, deal faithfully with them about their Souls.*

CONSIDER this may be the last opportunity you may have of doing any thing for your friend's soul. If he die, he is fixed in his everlasting state, so that all advices and counsels then will be fruitless. It is now, or never, you must exert yourself for your friend's advantage; there is no knowledge nor wisdom in the grave, to which he is going; "God's loving kindness cannot be declared in the grave, nor his faithfulness in destruction," Psal. lxxxviii. 11. Now is the proper time for doing good to your neighbour's soul. When affliction opens the ear to discipline, be careful to drop in wholesome instructions into it; and when the heart is made tender by sickness, it is a fit season for good counsel to make impressions on it. Let the opportunity then be improven with faithfulness and prudence. And, in order thereto, observe the following advices.

I. Labour to know the sick man's spiritual condition, that your applications may be suitable thereunto. The knowledge of the disease is previously requisite unto the cure; as the mistake of a physician about a man's disease may be as dangerous as the disease itself, so here it is highly dangerous to mistake the case of the sick man's soul; for then lenitives may be applied, when corrosives are needful; promises may be administered, when threatenings are more proper.

II. Beware of flattering the sick with vain hopes of life, when he is more likely to die; lest he be thereby tempted to delay or slacken his preparation for another world. It is fit that plainness be used with respect to his dangers, that he may be quickened to his work.

III. The sick person is to be admonished and told, that sickness comes not by chance, nor by second causes merely; but by the wise direction and special providence of God; that sometimes God smites out of displeasure for sin, and for the sinner's correction and amendment; and sometimes for the trial and exercise of his people's graces; that the sharpest afflictions shall work together for good to them that love God, and are rightly exercised under God's hand; that it is a great mercy to a sinner, when God by his rod gives him warning and space to repent, and flee to the blood of sprinkling, and to cry to God for pardon, and doth not snatch him out of the world, by a sudden death. Upon which account the voice of the rod should be carefully hearkened to and thankfully obeyed.

IV. If the sick person be ignorant, he is to be catechised and instructed in the principles of religion, especially concerning his faith and repentance, and his uptaking of the covenant of grace, and the method of pardon and salvation through the righteousness of Christ apprehended by faith. And it may be proper to demand his assent to some of the fundamental truths of Christianity, or his answer to such questions as these: *First*, Do you believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God in three persons, the Maker and Governor of the world? 2. Do you believe that Jesus Christ, who assumed our nature, obeyed the law, died on the cross, rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven, is the eternal Son of God, and the only Saviour of sinners? 3. Are you sensible that you are a lost sinner by Adam's fall, and, besides that, guilty of innumerable actual sins; and that you have broken God's holy commandments in thoughts, words and deeds, and, for so doing, do deserve God's wrath both in this life and that which is to come? 4. Are you truly grieved and sorry for breaking God's law, neglecting his worship, mispending your time, and pursuing the vanities of the world? And would you do as you have done, or live otherwise if you were to begin your life again? 5. How do you think to get your guilt removed, your sins pardoned, and your peace made up with God? Are you desirous from your heart to be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, the blessed Peace-maker? 6. Do you heartily approve of the gospel-method of reconciliation, by the righteousness and sacrifice offered by the Lord Jesus Christ, as your Surety, in your name and Stead? And is your soul desirous to chuse and accept of Christ for your Mediator and Saviour, in all his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King? 7. Do you renounce all confidence in any other, all dependence on your duties and righteousness, and put your whole trust and confidence in Christ, and the merits of his death and blood, saying, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on all the earth that I desire besides thee." Do you believe that there is no salvation in any other, and that there is no name under heaven whereby you can be saved, but Jesus Christ only? 8. Do you desire to be wholly renewed and sanctified by virtue of Christ's blood, and to show forth the reality of your faith by good works and a holy life, for the time you have to live in the world? And, as an evidence thereof, are you willing to restore what you have taken wrongfully from any, and to forgive all wrongs done to you by any, and cast out all malice or hatred you have borne to any, and ask forgiveness of any you have injured? 9. Do you believe that Christ is coming at the last day to judge all the world, both the quick and the dead, whom he shall then raise from the grave, and that your dead body shall rise with the rest? 10. Do you believe the immortality of the soul, and its living in a separate state after death, and that the souls of believers do immediately pass into glory, where they shall ever be with the Lord?

V. In dealing with the sick, you are to separate between the precious and the vile, and to make a difference between the converted and the unconverted. And seeing different applications are requisite, you are, according to your knowledge, to study to suit your counsels, admonitions and prayers, to their state and condition; not using the same words to the ungodly as you use to the godly, lest you flatter them with ill grounded hopes that their state is safe, while they are strangers to a work of regeneration. That great truth is to be declared to all, that, "Unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." O it is dangerous to speak peace, where God speaks war.

VI. If the sick person seem to be secure, or have not a due sense of his sins, endeavours must be used to convince him of the guilt, pollution, and danger of them, in order to his humiliation. Presumptuous sinners are not to be flattered, lest we betray their souls into eternal ruin, and so their blood be required at our hand. No fond love, no slavish fear, must keep us from telling them the hazards of their present state. Their secure conscience must be awakened to see the demerit of sin, and the terribleness of the justice of a sin-revenging God, before whom no Christless impenitent sinner can stand: this is necessary in order to a sinner's discovering his lost case in himself, and his fleeing to Christ for refuge. It is God's method, first to cast down the soul before he lift it up; to plough the heart by conviction, before he cast in the seed of consolation.

VII. If the sick person hath studied to walk uprightly, but is at present discouraged upon account of the sharpness of the rod, Satan's temptations, the guilt of sin, fear of death, or the like; then suitable counsels, resolutions, and comforts, are to be tendered, in order to his settlement and support. Particularly, he may be told, that sharp rods are no ways inconsistent with divine love; nay, frequently, they are a sign of it: for, as standing waters turn corrupt, because they have no current; and those who are not poured from vessel to vessel, their taste remains, and their scent is not changed; therefore God, in order to take away the scent of the corrupt nature from us, is pleased to change us from state to state, by crosses and sickness, to salvation. And as Noah's ark, the higher it was tossed with the flood, the nearer it mounted towards heaven; so the sanctified soul, the more it is exercised with affliction, the nearer it is lifted towards God. Again, it is proper to set before him the freeness and fulness of God's grace, the sufficiency of righteousness in Christ, and his rich and gracious offers in the gospel; by which we are assured, that all who repent and believe with their heart in God's mercy through Christ, renouncing their own righteousness, shall not perish in their sins, but have life and salvation in him, and that believers in Christ are assured of victory over Satan, death and all their enemies, because Christ their head hath by his cross conquered the devil, unstinged death, triumphed over the grave, and obtained victory for all his members; so that neither life nor death, principalities nor powers, shall be able to separate them from God's love in Christ.

VIII. If a sick man be so tempted and troubled in conscience, that he is in hazard of despairing of God's mercy; it is necessary to inform him of the greatness and infiniteness of God's mercy, that the most notorious sinners have been pardoned and saved by it, and it is still offered in the gospel to the vilest of sinners. Though God foresaw all the sins which the world would commit, yet these did not hinder him from loving the world so, that he gave his only begotten Son to death, to save as many as would believe and repent; so that the sins of one man can never hinder God from loving his soul, and forgiving his sins, when he sincerely desires to repent and believe. The cry of the most grievous sins that are recorded (such as those of Sodom) could never reach higher than unto heaven, Gen. xix. 13. But David assures us, Psal. cviii. 4. that the mercy of God is great, and reaches up higher than the heavens, so that it over-toppeth the greatest of all our sins. If the mercy of God be greater than all his works, it must surely be greater than all our sins.

Again, lay before him the infinite virtue of Christ's blood: why? It is not the blood of a mere man, but the blood of God, Acts xx. 28. And, are there any sins so great, or guilt so heinous, but the blood of God can wash away? This was godly Cranmer's support that day he suffered martyrdom, when his sin of renouncing the Protestant doctrine stared him in the face: "Surely (said he) God was made flesh, and shed his blood, not for lesser sins only, but for great sins also." He was sadly discouraged, and wept abundantly, till he eyed this meritorious blood, and then he took heart, and died with courage. O this price was so great, that it could have merited pardon for the sins of all the devils in hell, as well as for all the men on earth, though every one of them had been red as crimson. Yea, the least drop of this blood is of more merit to procure the mercy of God for our salvation, than all our sins can be of force to provoke the wrath of God for our damnation; why? The greatest of our sins are but the sins of a man, but the least drop of Christ's blood is the blood of God.

Moreover, let him be put in mind of the willingness and readiness of our Redeemer to receive all sinners that came to him in the days of his flesh, though driven to him by sickness and affliction; so that he never put any of them away without their errand, that came crying for mercy. Nay; he many times sought out objects of his mercy, that were not thinking of coming to him, as showed before. Observe the gentleness of our Lord's carriage to Judas himself, in calling him friend after his most treacherous dealing, Mat. xxvi. 50. "Friend (said he) wherefore art thou come?" Had wretched Judas laid hold on the word friend out of the mouth of Christ, as Benhadad did the word brother, from the mouth of Ahab; doubtless Judas should have found the God of Israel more merciful than Benhadad found the king of Israel.

Lastly, Let him consider, that to despair of God's mercy casts the greatest dishonour upon the Divine Majesty, and is a sin more heinous than all the sins which we have before committed: why? It doth charge the great God as guilty of perjury, who hath solemnly sworn that he desires not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should repent and live, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. God was more displeased with Cain for despairing of his mercy, than for murdering of his brother; and with Judas for hanging himself, than for betraying his master: why? Because that by their despair they would make the sins of mortal men greater than the infinite mercy of the eternal God.

Direct. IV.—*Be earnest in Prayer to God for your Friends, when Sick or Dying. Pray with them and for them.*

FREQUENTLY sick persons are so disquieted with pain and trouble, that they are out of case to pray for themselves, and therefore they have the more need of the prayers of others. David fasted and prayed for his enemies, when they were sick, Psal. xxx. 13. much more ought we to pray for our friends in that case. Never did they need our prayers so much, as when they are called to enter upon an unchangeable condition, to go to their long home, even that place wherein they must abide for ever. Now they are in the land of prayer, and it is now or never that you must pray and beg mercy for them. When their life is gone, they go from the land of prayer, and are fixed in that place, whence they shall never remove: then all your prayers and cries for them will be in vain. If your friend be a stranger to Christ, he is on the brink of hell, and knows it not; and will you not cry to God to open his eyes, and save him from falling into that devouring pit out of which there is no redemption? You would be willing to sit up a whole night for the relief of his body; and will you not spend a part of a night for the good of his soul, that is a thousand times more valuable! Now the question is, whether this precious soul shall be Christ's or the devil's for ever? And when will you wrestle for your friend, if you do it not now? If the sick person be a child of God, you may pray for him with the more comfort, and expectation to be heard. You may, in that case, send the same message by prayer to Christ, that the sister of

sick Lazarus did, John xi. 3. "Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick." Lord, pity him, comfort him, abate his distemper, and relieve him from it, if it be thy will: if not, grant him thy gracious presence and safe conduct through the Jordan of death, and a happy landing in the Canaan of glory.

We are told, that the prayers of the righteous, in such cases, do avail much, James v. 16. and this, to encourage us to pray one for another. Whatever be the sick person's condition, such confessions and petitions as these following may be made use of in prayer for him.

PETITIONS FOR THE SICK.

LORD, thou first breathedst into man the breath of life; and, when thou takest away that breath, he dies, and returns again to his dust. May we be duly sensible of our dependence on thee for all that we enjoy. We acknowledge, that our great abuse of the many days of health and welfare thou affordest us doth justly deserve the visitation of sickness and diseases. Wo is us, we lie down under a burden of sin, both original and actual; we are all children of wrath by nature, and under the curse of a broken law: and all other miseries, temporal and spiritual, distempers, pains, death and hell itself, are the issues thereof. Be merciful to the sick person under thy hand; discover to him his sins, and the cause why thou contendest with him. Make him to see that he is lost in himself, and wholly unable to satisfy the demands of offended justice; and do thou reveal Christ to his soul for righteousness and life. O give him thy holy Spirit to create and strengthen faith, that he may lay hold on Christ as offered in the gospel; work in him the grace of true repentance. Enable him to search his heart and try his ways, so as he may discover every accursed thing, every Achan in the camp, that hath provoked the Lord against him. When thou puttest him in the furnace, be pleased to stand by, and oversee the metal while it is melting in it. Try him as silver is tried, and bring him out purified, and let him lose nothing in this furnace but his dross. Remove his sins from thy presence, as far as east is from west, that they may never trouble his conscience, nor rise in judgment against his soul. However bitter the cup may be, let it be medicinal to cure all the diseases of his soul. O that these afflictions, which are but for a moment, may work for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory through Jesus Christ the purchaser!

Look down from heaven, the habitation of thy holiness, behold his affliction and his pain, and forgive all his sin. Shew such pity to him as a father doth to his child, and lay no more upon him than he is able to bear. Lord, give patience and strength answerable to the burden of trouble thou hast laid on him. In time of his weakness uphold him by thy strength. Relieve his wants out of thy infinite fulness. Lord, thou knowest his frame, and rememberest that he is dust; save him from extremity of trouble, either abate his pain, or increase his patience to endure what thou measurest out to him. Give him the evidences of all the graces of thy Spirit. Arm and defend him against all the suggestions and temptations of Satan. Take his heart wholly off the world, and set his affections on things above. Lord, make use of this chastisement of his body as a medicine to cure his soul, by drawing his soul, that is sick of sin, to thyself. O enable him, in a penitent believing manner, to come by repentance to Christ, his soul physician, to get it healed of all its maladies. Sanctify his sickness, and let the fruit of it be to purge away his sin.

If God shall be pleased to add to his days, bless all means of his recovery. Remove the disease; renew his strength, both outward and inward; heal his soul as well as his body. And enable him to walk tenderly before God, and carefully to remember and perform such vows and promises of obedience as men are apt to make in time of sickness.

If God hath determined to finish his days by the present visitation; let him find such evidence of the pardon of his sins, of his interest in Christ, and eternal life, as may cause his inward man to be renewed, while his outward man decayeth; that he may meet death without fear, cast himself wholly on Christ without doubting, and desire to be dissolved, that he may for ever be with Jesus Christ. Lord, make his last works better than his first, and the day of his death better than the day of his birth. Make his last words his best words, his last thoughts his best thoughts, and his last hour his best hour. O let him die the death of the righteous, and let his last end be like his. Let the eyes of his soul be opened to see his sins and his Saviour, before the eyes of his body be shut by death. Take away the sting of death, the guilt of sin, that he may walk through the valley of the shadow of death, and fear no evil. Open thou his lips, that his mouth may show forth thy praise, before he go to the place of silence. And when his strength doth fail, and his tongue is not able to utter words, let the blood of Christ speak for him in heaven. And let thy holy Spirit within him, make requests for him with sighs and groans that cannot be uttered. When the sight of his eyes doth fail him, let the eyes of his faith be strengthened, that his soul (with Stephen at his death) may behold Jesus Christ in heaven ready to receive him. Lord stand by him in his last conflict with his enemies, Satan and death, that he may overcome both, and be more than a conqueror through Christ that hath loved him. Into thy hands we commend his spirit.

Lord, teach us, who do survive, by this and other like daily spectacles of our mortality, to see how frail and uncertain our condition is, and so to number our days, that we may seriously apply our hearts to heavenly wisdom, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Direct. V.—*Be careful to furnish your Friends with suitable Company, and spiritual converse, when they are Sick or Dying.*

AS worldly company and converse are great hindrances, so spiritual company and converse are special helps to the sick and dying. Now, that the friends of the sick may prevent the one, and provide for the other, let the following advices be remembered.

1. Mind your friends timeously to make their wills, and dispatch the settlement of their worldly affairs, that so they may not be disturbed at the last, nor any wise diverted from their main work, by thoughts or discourse about the world. A mind abstracted from the world is a most suitable disposition for a dying man. You cannot carry the things of this world with you when you go hence; and it is not fit you should carry the thoughts of them.

2. Keep carnal company from them as much as possible, and all those that would divert them by idle or worldly discourse. It is both impertinent and cruel, to throw in

such impediments in the way of those that are going speedily to their endless state.

3. Do what you can to get faithful ministers and godly Christians to be much about them, who are fit to instruct and counsel them about their souls' matters, and also to pray with them and for them.

4. Be often minding your sick friends of their chief work, and those things which belong unto their peace. Whatever be their state, whether gracious or graceless, it is proper to be minding them, 1. Of the vanity and emptiness of the world, that can neither give ease to the body, nor comfort to the soul, when either of them is in trouble. 2. Of the sinfulness of sin, which is the spring of all diseases and miseries whatsoever. 3. Of the preciousness and usefulness of Christ to a sinner in all cases, and especially at a dying hour. 4. Of the inexpressible felicity of believers in Christ after death, &c.

Lastly, If you think yourselves not able to instruct or advise your sick friends as they stand in need, then read some good book to them, that may be suitable to the condition of their souls; and, if you have not a fitter at hand, read some chapters or directions of this book to them, as you may see most proper for them. But, above all books, read to the sick the holy scriptures, and some particular chapters and psalms there; such as the last three chapters of Genesis; the last chapter of Deuteronomy;—the 17th chapter of the 1st book of Kings;—the 2d chapter of the 2d book of Kings;—the 14th and 19th chapters of Job;—the Psalms of David, and particularly the 6th, the 23d, 25th, 30th, 38th, and 41st, 42d, 49th, 51st, 71st, 73d, 77th, 88th, 89th, 90th, 103d, 116th, 118th, 130th, 142d, 143d, and several other Psalms;—the 12th chapter of Ecclesiastes;—the 38th, 53d, 54th, and 55th chapters of Isaiah;—the three last chapters of Luke;—the 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, and 20th chapters of John;—the 8th chapter of the Romans;—the 15th chapter of the 1st Corinthians;—the 5th chapter of the 2d Corinthians;—the 4th of the 1st Thessalonians;—the 11th and 12th of the Hebrews, the three last chapters of the Revelation, and the like.

DIRECT. VI.—*Be likewise suitably concerned for the Bodies of your Friends, when they are Sick.*

IF you would evidence a suitable concern for them, then you must deal tenderly and compassionately with them in their sickness, bear with their impatience and fretting, weary not of them, nor grudge of the trouble they put you to; for shortly you yourselves may be in the like case, when you shall be as great a trouble to others, as your friends are now to you.

Again, it is necessary to employ physicians, and use the best means for the recovery of your friend's health. The means indeed must not be trusted to instead of God, but used in subserviency to him, who hath appointed them, and can only give success to them. We must beware of Asa's sin that sought to the physicians, and not to the Lord. Let us neither take food nor physic without prayer to God for his blessing thereupon.

DIRECT. VII.—*When the sickness of your Relations or Neighbours doth issue in death, study a Christian and suitable behaviour under such a dispensation.*

WHEN a parent loseth a promising child, or a child loseth a loving parent, or when death deprives us of any near relation, it is a speaking and trying providence; and we have much need of grace and counsel from God to carry aright under it. Let us observe these advices.

I. It is necessary, in such a case, that we have a tender sense and feeling of God's afflicting hand. There are two extremes which we must equally avoid; viz. to make light of the death of relations, and to be excessively grieved on that account. God will have us neither to despise his rod, nor faint under it, Heb. xii. 5. God is displeased with those that are stupid and insensible under such afflictions. Why? They despise his rod, and make light of his corrections. Hence he complains of these, Jer. v. 3. "I have smitten them, but they have not grieved." God will have us to feel his hand, to enquire into the meaning of the rod, and search for those sins that have provoked God to smite us. It is a sign of a naughty, selfish and unchristian spirit, to be unconcerned for the death of friends; and much more is it so in those children, who have a secret satisfaction in the death of parents, because of the worldly riches or liberty which they get thereby. God useth to follow this wicked temper with his heavy judgments even in this life.

II. Consider that God is calling you, by the death of others, to keep up lively and lasting impressions of death and eternity upon your spirits. God knoweth how advantageous it would be for men so to do; and therefore he sets frequent spectacles of mortality before their eyes for this end. But such is the corruption and earthliness of our minds, that we soon forget the thoughts of death. When we see our friends in the pangs of death, or laid in the grave, it strikes us with some fear and concern, to think that one day this will be our own case: but no sooner is the dead interred, and the grave filled up again, than all those serious thoughts begin to vanish, and men return to their sins and pleasures as before. Ah, what folly is this! should not men always keep alive the serious thoughts of death and a future state? are we not always alike mortal? are we not as liable to death's arrest at other times, as when examples are before our eyes?

III. When God takes away your children or relations, let it draw your heart and affections more toward God and things above. As when a shepherd taketh up in his arms a lamb of the flock, the ewe followeth him of her own accord, and will not leave him; so, when the great Shepherd of the sheep taketh a child or friend from you, it should cause you to follow after him, and desire to be with him. But one may say, that is not the case with me; I fear the wolf hath got the strayed sheep, and devoured it. Then even that suspicion should make you run to the good Shepherd, abide with him and keep close by the footsteps of the flock, and beware of straying in those paths wherein destroyers go. When God taketh from you those relations whom you dearly loved, he calls you to take your love off the fading creatures, and to set it on the eternal Creator: when the weak branch is taken off, then clasp to the body of the tree, which will not fail you.

IV. In such trials, study a humble and patient submission to the will of God, who in his sovereign wisdom and pleasure hath taken your child or friend from you. Remember who hath done it, even he who gives all men their lives, and hath the absolute power and right to dispose of mens' lives as he thinks best. If your fellow-crea-

ture do any thing that displeaseth you, you may both ask who did it, and why he did so? But, when God doth any thing to you, you must remember he is the potter and you are the clay; and that he may make or mar his clay vessels; yea, break them in pieces at his pleasure; "and there is none that can stay his hand, or say to him, what dost thou? be still, and know that I am God," Psal. xlvi. 10. The master of a family gathers at his pleasure the flowers and fruits of his gardens: sometimes he cuts off the buds, sometimes he suffers them to blossom; sometimes he gathers the green fruits, sometimes he stays till it be ripe; and every body thinks he may do with his own what he pleaseth: and, shall not the Almighty God have liberty much more to dispose of all that grows in his own territories at his pleasure? The master of the family hath not created the trees and plants of his garden; but God hath made and fashioned all the children of men with his Almighty hand.

It is the sense of this sovereign right and dominion of God over his creatures, that hath made his people to be silent under the greatest losses. Hence Aaron, when he lost his two sons by a sudden and extraordinary stroke, it is said of him, Lev. x. 3. "And Aaron held his peace. He opened not his mouth, because it was a sovereign God that did it. So holy Job, when he lost all his children by one blow, patiently submits to this absolute Lord, Job. i. 21. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Job knew that God's relation to them was far nearer than his, and his right to dispose of them was indisputable. It was a holy and excellent speech of that honourable person Lord Duplessis, at the death of his only son; "I could not have borne this from a man, but I can from God."

V. Guard against immoderate grief and excessive sorrow for the death of children or near relations; for this is sinful and offensive to God. Now, grief is sinful and immoderate, when it makes you grudge at God's dispensation, murmur at his will, turn unthankful to him for the mercies you enjoy, overlook all bypast favours, and lament a temporal more than a spiritual loss. Alas! there are many who can bewail a dead friend far more than a dead heart, and the loss of a child more than the loss of God's countenance. Now, for preventing this excessive sorrow, consider these things.

1. If you be Christless and impenitent, you have reason to bless God that the stroke was not at your own life, for then you had been eternally miserable and without hope. What is the temporal loss of a child, to the eternal loss of your own soul? O it is far better to be childless and friendless on earth, than to be hopeless and remediless in hell.

2. Consider how little ground you have to complain of any loss or stroke you meet with on earth. 1. If you eye God's sovereignty and power over you, you have cause to be thankful that he hath not annihilated you and your relations both long ere now, seeing he hath as full a dominion to reduce you to nothing, as to bring you from nothing. Though God should dash us against the walls, as a potter doth his vessel, no man could have reason to say, *What dost thou;* or, *Why dost thou use me so?* Jer. xviii. 6. "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord." Nay, he hath a greater right to deal so with us, than a potter with his vessel, for God hath contributed all to his creature, that it hath, but the potter never made the clay which is the substance of the vessel, nor the water that is needful to make it tractable. All that the potter doth is only to mould the clay into such a shape; besides, the potter's body is no better than the clay he makes his vessel of; nay, perhaps that very clay might once have been some part of the body of a man as good as the potter himself. Now, shall the potter have such absolute power over that which is so near and like to him, and shall not God have it over that which is infinitely distant from him? That word, Dan. iv. 34, 35. "The Most High doth according to his will," is enough to silence the murmurings of all men under strokes and losses.

2. If you eye the hand of God as most just and righteous in what you have met with, you have no ground to complain. Have you not procured all this to yourself? Is not God most just in all that hath come upon you? Nay, if you consider your sins and God's absolute dominion over you, you must own he might have dealt with you in a smarter manner than he hath done; instead of one affliction you might have had a thousand.

3. Look to the mercy that is mixed with the rod. It is a wonder that this great Sovereign, who is so provoked by us, should allow us any mercy at all, and yet we receive innumerable benefits from him. Whatever be our afflictions, surely they are far less than our iniquities deserve. Hath he cast your child into the grave? He might justly have thrown your soul into hell. It is of the Lord's mercy you are not consumed. Why should a living man complain? A man out of a grave, and out of hell likewise, hath surely no reason.

4. If you compare your affliction with the trials of others of God's people; yea, and those saints who have been most eminent, you have no reason to grudge at your loss. You have one child dead, but Aaron (who is called the saint of the Lord, Psal. cvi. 16.) had two at a stroke; nay, Job, whom God commends above all the saints in his day, had all his children slain by one blow, and both these eminent saints had these losses by an immediate and extraordinary stroke from God. Some godly parents have seen their children live to prove scandals to religion, and a grief of mind to themselves, and would have thought it a mercy if God had taken them away when young. Say not then, that there is no sorrow like your sorrow; for the cup which many others have drunk, hath had more bitter ingredients in it than yours.

3dly, Consider that excessive grief cannot better your case, it may well make it worse. If you struggle and contend under God's hand, you act a foolish part; as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, that by his struggling galls his neck, and makes the yoke the more uneasy; or like a bird fluttering in a net, that, instead of freeing, doth the more entangle itself. Thus, by immoderate sorrow and fretting under the stroke, you sin the more against God, and make your burden the more heavy.

4thly, Remember the tranactions of thy soul with God, in the day thou enteredst into covenant with him. When thou sawest thyself on the brink of hell, and a burden of sin pressing thee down, and no hope for thee but in Christ; then your cry was, "NONE BUT CHRIST; take children, take relations, riches, and all things in the world from me, and give me Christ. I give up myself, and all I have, to be disposed at thy pleasure; thy will, Lord, shall be my will," &c. Now God is taking thee at thy word,

and trying thy sincerity in what thou said and professed to him so solemnly. He hath disposed of thy dear relation as pleased him: O believer, dost thou rue the bargain? Wouldst thou take thy word again? Where is thy covenanted submission to the will of God, and thy promised contentment with all his disposals?

5thly, Dost thou not believe that a covenanted God is better to thee than all the friends in the world? Cannot God soon make up the greatest loss to thee, if thou turn to him by prayer, and pour out thy heart and sorrows in his bosom? What are the world's comforts to God's comforts? A smile of God's face in prayer can soon sweeten thy bitter cup, and make thee forget all thy sorrows, Psal. xciv. 19. "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul." The Author of the fulfilling of the scriptures, tells us of one Patrick Mackilwiæ, an eminent saint in the west of Scotland, who having lost his dear and only son, got to his closet, and there poured out his soul freely to the Lord. When he came out to his friends at length, who were waiting to comfort him, and fearing how he would take such a heavy stroke, he returned from prayer with a cheerful countenance, and told some of his friends, who asked him the reason of his cheerfulness, "That he had got that in his retirement with the Lord, that, to have it afterwards renewed, he would be content to lose a son every day."

6. Seriously consider that you are but a few days journey behind him for whom you mourn, and that you will quickly overtake him, and be with him again. This allayed David's sorrow for his child, 2 Sam. xii. 23. "I shall go to him." It is our expecting to live long here, to enjoy the comfort of relations, that commonly makes us grieve so much for their death; for, if we looked on ourselves as men that were to die in a few days, we would not be so much troubled for our friends, that are gone but a little space before us.

7. If your friends are gone to heaven, you have more reason to rejoice with them than to mourn for them; seeing they are unspeakably happier where they now are, than they could have been with you. It is the most fervent desire and wish of every true Christian to be in heaven; and, will you grieve, because God hath taken your relation thither, where you desire to be yourself above all things? As Christ said to his disciples before his death, John xiv. 28. "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I go unto the Father:" So, if your departed friend could speak to you from heaven, he would say, "If you loved me with a pure spiritual love, ye would rejoice that I am gone to my Father, where I am more happy than you can possibly conceive of me."

Object. "Had I ground to think that my friend is gone to heaven, it would ease me; but, alas, I fear it is otherwise."

Ans. 1. It doth not belong to us to dive into the eternal state and condition of those that are gone off the stage. These secret things belong to God, who exerciseth his mercy or justice toward sinners according to his sovereign will.

2. Supposing the worst, you ought to submit to the incontroulable sovereignty of God, who hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. He is of one mind, and who can turn him? The Lord cut off Aaron's two sons in the very act of sin and rebellion against him, and yet Aaron held his peace, and so ought you.

3. Whatever be the lot of others hereafter, you have reason to be thankful to God for his distinguishing mercy, in saving you from those flames that others fall into, and giving you good hope through grace of glorifying God above for ever.

DIRECT. VIII. *Let the Sickness and Death of others be a warning to you in time of Health, to make due preparation for the time of Sickness and of Dying, which is before your hand.*

WHEN you see your friends and neighbours in a sickly, weak, or dying condition, the language of the dispensation to you that are in health is, Prepare for sickness also. Nay, the feeble voice of the sick doth proclaim this warning as loudly, as if they should lift up their voice like a trumpet, and say to you, "Remember that you must lie in the same case ere long, you must also groan under pain, lose your strength and beauty, leave your mirth and company, bid adieu to all the world, and look out for the grim messenger death, that is coming to dissolve the earthly tabernacle, send the body to lie in a putrifying grave, and the soul to stand before God's tribunal, to be sentenced to an endless state." This will be thy case, O young man, strong man, healthful man, as really in a little, as it is of those now before your eyes. O how soon will it come!—What thoughts will you then have of this world, of sin, and vain company? Will any thing comfort you, then, but the favour of God, the love of Christ, and the review of a holy well spent life? wherefore do with all thy might now what thy hand finds to do: employ the time of health well in preparing for sickness, and leave nothing to do in time of sickness, which is a most unfit season for a man to do soul-work and salvation work in.

1. I shall begin with those of the family where the harbinger of death do presently reside. Surely the warnings of sickness and death ought to be louder in your ears than others, and most diligently hearkened unto by you, that lodge under the same roof with the messengers of the king of terrors. 1. Remember that word, 1 Pet. v. 6. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God." It well becomes guilty sinners, all the members of the family, to be humble before a holy God, when he is smiting any of the number. Humbly acknowledge his sovereignty and absolute dominion over you, saying, "Lord thou art the author and founder of families, and thou mayest afflict and punish them as thou thinkest fit. Thou settest the solitary in families, and multipliest their number; and thou mayest diminish them, yea, lay them desolate according to thy pleasure. Thou mightest have made all the members of the family sick, as well as one; thou mightest have given a deadly blow to parents, children and servants, at once; yea, have made the house in which we live a common grave, and buried us all together in its ruins." Humbly acknowledge the justice and mercy of God in the present visitation. "Lord, instead of one, we all deserved to have been thrown on sick beds, and all of us to have been smitten by death. Thou punishest us less than our iniquities deserve." Acknowledge also God's wisdom and love in the present affliction, and humbly submit to take the cup which he hath mingled for you. The cup which our heavenly Father hath ordered for his family, shall we not drink it? It is a gracious and wise God that doth what is done in the family; therefore it is our

part to be dumb, and not to open our mouth to quarrel it."

2. The command which the king of Nineveh gave to all his subjects, when threatened with ruin, Jonah iii. 8. is very proper for a master of a family to give to all under his charge, when sickness doth rage among them: "Fast, and cry mightily to God, and turn every one from his evil way:—who can tell if God will turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" When the destroying angel gets a commission to smite families with mortal and infectious diseases, which sometimes go from house to house like a plague, sweeping many old and young off the stage; then especially it should be a time of mighty crying and pleading with God for mercy. And, since our pleading is wholly ineffectual, without an atoning sacrifice to incensed Justice, let us not forget to bring the all sufficient sacrifice of Christ's blood along with us, and plead this with God for averting his wrath from our houses and families. As Moses said to Aaron, in a time of common calamity, Num. xiv. 46. so may I say to you that are heads of families, "Take a censer and incense, and go quickly and make an atonement for them; for there is wrath gone out from the Lord, the plague is begun." Bring the incense of Christ's satisfaction, that great atonement to Divine Justice, which was typified by the legal sacrifices and oblations. Humbly and earnestly plead that great sacrifice with God, for turning away the fierceness of his wrath. Get the bunch of hyssop, faith, in order to the sprinkling of your houses with that atoning blood, that so you and your families may be among the preserved in Christ Jesus.

Lastly, Let all in the family where sickness is, and especially the head of it, remember that word, Job xxii. 23. "Thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles." God hath sent sickness with this message to you, "Search out family sins, whether of omission or commission; mourn over them, turn from them, banish them far away. Let no vice lodge under your roof. Let family-worship be no more neglected, nor slightly performed. Let God have both the morning and evening sacrifice." Now, if the members of those families visited with sickness, who are in health for the present, would thus humble themselves, cry to God, plead the blood of Christ, and reform what is amiss among them; the present affliction would be sanctified, and they in some measure prepared for the like trial, when God shall be pleased to put the cup in their hands.

II. In the next place, let me warn all the friends and neighbours of the sick, whether they be of the family or not, to improve the day of health, in making ready for the time of sickness. Be much in the exercise of self-examination, humiliation for sin, believing in Christ, renewing covenant with God, mortifying of sin, trimming the lamp, meditating of heaven, living by faith, deniedness to the world, studying to overcome the love of life and fears of death. Concerning all which I have given directions in the foregoing chapters of this book, when speaking to the sick and the distressed. These exercises are not only proper for the sick, but also for those in health; and are suitable preparations for sickness and death, and to be studied by all men in every condition. But there are some things further most necessary to be minded by people in time of their health, in order to prepare them for the time of sickness and of dying, before it come.

1. Make your latter will, and keep it by you, that you may not be incumbered with your worldly affairs, in time of sickness, or at a dying hour. Surely it is great wisdom to put this work by hand in time of health. But I have spoken largely of this in Chap. I. Direct. VI.

2. Take heed in time of health, that you lay not up sad provision against the day of sickness, by your careless and untender walk. As it is sin that brings on sickness upon us, so it is sin that imbitters it unto us. O beware of all known sin, and particularly the sins of earthly mindedness, unthankfulness for mercies, lukewarmness in religion, neglecting to improve Christ, neglect of prayer, and formality in it, quenching of the Spirit, falling from your first love, breach of vows, miscarrying under signal mercies, sinning after afflictions, returning to old sins. Guard against these evils now in time of health, otherwise they will put thorns in your pillow where sickness cometh. Dare not to live in such a course as you would not adventure to die in. How do you know but your next step may be into the grave? and would you be willing to lie down there in your sins, with earthly, dead, formal, wandering, and unbelieving hearts?

3. Sit loose from the world, and live as strangers in it, that you may be able to pack up and be gone from it upon short warning. Let death find you dead before hand, dead to the world. If your affections be glewed to the world, it will be a violent rending and sad parting you will have with it when the dying hour cometh. You will be ready, like Lot's wife, to linger, hanker, and look greedily back again.

4. Keep short reckoning with God and conscience, that you may not have old scores to reckon upon when you come to the death bed. O what stinging, pain, and torment may one sin unmourned for cost you at that time! let conscience then bring in the accounts of every day before you sleep, and speedily make up every controversy that may fall out between God and thy soul.

5. Dwell much upon the thoughts of death, that you may learn to be acquainted and familiar with it, as Job was, who said, before-hand, "to corruption, Thou art my father; and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister," Job xvii. 14. For this cause the Egyptians used to place a dead man's scull in some conspicuous place of their rooms; likewise the Jews had their sepulchres in their gardens of pleasure, that so in the midst of their delights they might think on their dying time. We read of Philip, king of Macedon, that ordered a page to rouse him from sleep every morning with these words: "O king, remember that thou art a mortal man." By this often repeated lesson he laboured to humble his lofty mind, and make his acquaintance with death, that it might not seem strange or surprising to him, when it should actually come and snatch him away.

6. Study to spend every day as it were to be your last, and perform every duty as it were the last, still looking on sickness and death as very near. That which makes most men so unconcerned about sickness, death, and eternity, is, they view them as things afar off, at thirty or forty years distance. "They think their time will be long here: why? they are healthy, of a strong constitution, and their fathers lived so long; which surely are false rules to judge by." It was the expectation of many years that helped on the ruin of that rich fool in the gospel. It were far better for every man to look on himself as standing every day and night at the very door of eternity, and hundreds of diseases ready to open the door to let him in. When you lie down at night, leave your heart

with Christ, and compose your spirit so, as if you were not to awake till the heavens were no more; for certainly that night cometh, of which you will never see the morning, or that morning of which you will never see the night. But which of your mornings or nights these will be, you know not, seeing your times are not in your own hands.

7. Set apart some time daily for thinking in a retired way on your time that is past, and upon eternity that is to come. The neglect of this duty of meditation and retired thinking, is very prejudicial both to the godly and ungodly. It was David's practice to think, and to think upon his ways; which engaged him to reform whatever he found amiss in them, Psal. cxix. 59. Oh! it is the ruin of many a soul, they are utter strangers to this way of thinking. I have read of a father, who on his death-bed left it as a solemn charge upon his only son (who was a prodigal), that he should spend a quarter of an hour every day in retired thinking, and let him chuse any subject he pleased. The son thinks this an easy task, undertakes it, and after his father's death set himself to perform his promise: one day he thinks upon his by-past pleasures: another day he contrives his future delights; after a while he begins to think seriously what might be his father's design in laying this task upon him: at length, he thinks his father was a wise and good man, and therefore he surely intended and hoped, that, among the rest of his meditations, he would some time or other think of religion. When this had truly possessed his thoughts, one thought and question comes upon the back of another, about his by-past life and future state, that he could not contain himself in so short a confinement, but was that night without sleep; yea, and afterwards could have no rest till he became seriously religious. O that I could persuade all careless and unthinking souls to go and do likewise! Ah, how many spend their days in a hurry about worldly affairs, and perish for want of thinking!

8. Among other subjects of your retired thoughts, spend some time in thinking, how awful and terrible a thing it must be for a poor Christless soul to make its appearance before an angry God after death: for who (said the Prophet) can dwell with devouring fire? Who can abide with everlasting burnings? I have read of a certain king of Hungary, who being on a time marvelously sad and heavy, his brother, who was a brisk and gallant man, would needs know the reason: "Oh brother (said he), I have been a great sinner against God, and I know not how I shall appear before his judgment seat." His brother answered, "These are but melancholy thoughts;" and so made light of them, as most courtiers use to do. The king replied nothing at that time; but the custom of that country was (the government being absolute), if the executioner sounded a trumpet at a man's door, he was presently to be led to execution. The king sent the executioner in the dead of the night, and caused him to sound his trumpet before his brother's door, who hearing and seeing the messenger of death, sprang in trembling into his brother's presence, falls down upon his knees, and beseeches the king to let him know wherein he had offended him. "O brother (said the king) you never offended me, but loved me; but is the sight of an earthly executioner so terrible to thee; and, shall not I, who am so great a sinner, fear much more to be brought to the judgment-seat of an angry God?"

9. Think often how religiously men use to wish they had lived when they come to the sick and dying time. Those who have spent their time most carelessly, begin to have other notions of religion when they see the grim messenger approaching. Go to their bed-sides and ask them, Whether sloth or diligence, formality or fervency, drinking or prayer, loving the world or loving Christ, be the best; would they not tell you, that there are none so wise as they that are most religious? Think, O man in health, with thyself, if thou was just now upon thy death-bed, and sawest thy friends standing mourning round about thee, but unable to help thee, what would be thy thoughts and discourse at that time? O then, let some of the same thoughts and discourse fill up every day and hour of thy life now. Why? Thou knowest not but this moment thou mayest be as near death as if thy friends and physicians likewise were despairing of thy life, and had given you over for dead.

10. Be employed now in fighting the good fight of faith. You have many enemies to deal with, and death is the last of them. Would you obtain the victory over them? Then get on the Christian armour, and make much use of the shield of faith. We read in the book of Esther, that king Ahasuerus would not recal the proclamation he had emitted against the Jews; but he gave them full liberty to take up arms to defend themselves, and attack their enemies: so here, God will not recal the sentence of death he hath passed on all men in the garden; but nevertheless he allows, yea, commissionates all true Israelites to take up arms against death, to conquer and trample it under foot by faith.

Lastly, Be diligent now in health, providing and laying up a stock against the time of sickness and affliction; which may contribute to your comfortable living then when the world's good things will be tasteless and comfortless to you. As they who have a voyage to go, do victual the ship, and those who have a siege to hold out, take in provision; even so do you.

1. Get a stock of graces against that time, especially a stock of faith, of patience, of humility, self-denial, &c. There will be use for all these then. A little grace, or a little faith, is not enough; for this will faint under great afflictions. We read, Matt. xiv. that, when the winds began to blow fiercely, Peter's little faith began to fail. You have need of a great measure of patience against that time, that you may wait patiently on God till he come to your relief. You know not but he may lengthen out your trials, and tarry till the fourth watch of the night before he come with deliverance.

2. Provide a stock of evidences or marks of grace, and of the love of God, that you may be able to assert your interest in him as your portion in Christ, and may be persuaded that neither death nor life will ever separate you from him.

3. Get a stock of divine experiences. Lay up all the experiences you have had of God's loving-kindness, and these will give greater relief and encouragement to the soul in the day of distress.

4. Lay up a stock of sermons. Treasure up the counsels and cordials which they bring you from God's word, that so you may, according to Isa. xlii. 23. *hear for the time to come;* and especially for sick-beds, when you cannot get sermons to hear. Then it is, that you ought to live and feed upon the sermons you have heard.

5. Lay up a stock of prayers. Be much in wrestling with God for help and through-bearing in the day of af-

fliction; and so you may expect the gracious returns thereof in the day of calamity.

9. Provide a stock of promises. Be now gathering these sweet cordials from God's word, lay them up in your heart and memory, and they will be very refreshing and supporting to you in the day of affliction.

Direct. IX.—*Let those who are in health set about the work of Repentance, and turning to God in Christ timeously and quickly: and beware of delaying this work until the time of sickness and dying.*

GOD's command to you is, to set about the work presently without any delay, Heb. iii. 15. "To-day if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Matt. xxi. 28, "Go work to-day in my vineyard." Eccl. xii. 1. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Well, God's voice to you, O man in health, is to-day. But the devil's voice is to-morrow. And which of the two will you hearken to? Surely it is your wisdom to obey the voice of your Creater and Friend, and not of your enemy and destroyer. *Why?* To-day thou art in health, to-morrow thou mayest be in sickness; to-day thou art on earth, to-morrow thou mayest be in hell; to-day Christ is inviting you to come to him, to-morrow he may be sentencing you to depart from him. And consider, that the devil, who tempts you to delay this day, will be as ready to tempt you to the same to-morrow; and so the devil's to-morrow will never come. It will still be to-morrow with him till the last hour, that so he may get you beguiled out of your whole time and salvation together.

Here I shall endeavour two things: 1. Bring arguments to persuade you to repent and close with the offers of Christ presently, without any delay, as God requires. 2. Shew the evil and danger of delaying till the time of sickness and of dying. As to the first, viz. arguments for present repentance, and against delaying the work:

1. Consider the uncertainty of your life and time to repent. Your life is but a vapour, a little warm breath that is going out and in at your nostrils, which may be stopped by death ere you be aware; thou knowest not what will be to-morrow, Prov. xxvii. 1. It was the saying of a godly man, when invited to a feast upon the morrow, "I have not had a morrow for these many years." It was a bad use these Epicureans made of this uncertainty, Isa. xxii. 13. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die." It is much wiser to say, "Let us pray and turn to the Lord, for to-morrow we shall die." Nay, you have no security for one hour to repent in; for God hath a thousand diseases and accidents ready to stop your breath and end your days, whenever he pleaseth to give them orders. There are many secure sinners, who presume on long life, but there are none nearer to destruction than such; for God loves to disappoint those that promise themselves a long life in sin and impenitency, as he did that rich man who was laying up for many years, Luke xii. 19. "This night shall thy soul be required of thee." And O what a dark and dismal night will it be, if death comes before thy repentance! O man, thou never didst lie down one night with assurance of rising again; thou never didst draw one breath with assurance of drawing another. What madness is it then to delay salvation-work one day or hour longer, and so to leave the weightiest matter in the world at the greatest uncertainty!

2. Consider, that though God, in his wonderful mercy and patience, should prolong your days, yet the longest life is short enough for the work you have to do, suppose you begin it presently. Nay, had you Methusalem's years to spend, they would be no more than sufficient to repent and mourn for the sins and guilt which you have been so long contracting; to perform and amend the many things that have been amiss; to perform all the duties incumbent on you; to make sure your calling and election, and put your souls in a good posture and preparation for an eternal state, and get them made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Now, do you think that all this work can be done in an instant, or in a time of sickness or old age, when you are hardly fit to do any thing?—When a man's spirit is unable to bear the infirmities of nature, how will he be able to bear the lashes of a guilty conscience, or a wounded spirit? When the understanding is weak, the memory frail, the will obstinately bent the wrong way, by a long custom of sinning and neglecting of duty; will that be a fit time to begin the work of repentance and conversion to God? When nature is decayed, and the candle of life just sinking in the socket, will you begin then to act for God, and make your light shine before men to his glory? O remember, your work is long, your time is short, and though you begin this very hour, you will have no time to spare.

3. Delay not this work, because it is not in your power to do it when you please. It is a delusion of the devil, to imagine you may repent when you will. No, no; it is God only that giveth repentance, and he gives it when, and to whom he pleaseth, Acts v. 31. And it is a mere peradventure, if ever he give it to a delaying sinner, 2 Tim. ii. 25. When is it that you may have hopes he will give repentance, but when he calls you to it, and prescribes means to be used for that end? Now, that is, to-day. "To-day, if ye will hear his voice: now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." To-day, when God is calling, and the Spirit striving, is the time of finding the Lord, and getting repentance from him. To-morrow it may be too late; the Lord's hand may be closed, and the door of mercy shut. If you refuse the Spirit when he strives with you, he may leave you, and never put another serious thought in your heart of turning to the Lord. O defer not seeking repentance till it be too late; for there is a time when the Lord will not be found, and then repentance will not be found, though you seek it with tears. Indeed, God hath promised mercy to penitent sinners; but he hath no where promised the aids of his grace and Spirit to them that put off their repentance: and he hath no where promised acceptance to mere grief and sorrow for sin, without faith and fruits meet for repentance; he hath no where promised to pardon those, who at last promise to leave their sins, when they can keep them no longer.

4. The longer repentance and closing with Christ is delayed, the difficulty thereof is every day increased.—Why? 1. Because of the deceitful nature of sin, which doth daily bewitch and harden the heart more and more in the practice of it. 2. Custom in any thing hath a strange influence on us, and becomes a kind of second nature, and breeds an almost invisible inclination to whatsoever we have long addicted ourselves unto, whither it be in action natural or moral. Hence Ovid gives that good advice.

Sed propera, nec te venturas differ in horas:
Qui non est hodie, cras minus aptus erit.

Be speedy; put not off till another time:
He who is not prepared to-day, will be more unprepared to-morrow.

He that goes on from day to day, in sin, will find his indisposition to repent daily increased, the habits of sin strengthened, and himself brought at length under the power of an inveterate custom. And if it be hard to break any custom, much more a custom in sinning, which is so agreeable to depraved nature. Hence, saith the Spirit of God, Jer. xiii. 23. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." 3. The longer Satan keeps possession, the more difficult will his ejection prove. The devils that possessed the man from the womb up, could not be cast out but by some extraordinary way. 4. Delays bring on spiritual judgments from God, such as judicial hardness on the heart, which will make repentance impossible, according to that terrible place, Isa. vi. 9. 10. "Make the heart of this people fat," &c Which is quoted no less than six times in the New Testament, as if it belonged only to them that linger and sit impenitent under gospel-calls.

Lastly, We would reckon such delays madness in earthly affairs, which are but trifles when compared to salvation-work. If a man's house were on fire, we would count him mad, if he would say, it is time enough to quench it to-morrow: or if he were stung with a venomous serpent, he would be mad that neglected to seek a present cure: or, if he had got poison in his stomach, he would never think he could soon enough vomit it up. If a malefactor were condemned to a cruel death to-morrow, but had a promise of a remission, if he should look after it to day; would he be so foolish as delay it till next morning? But how much greater madness is it to delay repenting and fleeing to Christ, when God's calls and promises relate to the present time, and our danger in delaying is infinitely greater than in any of the foresaid cases? Surely there is no sting so dangerous, no poison so deadly, as sin; and can we too soon seek after the balm of Gilead, the blood of Christ for its cure? There is no death like the second death, no fire so dreadful as the eternal fire of God's wrath; now this fire is already kindled against your souls; and if it be not timeously quenched, it will burn to the lowest hell. Lose no time to get it extinguished, by fleeing to the blood of Jesus.

II. The next thing is to show the evil and danger of delaying this work until the time of sickness and dying. Alas, it is the common practice of the most part! but consider, 1. What wretched ingratitude and baseness there is in it. Whether is it fit ye should give the best of your time to God that made you, or to the devil that seeks your destruction? Is it reasonable that the devil should feast on the flower and prime of your youth and strength, and your Creator have no other but the fragments of the devil's table? When the dregs of your time are come, your strength gone, your senses failed, your understanding and memory weak, your affections spent upon the creature, yea, when you are good for nothing else; will ye be so base as think you are then good enough for God, and for salvation-work, which requires all your strength and might? But remember, if you be so base as to reserve the dregs of your time for God, you may expect he will be so just as to reserve the dregs of his wrath for you, according to that word, Mal. i. 14. "Cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing." Your youth, strength, health, gifts, talents, are the males of the flock; if you give these to the devil, and reserve the weakness of sickness and old age for God, you draw down his curse upon your heads; and how long will you be able to bear up under the weight of God's curse? Now, O delaying sinners, why should you be so ungrateful to God, and injurious to yourselves? God had early thoughts of mercy to you; and will you have nothing but late thoughts of duty to him? Christ did not defer his dying for us till he was old; and shall we defer living to him, till we be old? Oh, we do not deal with God as we would have him deal with us. When we need help in trouble, we cry, as Psal. cii. 2. "Lord hear me; in the day when I call, answer me speedily." To-day we still make the season of mercy, but to-morrow the season for duty. When mercy is delayed, we impatiently cry, how long? how long? We will not wait God's holy leisure. But, alas! we would have God to wait our sinful leisure. Oh let us be ashamed of such disingenuous dealings with our Creator.

2. Death may get a commission to take you off suddenly, without giving you any time to repent. You are not sure to see the evening star of sickness, before the night of death overtake you, or that you will have any warning given you before the fatal stroke. For how many are there who project long lives, and look for time before death to repent, that get a surprising call to remove from the earthly tabernacle, and have not one minute to provide another lodging? How many are drowned by a sudden storm at sea? And how many killed by outward accidents on land? Some drop down suddenly in the streets; some die sitting in their chairs, some go well to bed at night, and never see the morning; some die as quickly by a fit of an epilepsy or apoplexy, as if shot with a gun. Thus thousands are hurried into eternity, and presented before a tribunal, without being allowed so much time as to think one serious thought, or speak one word? not one moment to consider where they are going, or to cry to God for mercy. And how know you but this may be your case at death? Must it not be the greatest folly then, to delay your repentance to a dying time, when your life may not be one minute longer?

3. Though you may have some time to lie on sick-beds, how know ye but your sickness may be such as shall incapacitate you for spiritual work? Some we see are so oppressed with continual slumbering and sleeping, even when death is nearest, that they are in no case to think or speak of those things that belong to their eternal state. Others, in high fevers, are troubled with ravings; and have no use of their reason, so that they are not capable to settle their worldly affairs; and how much less are they fit to secure their souls' eternal concerns at that time? Some again, are so racked with extreme pains and agonies, impatient frettings, and bitter uneasiness, that they cannot get one settled thought about their souls' present or future state. Others are so filled with terror and amazement at the view of approaching death and eternity, that they cannot compose their thoughts, to examine themselves, confess their sins, act faith in a Saviour, or follow any direction that is given them; but go off the stage in a confusion, being incapable to do any thing to purpose for their souls. Some their distemper is such, that they are brought to a great strait between the word of God and the physician. The

word of God and his ministers tell them if they do not mourn for their sins, and wrestle for mercy, they cannot be saved: but, saith the physician, if you trouble yourself with sad and melancholy thoughts, you prejudice your body, and hazard your life. O! is this a fit time then to begin your preparation for another world?

4. The Spirit of God being long resisted and vexed by many in the day of health, he is provoked to leave them on death-beds to the hardness of their own hearts: and so they remain, like stocks and stones, dead and stupid to the last.

5. The devil, that was busy all your lives to keep you from repentance, will not be idle at this time; nay, he will be more active then than ever to ruin you, either by causing you to split on the rock of presumption or of despair. Sometimes he will tell sinners then, "You need not trouble yourselves about your souls: God is more merciful than to damn you; the repentance you have already, will serve the turn." But if this will not quiet them, he will study to drive them to despair, by telling them, "They have lost the season of repentance and closing with Christ; and now there is no remedy, no hope for them; and it is in vain to use any further means." O then, do not hearken to Satan now, when he tempts you to delay your repentance.

6. Whatever appearance of repentance some dying persons may have, let that be no encouragement to put off till that time. Why, there lieth a just suspicion upon a late repentance, that it is seldom sound and sincere. It is no sound work, that ariseth more from fears of hell, than from any real hatred of sin; more from love to self, than love to God: and it is to be feared, that death-bed repentance is mostly of this sort, seeing ordinarily it consisteth more in grief and fear, prayers and promises, than in a hearty loathing of sin, love to holiness, or willingness to accept of Jesus Christ: for have we not seen many of these penitents, who, in the view of death, have professed great sorrow for their wicked lives, and made solemn promises of amendment; yet when they have happened to recover, all their righteousness hath vanished, and they have returned to their former sins as greedily as ever? And, O delaying sinner, what ground have you to think that your death-bed repentance will be any better than theirs? Be wise then in time, set heartily about salvation-work in the day of your health, and do not leave the weightiest work to the weakest time.

Object. I. "But hath not God promised mercy to them that repent of their sins at any time?"

Ans. Yes, to them that repent truly and sincerely: but do not think that it is in your power to repent so, at any time you please; no, it is impossible you can do it without the influence and assistance of the Spirit of God. And God hath no where promised this to those that put off their repentance to a death-bed. There is a great difference between a sick man's howling upon his bed, and sincere gospel repenting. I grant, true repentance is never too late; but O! late repentance is seldom true. True repentance is that which hath a care to walk holily, or hath work meet for repentance joined with it. Hence repentance is not only called *Metanoia*, a change of mind; but also *Metameleia*, an after care. Now for a death-bed repentance, that hath no such holy care or good works, I know no promise in the Bible that annexeth salvation unto it.

Object. II. "Do not we read in Christ's parable of the labourers, Mat. xx. that some were hired and brought into the vineyard at the eleventh hour, and got the same reward with those that were hired at the third and sixth hour?"

Ans. 1. These that were brought in so late, could say for themselves, ver. 6. "that no man had hired them," or had offered to hire them before; they did no sooner hear the gospel-call, and offers of salvation through Christ tendered to them. But O! this will stand you in no stead, who have had many a call and offer made you at the third, sixth, and ninth hour, and have resisted and refused them: you will not have it to say at the eleventh hour, as these had, "No man hath hired us."

2. These men, though they came in but at the eleventh hour, and not being sooner hired, yet they were labourers in the vineyard, and wrought one hour therein faithfully, in obedience to their Lord's command; and so brought forth some fruits meet for repentance, and were accepted. But this is no encouragement to any to expect to be brought in at the twelfth hour, when there is no time to work, nor bring forth any fruits to testify the sincerity of their repentance; we have no promise of acceptance made to such.

Object. III. "The penitent thief on the cross sought mercy from Christ at the last hour, and got it."

Ans. That is a singular instance, and gives no encouragement to delaying sinners. The scriptures contain a history of more than four thousand years, and yet, during all that, we have but one example of a man that truly and sincerely repented when he came to die. And in this man's case there was such an extraordinary conjunction of circumstances, as never happened before, and can never fall out again to the end of the world. This man had the happiness to die close by the newly pierced and bleeding wounds of a crucified Jesus, when he was lifted up from the earth in the height of his love, drawing sinners to salvation; which was a junction that can never have a parallel. Again, the man never had an offer of Christ, nor day of grace before now; he surrendered himself upon the very first call: and his faith in Christ at this time was truly singular and miraculous. He was designed by Heaven to be made a rare monument of the power of Christ's grace, and a special trophy of his victory over the devils and wicked men, at a time when they seemed to triumph over him, as one crucified through weakness.

From all which we may see, that this example was extraordinary, and affords no ground for the presumption of delaying sinners. You may as well cast yourselves into the sea, in hopes of preservation by a whale, from the example of Jonah, as defer repentance now, in hopes of repenting on a death-bed, from the example of the thief on the cross. Besides, your way of sinning differs vastly from his. He was not guilty of presumption as you are; he did not slight Christ's calls and offers in the days of his health, and delay his repenting and closing with Christ, in hopes of an opportunity for them at the hour of death, as you do. Do you know what God determines concerning presumptuous sinning? You may see it, Numb. xv. 28, 30, 31; "And the priests shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, &c. But the soul that doth ought presumptuously (whether he be born in the land, or a stranger), the same reproacheth the Lord: and that soul shall

be cut off from among his people; because he hath despised the word of the Lord." O presumptuous delaying sinner, let this word of the Lord awaken you to a speedy and present resolution to obey his voice. "Return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good," Jer. xviii. 11. Now is the accepted time: if ye will hear his voice, it must be to-day. Lord, save us from hardening our hearts. *Amen.*

CONTENTS.

THE END.

THE CHURCH'S DANGER,

AND THE

MINISTER'S DUTY;

DECLARED IN A

Sermon,

PREACHED

AT THE OPENING OF THE SYNOD OF ANGUS AND MEARNS,

AT MONTROSE.

WITH

A PREFACE AND POSTSCRIPT,

TOUCHING

SOME MORE EVILS OF THE PRESENT TIME.

BY

THE REVEREND JOHN WILLISON, LATE MINISTER

OF DUNDEE.

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1815.

THE

CHURCH'S DANGER, AND MINISTER'S DUTY.

PREFACE.

I HAVE published the following Sermon, to show to the world my concern for the Church of Scotland, and her *Covenanted Reformation*, to promote what I can her credit and prosperity, and to testify against what I judge reproachful and prejudicial to her. I have added some things from my papers, which I omitted in the delivery for want of time; and here I shall add some things more, for exonering and explaining myself more fully upon the said subject.

Seeing it is the power of conscience that obliges me to make this appearance, I beg that no man may think I affect popularity in it, or that I incline to make an appeal to the people about controversies which fall in among ministers: that was never my way; and far less am I for bringing in such debates upon sacramental occasions, which ought to be love feasts among Christians. But, in my humble opinion, it is not an improper occasion for the moderator of a synod, in his sermon at the opening thereof, which is *concio ad clerum*, to address his brethren concerning the controversies or defections of the time, especially if he see his mother-church in extreme danger thereby: for, what dutiful son can be silent at such a time, seeing it is the proper business of a Synod, both to provide remedies themselves, and to address the General Assembly to do it when they are at a loss?

Object. "It is not proper to handle these before the people."

Ans. 1. This has been the constant practice of moderators at the opening of synods since our blessed Reformation, as appears from our church histories. 2. Frequently there are as many of the people attending the synod's meetings, whom we cannot prevent, as are hearing the sermon; and so if this argument hold good, we should not at all open our mouths concerning any of the defections of the time: and we know, silence in watchmen is highly condemned by the word of God.

Object. "Is it not said of a dangerous and declining time, Amos v. 13. *Therefore the prudent shall keep silence at that time, for it is an evil time.*"

Ans. No doubt some ministers make use of that scripture to prevent trouble to themselves, and it hath been cast up to my thoughts also: but, in my opinion, that text doth not point at prophets, but other private men, whose private capacity allows them to keep silence when others must speak. For prophets are required to *cry aloud, and not spare;* and those who do not, are called *dumb dogs*, Isa. lvi. 10. Isa. lviii. 1. I grant, indeed, there is a "time to keep silence, as well as a time to speak," Eccl. iii. 7. And the prudent will wisely observe these times: and even when the time cometh that they are called to speak of faults, the prudent will mind to do it in a decent manner, especially if superiors be concerned. If any think I have not so well observed this rule myself, it is what I cannot help, seeing I have aimed to do it the best way I could: and I do here further declare, that I am loth to give offence to any man; my sincere design being, not to cast reproach upon any of my brethren, but to avert and prevent the reproach of my mother-church, and to promote her welfare according to my bounden duty.

I never inclined to expose my brethren, but rather to cover their mistakes, and speak charitably of every one; for which I have been oftentimes blamed by some: but I had far rather err upon that side than upon the other, seeing I myself am so liable to faults and mistakes. I never loved the character of an incendiary, to blow the coal in smaller differences, or to aggravate the wrong steps of others; but always preferred the character of a peace maker; to compose matters, and reconcile parties as much as possible; in which also I have been blamed, as making too great concessions for that end.

Notwithstanding of all the complaints of defection, I acknowledge there are still in the church many worthy, learned, and pious men, in the ministry, whom I honour, and from whom I would be willing to learn, and whom I pray God may long continue in the church as a bulwark, under God, against the evils of corruption and defection which threaten her; and that he may raise up a young set to fill their room, when they are called off the stage. But at the same time I cannot conceal the dismal apprehensions which many well-wishers of our Zion have of her danger, from the view they have of many of the present young clergy and preachers, who seem to affect a new way of moral preaching and lax management, suited to the taste of many patrons and heritors; greedily snatch at presentations, and concur to get themselves thrust into churches against the inclinations both of the presbyteries and the people immediately concerned; which dangerous course is still continued, notwithstanding of the awful rebukes given by the providence of God to severals engaged therein.

Besides what I have said in the sermon, of the evil of this practice of voluntary courting and accepting Presentations, without any necessity for it; let me here add, that I look upon it as the main spring of all our present distress: for, as it brought on violent settlements and melancholy divisions in parishes and presbyteries; so it gave rise to the making of these acts by assembly 1732, and Assembly 1733, which at present occasion so great unea-

sions in this church, and may issue in a most destructive rupture, if God in his mercy prevent not. For many years this pernicious practice was bogled at, as contrary to presbyterian principles, and the interest of the church; till some principal persons in this church, who ought to have been guardians of her peace and liberties, from selfish principles, most ingloriously broke the ice to it, about the year 1727, and by their example and countenance drew many others into it; whence it is easy to see at whose door the miseries of this church are to be laid.

Object. "Our famous presbyterian ministers in ancient times accepted of presentations, and were settled this way."

Ans. Many are grievously imposed upon by this objection, through their not knowing their different situations from ours: For, 1. Our worthy ancestors were but then reforming, and had never been delivered from the yoke of patronages, under which they groaned: but had they been delivered, as we have been, they would never voluntarily have yielded to the wreathing of that yoke about their necks again, as many of us have done, by courting and accepting of the patrons' presentations, when they were under no necessity from the law to do it.

2. In our ancestors' times no man could have access to a church without the patron's allowance; but, as the law now stands, all among us may be settled without owning patrons at all, if they will have but a little patience: seeing the legislature hath been so indulging as to enact, "That if the patron's presentation be not accepted within six months after the vacancy, the power of planting the church falls into the hands of the presbytery."

3. Our zealous ancestors gave no countenance to patronages, but what they were driven to by their situation with the law; they would not, for mean ends, have gone into voluntary and unnecessary accepting of presentations, as many of us do: but seeing, as the law then stood, there was no access to churches without the patron's allowance, they behoved to submit to settlements in those churches to which the patrons were pleased to present them; and this they did not till they had the consent of the people, and concurrence of the presbyteries concerned.

4. Our reforming ancestors still looked upon patronages as a grievance and bondage, and from time to time applied to the legislature to get it removed, which at length they got done *anno* 1649. But many of us are so far from looking on it as a grievance, that they wilfully bring the yoke upon the church, by their officious courting and accepting of presentations, after we were in effect delivered by the legislature, *anno* 1719: thus preferring bondage to liberty, a patron's presentation to a congregation's call, which our pious ancestors would never have done. So that our modern acceptors cannot skreen their shame by their practice, the cases being so widely different.

But, supposing all were true, which some allege concerning the practice of some ancient presbyterians, while in their reforming state from Popish corruptions and abuses; what folly, or rather impiety, must it be in some to be at pains to search out all their infirmities, weaknesses, defects and imperfections (which are owned to be such by themselves), in order to copy after them, especially when we are under no manner of necessity to do it from the legislature? What! are they wearied of liberty and purity? Would they have the church reduced to her infant and more imperfect state again? Do they prefer that to a state of greater purity and perfection, which we might still maintain if we were inclined to it, seeing the legislature hath been so indulging as to leave the matter at our own choice? Good Lord, deliver us from such infatuation.

The synods of Angus, Aberdeen and Perth, within these two years past, have emitted warnings in strong terms against this woful officious practice, which have been the origin of so much trouble to this church: I wish they were seconded in the noble attempt by other synods, or by the assembly or commission, which, through the Lord's blessing, might prove an excellent mean to stop the tide of corruption which otherwise is like to flow in upon us; O that the Lord, who hath all mens' hearts in his hand, may incline and determine them to it.

When I speak against presentations or encroachments upon our rights and liberties, I have no design to show any contempt of my superiors or their authority, whether in the civil or ecclesiastic courts; but desire to show all due regard to the same, and to be thankful to them for the peaceable exercise of my ministry, without any sinful terms of communion or imposition on my conscience; as also, to bless God for the valuable blessings and privileges we still enjoy above other nations and churches: but, at the same time, I must own, that the consideration of these mercies should not make me or others easy about any appearance of defection or corruption in the clergy, which, if connived at, may soon bring us to as melancholy a condition as other churches.

I honour our supreme judicatories, and would desire to support their authority, and fall in with their acts and decisions, as far as possibly I can; but as we must own, with our "Confession of Faith," there is none of them infallible: so we cannot be bound to give implicit faith to all their determinations; nay, when we judge them wrong, we may warrantably reclaim and address to have them rectified, especially if it be in a matter of great moment; though still I own this ought to be done in the most decent and dutiful manner.

I am heartily sorry that instructions, representations, and addresses, from presbyteries, synods, and bodies of ministers, concerning grievances, have of late years been so disregarded by our assemblies; and that dissents and protestations by particular ministers are not allowed nor recorded. This entertainment doth put ministers to think of other ways to exoner their minds. And, upon that account, I do find myself obliged to ease my thoughts in this way concerning the evils and declinings of the present time, lest they should be imputable to me, as a member of the incorporated body, through my connivance or silence. And though my testimony be of small value, yet seeing I have been long in the ministry, and know not how soon I may be called to put off this tabernacle, and to give an account of my stewardship; the Lord prepare me for that time, and for the trials which may abide me before it,—I do, in imitation of some of our worthy predecessors, leave this declaration of my mind behind me, that neither the present nor succeeding ages may be imposed upon, as to my sentiments of the evils of the present times. Wherefore, besides what I have said before and afterwards in my sermon, I here bear my testimony against the atheism, infidelity, immorality, looseness of the age; against all Popish, Socinian, Arian, Arminian, and Antinomian errors in doctrine; against all superstition and human inventions, in worship; against both prelacy and independency in church government; against all Simoniacal pactions, officious

courting of patrons, and accepting of their presentations; against all spiritual oppression and persecution, and encroachments upon the rights and liberties of this church: as also, against all thrusting and violent imposing of ministers upon christian congregations; and against all public acts and deeds which favour or promote this imposing course: and likewise, against all proceedings or designs to silence or cast out worthy and useful ministers for remonstrating against such violent settlements, or the acts which authorize and encourage the same, or for refusing to exclude serious Christians from sealing ordinances, who are chargeable with no greater fault than want of freedom to own their relation to such pastors as are violently thrust in upon them; surely there is something grosser required to excommunicate good Christians, and to depose or cast out good ministers, than such things: and I hope we shall see it, when the God of peace doth incline us calmly to think and deliberate thereupon.

As for the act of assembly 1732, about which there is so much noise, I was at the assembly in May 1731, when it began; and, I confess, when the overture was in Edinburgh, I carried favourably towards it, though I was not present in the assembly when it came in to be reasoned upon and voted, being called home by express before that time. And that which inclined me to favour the proposal at the first, was the great love I had to the peace and safety of my mother church, which I then saw to be endangered by the patronages, and the violent settlements begun to be made in consequence thereof; for I was told by some leading men (whom I thought I might trust), that there was no way to deliver us from those evils, but by our agreeing among ourselves upon some rule for planting churches, which we might lay before the civil government, and get substituted in the room of the patronage act, and that some of our great men gave encouragement to expect this. I was then fixed upon no particular rule, but had favourable thoughts of the Acts of Parliament 1690, which at first was proposed to be the rule; and in order thereto, it was thought necessary to transmit the same to the presbyteries by way of overture, that they might consider it, and thereby it would be known how far we could agree about it. This seemed to be pretty plausible; for the notion I always had of the plan of settling churches, according to the act 1690, was, That the heritors and elders were to chuse a minister, with consent of the congregation; and when there arose any difference about the choice, the case was brought to the presbytery to be cognosced upon by them, they being impowered to judge what was most for edification, whether to proceed to settle the man that seemed to have most of the legal votes, or lay him aside, in case others, with the body of the people, continued dissatisfied, and appoint a new moderation: and sometimes they did the one, and sometimes the other, as they judged most for edification; for the good and edification of the parish, was the great rule the judicatories then kept in their eye in their determinations, which commonly had a comfortable issue. I am sure this was the sense the church put upon the act 1690, and proceeded accordingly in settling of churches, for twenty-two years after it was made, and had much peace and tranquillity in following that method. As long as I thought the design was to keep things upon this footing, I was easy (the matter not being great) who had the liberty of voting, providing matters were so managed, that no man should be thrust in upon a congregation against their will: but as soon as I perceived the design was to carry the affair of settlements beyond the act 1690, I told my mind freely in the presbytery, and proposed an amendment of the overture to prevent any such design, which they were pleased to receive and send over among their instructions to the assembly 1732, which I am sorry they did not think fit to notice. And now, when I compare the two acts together, I find indeed there is a great difference: For, 1. By the act 1690, the heritors and elders are only impowered to *name* and *propose* a person to the whole congregation: but, by the act 1732, the heritors and elders are impowered to *elect* and *call* one to be minister of the parish. 2. According to the act 1690, the election was not to be looked upon as finished, till the man was proposed to the congregation, and their approbation obtained; and, in case this was refused, the nomination and proposal was to stop, and be laid as an incomplete *unfinished* affair before the presbytery, that they might give their judgment whether to proceed any further in it or not: but, according to the act 1732, after the heritors and elders have voted, the election is said to be *finished*, whether the congregation approve or not; nay, the man is reckoned legally *elected* and *called* to be minister of the parish, before any notice is taken of the congregation, or the matter at all proposed to them. 3. According to the act 1690, and the sense which was to be put upon it, if the body of the heads of families did object against the man named by the majority of heritors and elders, and say he had not an edifying gift, or that it was not suited to their capacities, and that they had not freedom in their consciences to consent to his being their minister; the presbytery judged such objections, made by a knowing well disposed people, sufficient to stop the affair, and to proceed to a new election. All this will appear from our records, and from the nature and strain of the *calls* given in those days. But, according to the act 1732, and the sense now put upon it, let heads of families object what they will against the election, if they be not able to prove error or immorality against the man by two witnesses, they must receive him as their pastor, and so the body of the congregation have no greater power or influence in the settlement, than those who dwell in another nation. Yea, according to this act, as it is now sensed, parishes may be settled, and sometimes are, by a majority of non-residing and disaffected heritors, where the whole elders and people do reclaim and protest against the settlement: and surely such settlements, as they are against scripture rules, so they are a sad hindrance and stop to the advancement of the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, and cannot but be most grieving to all who are zealous for his glory, and who make conscience of praying, as he directs, "Thy kingdom come: gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most Mighty: and in thy Majesty ride prosperously." Upon which account, I do with the greatest humility and earnestness beseech and obtest the reverend and honourable members of the next assembly, to give at least an application of this act, declaring, That it is not the meaning of it to impose ministers upon congregations, where the eldership and body of the people do reclaim, not to contradict our books of discipline and ancient acts of assembly, as the assembly 1586, 1596, 1638, 1649, &c. And I would beg (if I could do it, with tears of blood) that they would not make any such act as this, an engine of trouble and persecution in the church, seeing no man pleads that

it is founded upon the word of God, but only that it is devised as a proper expedient till the church be delivered from patronages. And, about what acts of the church may ministers have liberty to speak their minds so freely, as about those which are owned to be mere human constitutions.

Object. "If ministers be dissatisfied with the acts and constitution of the church, they should withdraw from her, and give up their legal privileges."

Ans. 1. Though this be the common talk of some, there is no warrant for this course in the word of God; for the scripture directs us, when we see things wrong in the church, to *plead with our mother*, but not to disown her forthwith, or renounce communion with her. 2. Those who talk so now, would be most ready to accuse ministers, if they did withdraw, of making a schism and separation without just cause. What! would they say, "is the church so heretical, that they will not hold communion with her? are such small mistakes, just grounds of separation? why did they not protest against what they judged wrong, and continue still within the church, as several of our brave ancestors did in former ages?

Object. "They may plead with their mother, but must not spit in her face."

Answ. 1. I am indeed for a decent and respectful way of pleading with our mother. 2. If some good men shall use a rougher way of dealing than others, in testifying against what is wrong, it ought not to be termed a spitting in their mother's face, nor made a ground of severe censure. If our ancestors, in former ages, had been so narrow and rigid in their way of thinking, what had become of Mr. Knox, Craig, Davidson, Welsh, Bruce, the two Melvils, and many others?

Object. "The church's acts must be obeyed, her sentence execute, and the fence of her authority maintained; otherwise she cannot be preserved from the greatest errors and disorders. We must not see the authority of the General Assembly ruined."

Answ. 1. As for my own part, I was always for maintaining the authority of the General Assembly as sacred and inviolable, seeing it is of so great consequence to the preserving of peace and unity in this church; I have been sorry to see it attacked, or badly used; but, if we would truly preserve it, let us be tender of it, in the making of acts or decisions; being careful that either they be evidently founded upon the word of God, or, that there be nothing in them contrary thereunto.

2. When any rule is transgressed which hath nothing but church-authority to support it, church censures should be gently used, seeing rigour in that case doth ruin authority more than maintain it: we do not read of any church destroyed by her lenity and forbearance in such cases; though severals have been ruined by screwing up authority too high. We may see, by long experience, that severe dealing is not the way of convincing men of conscience and zeal of their mistakes: and, by the way, it is a little surprising to see some, whose discourses breathed forth nothing but moderation, peace, charity and benevolence toward their fellow-creatures, all of a sudden metamorphosed in their tempers, and breathing forth rigour, severity, persecution, and bitter speeches, against their brethren who differ from them but a little in their way of thinking. Ah! what poor changeable creatures are we!

3. If we would have the assembly's authority maintained, we must take care, in making acts of general concern, that none of the church's fences or guardian rules be broke through, such as that excellent one, Act 9. Assemb. 1697, in which, "For the safety of the doctrine, worship, discipline and government of this church, it is appointed, enacted and declared, that before any General Assembly, of this church, shall pass any acts which are to be binding rules and constitutions to the church, the same acts be first proposed as overtures to the assembly, and being by them past as such, be remitted to the consideration of the several presbyteries of this church, and their opinions and consents reported by their commissioners to the next assembly, who may then pass the same in acts, if the *more general opinion* (N. B.) *of the church*, thus had, agree thereunto." Now this *guardian* act hath been in force these thirty-six years, and hath been regarded as a fundamental rule and bulwark of our happy constitution; and, if it be broke through in the making of any act or rule, how can we expect that such an act will be regarded as a binding rule and constitution to the church, legally enacted; and this seems to be the case with respect to Act 1732; for of forty nine presbyteries who gave their opinions concerning it, there were no more than six presbyteries in all Scotland for it. Some of them indeed were for it with amendments, but generally these would have altered the nature of it very much for what it is, had they been gone into.

4. In all ages the wisest states and governments have in many cases thought fit to relax their authority in censuring the disobedient; and this hath been so far from ruining their authority, that it hath contributed to preserve and establish it. How many of the ministers of Scotland were guilty of disobedience to the assembly, 1606, at Linlithgow, who appointed them to accept of constant moderations; and to the assembly, 1618, who appointed them to receive the five articles of Perth? Did ever the church carry the matter so far, as to suspend or depose any of the disobedient brethren? Or, was the authority of the General Assembly ruined by such connivance? Have we not seen many General Assemblies since that time highly regarded, and their authority in a flourishing condition?

After all, I humbly beg, that none may be offended with my freedom in handling these matters, seeing conscience hath moved me to it, for the safety of my mother church, which I stand engaged by the strongest ties to promote, and which at this juncture I take to be in extreme danger; and in such cases *omnis homo est miles.*

I wish also, for the safety and quiet of the church, that the dissents and protestations of members and judicatories were allowed to be recorded, with their reasons. And I see not why this might not be allowed, under proper regulations, in our supreme ecclesiastical judicatories, as well as in the House of Peers of Great Britain. Why should we think it a greater affront to our authority than they do to theirs? Or, do we pretend to infallibility more than they?

Likewise it would add to the church's safety, that both the numbers and qualifications of ruling elders allowed to sit in assemblies, and commissions, were better regulated, and more narrowly canvassed. And many are of opinion, that the expediency of ruling elders from burghs, should of new be taken into serious consideration.

And, I am sure, it is not much for our safety, that national and provincial fasts are so much neglected, when

Providence so loudly calls us to the work of humiliation and prayer; when sin is arriving to so great a height, when clouds of wrath are gathering so fast; when all Europe is threatened with blood and confusion, and when destructive divisions and schisms are ready to break out among us at home; and O, do not these frightful appearances proclaim it to be a proper season for us to meet, and fast, and mourn, and see if we can weep our hearts into one lump, and, by our united prayers, prevail with God, for Christ's sake, to 'spare his people, and not give his heritage to reproach;' or else, that he will prepare us to meet him, when coming in the way of his judgments? And, if judgment begin at the house of God, what shall be the end of these that obey not the gospel? O that God, in his mercy, may awaken us in time to think on these things! Amen.

A SERMON:

On Joel ii. 17.

"Let the Priests, the Ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach; that the Heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, where is their God?"

AT this time twenty-one years ago, (viz. October 1712(. I opened the synod, by a sermon on 1 Sam. iv. 13. concerning Eli's heart 'trembling for the ark of God.' Many of the members of the synod are removed by death since that time; but those who survive may remember it was a very threatening time to that church; yet it pleased our gracious God to save us from the storm then impeding, and allow her many halcyon days since, though, alas! badly improven: wherefore the clouds seem to gather again, and look very black; and a new storm from another quarter (if God prevent not) is ready to blow. I have chosen therefore this text, which calls us for more than trembling hearts for the ark, even weeping eyes, and praying lips also; and O that all these might meet in us at this time!

In Joel's time, the church and people of God were threatened with a desolating judgment: to prevent it, he calls them to public national fasting and humiliation; duties most proper for a people exposed to public national calamities. In the text, we have directions given to ministers for carrying on this work; in which let us

Observe, 1. The persons addressed, the priests or ministers of God; why? because they who were the people's mouth to God, upon other occasions, were especially called at this time, to stand in the open, to turn away God's wrath from the church. Though others are not exempted from his duty, yet it is the business of ministers, in a special manner, Joel i. 13. 'Lie all night in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God.' When others mourn in the day, it is your duty to mourn both night and day.

2. Observe the place where they are to mourn and wrestle; 'betwixt the porch and the altar;' that is, the stately porch built by Solomon, and the great brazen altar, the public place where they used to attend the offering of sacrifices, there they are to pour out their tears and prayers in view of all the people, that, by the minister's example, the people may be affected and wrought into the like pious disposition.

3. Observe the words the ministers are directed to use and enlarge upon in their prayers to God; 'Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach,' &c. In which there are several strong arguments used to prevail with God for the church:

1st, They are to cry, 'Spare, O Lord;' *q. d.* 'We confess our guilt and ill deservings; we acknowledge the justice of thy proceedings, though we should be cut off; all our relief is in thy sparing mercy, and this we humbly look up to, and plead for, with a merciful God.'

2dly, Another plea is taken from the relation they stood in unto God; 'We are thy people, thine heritage:' 'We are the people thou hast set thy love upon, separated from thy church, taken into covenant with thee, ransomed from Egyptian bondage, delivered from many enemies and dangers, and preserved from ruin by a train of miraculous providences; Lord, spare the inheritances thou hast purchased for thyself at so dear a rate.'

3dly, They are to plead the reproach and contempt which would fall upon the church and people of God, if God give up with them; 'give not up thine heritage to reproach;' *q. d.* If thou send a famine upon us (which was the judgment immediately threatened), then the fruitful land of Canaan, the glory of all lands, shall be reproached as a poor beggarly and barren land, insufficient to afford sacrifices for the temple: yea, we shall soon fall under the reproach of servitude to our Heathen neighbours, who will make an easy prey of us, if once we be famished, and deprive us both of our civil and spiritual liberties, and especially of God's ordinances, the symbols of his presence, and means of communion with him; which we value as our great honour and happiness above other nations."

Lastly, They are to plead in prayer, that the reproach of the church will some way reflect upon her God and protector; 'wherefore should they say among the people, where is their God?' *q. d.* 'These barbarous people, who watched for our halting, will not consider our sins and ill-deservings at God's hand, but will talk reproachfully of God, saying, where is the God they trusted in, the God of whose power, mercy, and faithfulness, they boasted so much? They will say, he is either weak, and could not help them in their extremity, or unkind, and would not: Lord, spare and pity the church, for thy name, thy glory's sake. The master of our reproach is not so great; but, Lord, what wilt thou do for thy great name?'

DOCT.—*In time of the church's danger, ministers are especially called to mourn, plead, and wrestle with God for her, that she may not be abandoned or given up to reproach.*

In prosecuting this subject, I proposed to show,

1st, When it may be said, that a church is left or given up to reproach.

2dly, Why ministers should be so earnest with God to prevent this calamity.

3dly, Make improvement suitable to the case of the church.

I. The first head is, to show when a church may be said to be left or given up to reproach and contempt.

And here I shall mention several reproachful and church exposing evils, which ministers ought mournfully and fer-

vently to deprecate, especially when a church is threatened with them. As,

1st, When a church falls into a backsliding condition, religion in her is under a visible decay; her members leave their first love, degenerate from their predecessors' piety and zeal, turn loose and indifferent about God's truths, their former declared principles, and the solemn engagements they lie under to maintain them; and not only so, but turn careless also about the practice and duties of religion, such as family-worship, secret prayer, sabbath-sanctification, and gospel holiness: when people lose their former spirituality and liveliness in God's service, and their duties dwindle away into a dead formality: when they content themselves with external ordinances and communions, without communion with God in them: when they turn carnal in their conversation; Christian love declines, malice, hatred and envy do increase: then it is, that a church is left and given up to reproach; these are church disgracing evils, which ministers should earnestly deprecate, and cry, 'spare'.

2dly, When destructive schisms and divisions invade a church, so that good men, both ministers and professors of religion, entertain rough thoughts, and break out into uncharitable reflections, and severe censures one against another, and will not use lenity or forbearance to them who differ from them in some lesser things. These are evils we should earnestly pray against, seeing they manifestly tend to expose and ruin a church; for they put a stop to the progress of the gospel, the conversion of souls, and in bringing of strangers to Christ: they hinder the sweet fellowship of Christians together, and their mutual prayers with and for one another; and open a flood-gate for innumerable other evils: as, for instance, they take us off from the vitals and essentials of religion, the life and power of godliness; and, in the room thereof, engage and employ us into many needless disputes, passionate strivings, envious whispers, unchristian backbitings, and revengeful actions. How sadly verified do we find that word of the Apostle James ii. 16. 'Where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work!' We have reason to plead and cry against this woful spirit of strife and contention; for, where it doth take place, the church's best friends is highly provoked, the 'prince of peace;' and she herself is sadly exposed to the scorn and derision of her enemies.

3dly, It is most reproachful to a church, when doctrinal errors creep into her, when her teachers begin to resile from the pure truths of God handed down to them, and vent doctrines which have a tendency to Arminianism, Arianism, or Deism; when they extol natural reason more than revelation, the power of corrupt nature more than efficacious free grace, mens' own moral performances more than imputed righteousness, Jesus Christ as a pattern more than as a propitiation; or any other opinions which tend to sap the foundation of Christianity, or reproach the holy Spirit's operations, and life of faith, with the name of enthusiasm: these are church-exposing evils, which we ought to bewail and pray against.

4thly, It is reproachful to a church, when she is smitten with barrenness and unfruitfulness, with respect to converting of souls, and bringing forth children to God: when the great doctrine of regeneration and the new-birth is little preached or experienced in her; or, when in judgment she has given her a *miscarrying womb and dry breasts*. 'Lord, spare thy people, and give not thine heritage to this reproach.'

5thly, It is a church-disgracing evil, when God withdraws his holy Spirit and his gracious influences from her ministers and teachers, in any measure or degree; of which there are many, and each of them is to be dreaded and deprecated by us. As, *1st*, When we are deprived of the gifts and qualifications we once had. *2dly*, When the light and knowledge we retain, hath no influence on our consciences. *3dly*, When we lose our spirituality and liveliness in the worship and service of God. *4thly*, When we are straitened in our approaches to God. *5thly*, When we begin to think duty a weariness, and our hearts are alienated from it. *6thly*, When heart-plagues and indwelling corruptions prevail and increase, as heart-atheism, unbelief, carnality, &c. *7thly*, When we incline towards the temptations of sin, and society of ungodly men. *8thly*, When wonted restraints are taken off, and we turn loose and profane in our lives, so as (like Eli's sons) to tempt men to abhor the offerings of the Lord. "O Lord, spare thy people, and give not thy church to this reproach."

6thly, It is reproachful to the Lord's vineyard, when breaches are made in her walls and fences, so that her enemies, the foxes and wild beasts, break in and spoil the vines: when strangers do devour her strength, those of a different persuasion and communion do spoil her of her ancient rights and liberties: when patrons and their abettors thrust in pastors upon Christian congregations against their will, whereby God's ordinances are deserted, the ministry is contemned, the Lord's day is profaned, the flock of Christ is scattered and exposed as a prey to seducers. These are evils we should bewail and pray against with tears, crying, "Lord, spare thy church, and give her not up to this reproach."

7thly, It is disgracing to a church, when God hides his face from her, when under oppression and distress, and covers himself with a cloud, that their prayers cannot pass through; so that enemies are ready to say, as in the text, 'Where is their God?' 'Where is the fruit of all your prayers? where is he in whom you trusted for help? where is your covenanted God, of whose promises to relieve you in trouble, you were wont to boast?' This reproach is as a sword in his peoples' bones, Psal. xlii. 10. against which let us pray, "Lord, spare thy people, and give not thine heritage to this sad reproach."

8thly, It doth sadly expose a church, when her pillars are removed; when those are discouraged or taken away, who were wont to weep and wrestle between the porch and the altar, and stood in the breach to keep off wrath from her; when her burning and shining lights are extinguished; the precious sons of Zion are thrown by as earthen pitchers; when faithful teachers are removed into corners or graves, and such put in their room, who are unexperienced in religion, harden people in their sins, or lull them asleep in a Christless and unregenerate state. It is distressing to a church, when her pillars are struck at, persecution is intended against the champions of Christ's cause, whereby others are intimidated with fear to own it. How low was the church brought in Herod's time, Acts xii. when James was killed with the sword, Peter in prison ready to be executed, and all the rest of the apostles were designed as a sacrifice? then the pillars shook, the disciples trembled, and the enemies triumphed. This was a time of reproach; and it becomes all the ministers of the Lord to weep between the porch and the altar, and cry, "Spare thy pepole, O Lord, give not thine heritage to this reproach, or any other church disgracing evil."

II. The *second* head I proposed, was, to show why ministers should be so earnest with God, to avert these church-exposing evils. Reasons for it.

1. Because God expressly requires this at their hand, as in the text, and also in Isa. lxii. 6, 7. "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem.'——' Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence. And give him no rest, till he establish Jerusalem.' Where we may see the great end for which God sets ministers in such public posts; it is not to keep silence in an evil time, as other prudent men may do, but to speak aloud in Zion's behalf, and to intercede and wrestle with God for her. And we see God requires faithfulness in this matter.

2. This hath been the approven practice of the Lord's prophets and ministers in all ages. How earnest was Moses, in wrestling and pleading for the church in his day! Exod. xxxiii. 11, 12, 13. 'And Moses besought the Lord his God, and said, Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt, with great power and a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, for mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and consume them from the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swearest,' &c. Here is an intercessory prayer for Israel, full of the most powerful arguments, worthy of our imitation. In like manner was the prophet Samuel employed for the church in his time, I Sam. xii. 23. 'As for me (saith he) God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing top ray for you.' So the prophet David wrestled for the church, Ps. xiv. 7. 'O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion.' Psal. xxv. 22. 'Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles,' Psal. li. 18. 'Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion, build thou the walls of Jerusalem.' So Asaph, Psal. lxxx. 14. 'Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and visit this vine,' &c. Likewise the prophet Isaiah was thus concerned, Isa. lxii. 1. 'For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake will I not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And so the prophet Daniel wrestled fervently for the church, Dan. ix. 16, 17, 18, 19. So did Nehemiah, Neh. i. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, &c. And so did the apostle Paul, Rom. i. 9, and x. 1. Eph. i. 16, 17. But I have a greater pattern to lay before you than all these, even that of the angel of the covenant, the great prophet and teacher of the church, Zech. i. 12. How earnestly doth he plead for the church in distress? 'O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these seventy years?' Let us imitate him.

3. Because God is exceedingly delighted with such pleadings, and allows great familiarity to those who intercede for his church, Isa. xlv. 11. and promises prosperity to them, Psal. cxxii. 6.

4 Ministers should be more earnest for the church in trouble than other men, because they are Christ's principal servants, who should be more zealous for their glorious master than others, and know best the near relation the church stands in to him, that she is his city, his house, his heritage, his spouse, his body, and the purchase of his blood. And therefore ministers, for their master's sake, should interpose with the greatest earnestness for the church.

5. Because ministers are, by their office, bound to have more compassion than others to precious souls, which cannot miss to be in a miserable situation, when the church is distressed with spiritual judgments, as the withdrawing of the spirit from ordinances, and the plague of dry breasts.

6. Because at such a time the souls of ministers are like to suffer, as well as others; for the church, being the mother of us all; if it be ill with her, and her condition sickly and pining, our souls must languish with other mens.

7. Because ministers should best know the hazard of being silent and unconcerned about the church's danger and trouble; seeing there is a heavy woe denounced against them, 'who are at ease in Zion, and are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph,' Amos, vi. 1. 6. And they know what wrath was threatened against Esther, if she did keep silence when the church was in danger, Esther iv. 14. 'For if thou altogether hold thy peace at this time, then shall enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed.'

HEAD III.—*The Improvement.*

First, Use may be of Lamentation, upon the account of our silence and unconcernedness who are ministers about the church of God when in danger and distress. Ah! how few are there among us of Eli's disposition this day, whose hearts are trembling for the ark of God! How few weeping between the porch and the altar, and crying, 'Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine inheritance to reproach.' Witness the unfrequency of fast-days, and the cold entertainment given to motions for observing them. What! is it a time for silence and easiness, when the affairs of Zion are in such a melancholy situation both at home and abroad? Is it time for us to dwell at ease in our ceiled houses, when the Lord's house is threatened to be laid waste by our woful backslidings, and destructive divisions? Is it becoming the character of Christ's ambassadors to show an indifferency anent his church's danger, and to act the part of a Heathen Gallio, to care for none of these things? O what cause have we to bewail the case of those, who can be easy about the public interest of the church, if it go well with their own private affairs; who care not, if they can swim in prosperity, though the church be drowned in tears and blood! What is this! but to be like the king and Haman, who sat down to drink when the city Shushan was perplexed, Esther, iii. 15. For a Christian minister to mind his private concerns, and neglect the public, is as great folly, as if a sailor in a storm should notice only his private chest, and neglect the vessel in which he and his effects are embarked. It is recorded, as a praise-worthy action, and a noble evidence of a public spirit in one Terentius, a captain under the Emperor Valens, who, having done some special service to the emperor, for which he judged him worthy of an eminent reward, he bid him ask what he would have, and it should be granted. Whereupon, after an advisement, he wrote a petition to the emperor, That the orthodox Christians might have liberty of a church by themselves, where they might worship God separately from the Arians. The em-

peror, being Arian himself, was much offended with the petition, tore it in pieces, and threw it away, bidding the captain ask something for himself: but he, carefully gathering up the pieces of his torn petition, said, if he could not be heard in Christ's cause, he would ask nothing for himself. Alas! that we, who are Christ's ministers, should fall so much short of this soldier in concern for Christ's interest!

But the best improvement we can make of this doctrine is for amendment; and therefore I shall proceed to a

Second Use of Exhortation.—And here, my dear brethren, suffer me to be your humble remembrancer, and my own monitor; and the duty exhorted to, is, that I have been insisting upon from the text, weep and pray for all the churches of God that are in distress, and especially the church of Scotland, our mother church, which at this day is in danger of being torn in pieces and destroyed, if God, in his mercy, do not prevent it. O let us cry with all our might. 'Lord, spare thy people, and give not thine heritage (in Scotland) to reproach: wherefore shall they say among the people, where is their God?' And, for your encouragement to wrestle and plead with God in her behalf, let me offer these considerations;

1. Such pleadings are most acceptable to God, and prevalent with him. Who are they but the wrestlers that deliver the church, and preserve the island?

2. Those who are most concerned for the church in danger, shall have the greatest share in her comforts when God rescues her. They who sow most of the seed of tears for Zion, shall reap most of her joys, when the harvest comes.

3. We have noble arguments to make use of in pleading with God for this poor church, as well as they had of old, for Israel.

As, (1) The compassion of his nature, which hath often interposed for this church, when he seemed to have given her up. So was it in the case of Israel, Judg. x. 14. where God appeared to reject them, and bid them, 'Go cry to the gods they had chosen, and let these deliver them in the time of their trouble;' yet when Israel persisted in crying for pity, it is said v. 16. 'His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel, and he delivered them.'

(2) We may plead the glory of his name, as of old, Jer. xiv. 21. 'Lord, do not disgrace the throne of thy glory.' viz. the temple where thy glory is displayed: *q. d.* 'Lord, we deserve to have disgrace put upon us; but O let it be in such a way that the disgrace may not reflect upon thyself, upon thy worship, thy ordinances, thy attributes, thy promises. Let not our enemies have occasion to reproach thy name, or to say, *where is now their God?* Where is the God they always boasted of, as superior to all the gods of the nations?' So may we say, 'Lord do for thy own name's sake; it is no great matter what become of the ministers or professors of Scotland; but what wilt thou do for thy great name that may come some way to suffer with them? Lord, what will the Egyptians say?' Exod. xxxii.

(3) We may plead his covenant with us, as they did, Jer. xiv. 21. *Lord, remember and break not covenant with us.* Though we have broke to thee, Lord do not thou break to us. We are a people in covenant with thee more explicitly than other nations; we are a land peculiarly given to Christ by the father's donation, as being amongst the ends and uttermost parts of the earth, and among the isles, which have seen his salvation, and waited for his law; we are a land most solemnly devoted to God by our reforming ancestors, who, in a national way, avouched the Lord to be their God; and at the same time gave up themselves and their posterity to the Lord; and thou, Lord, didst declare thyself well pleased with the bargain, thou didst fill the temple with thy glory, work great deliverance for us, and raised up saviours unto us, when we were brought very low. O do not now forsake thine inheritance!

DIRECTIONS.

I proceed, in the next place, with all humility, to offer some advices proper for ministers of the gospel, relative to this subject: and, that I may the better reach them, I shall propose and answer some questions.

Quest. 1. 'What things shall we pray for at this time unto this church, for preventing her reproach, retrieving her credit, and promoting her welfare?'

Ans. 1. Let us pray for a spirit of repentance, mourning and supplication, to all ranks among us, that we may all be disposed to humble ourselves before the Lord, and mournfully to bewail our sins, our backslidings and defections, which have provoked God to withdraw from us, and threaten to give us up to reproach. O that Scotland were brought to the temper of penitent returning Israel, 1 Sam. vii. 2. where it is said, that 'all Israel lamented after the Lord!' Were all ranks moved in a penitent manner to come and lament after a departing God, it would be a hopeful token for the land.

2. Let us pray for God's pouring out his Spirit from on high upon the ordinances and assemblies of this land, for convincing, enlightening, and converting of souls to the Lord: for our affairs will never take a turn to the better, 'until the spirit be poured out from on high,' Isa. xxxii. 15: till then, our wilderness will not be turned to a fruitful field. Well, then, let us all pray for a time when gospel-ordinances, dispensed by us, shall be remarkably backed by God's power, and presence; for a time when, by the effusion of the Spirit, a great and effectual door shall be opened to us, as was to Paul at Ephesus, 1 Cor. xvi. 9. 'a door of utterance' opened in ministers' mouths, and a door of entrance in sinners' hearts; a time when ministers' minds shall be enlightened, their hearts warmed, memories strengthened, and tongues loosed; so that they shall have a great facility in uttering their thoughts; 'their hearts shall indite a good matter, and their tongues be as the pen of a ready writer.' Let us pray for the time when ministers' mouths shall be opened, and hearers' appetites sharpened; when ministers' hearts shall be enlarged, and hearers' hearts melted; when the arrows of the word shall be directed by a powerful hand, to pierce the consciences of men, and they brought thereby to make serious enquiries about their eternal state. 'What must we do to be saved?' This would retrieve our credit.

3. Let us pray earnestly for the down-pouring of the Spirit upon young students and expectants of the holy ministry, that God may make them acquainted with regeneration-work in their younger years, and raise up amongst them eminent instruments of his glory; make them burning and shining lights, men of public spirits, who will desire to spend and be spent for the glory of Christ and winning of souls; men that will prefer Jerusalem to their chiefest joy; men that will be suitably weighted with the work they are undertaking, and concerned to be cleared about their having God's call to it; men that will not rush forwardly upon the work, have an active hand in

thrusting themselves into the vineyard, and so run unsent, but wait patiently till God clear their way. O that God would raise up such a ministry in Scotland for the next age! O that he would send such labourers into his harvest! This would prevent our reproach, and retrieve our credit.

4. Let us pray for the continuance of the purity of doctrine and worship in the land, that God may preserve us from deism, and whatever hath a tendency thereto; and from all Popish, Socinian, or Arian errors; and that he may deliver us from all Pelagian and Arminian tenets and opinions; that so men may see and acknowledge God in every thing; whereas Pelagians and Arminians scarce see God in any thing, but make man himself (as it were) a God, by ascribing all to his natural powers, and making him independent with respect to his conversion and spiritual performances. O what a reproach would it be to us, if such errors should prevail among us!

5. Let us pray for the preservation of the peace and unity of this church, and that our breaches may all be healed, and greater breaches prevented; that God may pity us in our present situation, and raise up peace-makers amongst us; that he may inspire all the ministers of this church with a spirit of meekness, charity, and forbearance towards their brethren, who cannot attain to the same light with them in some lesser matters; and that he may deliver us from a spirit of bitterness, malice, or persecution, against our brethren. O how monstrous and reproachful will it be, for those who bear the character of Christ's lambs and doves, to fall a biting and tearing one another, like lions and beasts of prey!

6. Let us pray for the removing of all these things which are the causes of division and contention among us; and, particularly, for deliverance from all spiritual oppression, and encroachments upon the rights and liberties of this church, by patrons or others, that so congregations may be supplied with pastors, with the consent and good liking of the members thereof; this would contribute much for our welfare, and prevent our reproach.

7. Let us pray, that God would pour out a spirit of reformation, and of zeal for piety, and against all manner of sin and vice, upon all ranks of persons amongst us: such as magistrates, ministers, elders, heads of families, parents, and teachers of youth; so that every person, in their respective stations, may vigorously exert themselves for suppressing sin, and recommending the exercise of godliness amongst those committed to their charge; and hereby the credit and prosperity of the church would be greatly promoted.

Quest. 2. How is it that we must pray for the church, so as to prevail?

Ans. 1. 'Let us pray in faith,' Jam. i. 6. believing that God is infinite in power, and able to help; full of compassion, and ready to help; and depending entirely upon the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, for acceptance in our prayers. 2. Let us pray with fervency, like Jacob, who wrestled with God, when he prayed. Let us, by importunate addresses, besiege heaven with holy violence; and, like Samson, let us bow ourselves with all our might, in order to pull down the pillars of Dagon's temple. 3. Let us join penitent tears with our fervent prayers; for, in the text, we find weeping and praying linked together; also the famous wrestler Jacob 'wept and made supplication,' when he prevailed with the angel, Hos. xii. 4. 4. Let us pray in an argumentative manner, when we plead with God for his church: let us fill our mouths with arguments, as in the text, and as Moses did, Exod. xxxii. 11, 12, 13. 5. Let us pray with perseverance, as we are directed, Eph. vi. 18. Rom. xii. 12. 'Hold not your peace, give him no rest, saith the prophet, Isa. lxii. 1, 6, 7. 6. Let our prayers be joined with a diligent use of the means, to obtain the favours we ask: as idle beggars are not welcome to man's door, so neither are they to God's. And this leads to

Quest. 3. What are those means and endeavours proper to be used by us, in conjunction with our prayers, in order to obtain the credit and prosperity of this church, and to prevent her reproach?

Ans. I desire, in the humblest manner, to offer these following to my brethren's consideration:

1. Let us all endeavour to be like the well-furnished scribe, that bringeth forth out of his treasure, 'things both new and old,' *i. e.* Let us study to be furnished with a stock of necessary and useful knowledge, that we may bring forth variety of provision for the entertainment of our people's souls: 'The priests' lips should preserve knowledge.' In the 1*st* place, Let us all be well-skilled in scripture knowledge, in the knowledge of God and his perfections, and of the mystery of the Trinity, so far as revealed, and of Jesus Christ, our surety and sacrifice. Likewise, we need the knowledge of human arts and sciences, and of the languages; and especially those in which the Holy Bible was first written: this knowledge is a good hand-maid to divinity and scripture-knowledge; and, for acquiring these, we ought to have nurseries of learning, and schools of the prophets, as in ancient ages.

There is a sect lately risen among us, who decry such knowledge as unnecessary for gospel-ministers, and therefore make choice of illiterate men for that office. But, if the devil should stir up Arians, Socinians, Deists, or others, to make an attack upon our holy religion, what could such men do to defend it? If Rome should send her subtile Jesuits and learned priests among us to subvert the Protestant doctrines, and mislead our people, how would these unlearned preachers be able to maintain them, and discover the fallacies of their arguments?

Object. O (say they) we have the word to oppose them.

Ans. 1*st*. Had there not been men of learning before you to have translated it, you even would not have had that. 2*dly*, Put the best sword ever was, in the hand of one that wants skill to use it, he could not thereby defend himself against him that is expert in the art of fencing. When the cunning Jesuit shall allege, The passage you quote is not justly translated, what would you answer him? It hath been judiciously observed, by the authors of our ecclesiastic histories, that the bloody Emperor Dioclesian did not so much mischief to the church and her ministers, as the Emperor Julian the apostate did. The first, indeed, put many of them to death; but the devil learned Julian another way, viz. to take away the maintenance of ministers, and put down their schools of learning; and hereby Julian did the greatest damage of the two: for, though Dioclesian took many eminent men away, there still arose others in their stead; but the robbing of ministers and schools of learning, of their maintenance and revenues, did hinder a succession of able ministers in the church. And shall any lover of Zion join issue with that infamous

apostate? Let young preachers and expectants remember this, that they may diligently improve their excellent opportunities in furnishing themselves with the knowledge of the languages, history, philosophy, mathematics, geography, astronomy, and polemic divinity, which are good handmaids to scripture-knowledge: and this would be one way to promote the welfare of this church, and prevent her reproach; for an ignorant ministry is a reproach to any church.

II. Let all of us study, in a special manner, to be found among these who deserve the character of able ministers of the New Testament, mentioned by the apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 6. *Quest.* Who is it that may be denominated an able minister of the New Testament? *Ans.* He is one that is well skilled in the mystery of Christ, and him crucified; that knows how to open up the covenant of grace, and the method of our justification by Jesus Christ, and his righteousness only. He makes it his main business to hold forth the excellency and usefulness of Christ, both for our justification and sanctification. He looks upon Jesus Christ as the Christian's great surety and sacrifice, and also as his head of influence, his life, and that 'without Christ we can do nothing:' and, therefore, he makes it the great end of his sermons to exalt Christ, and free grace displayed through him; to preach up Christ, and preach down *self*; to make Christ *all*, and self *nothing:* and, whether he preach duties or privileges, threatenings or promises, the tendency of all is to lead sinners from a covenant of works to a covenant of grace, from self to Christ. Again, this New Testament minister, not only preaches up the excellency of the righteousness of Christ, and of faith therein, for our salvation; but he also insists upon the necessity of repentance for sin, and reformation from it: he presses the practice of holiness and all moral duties, to complete the character of a true Christian: he assures all his hearers, that 'without holiness no man can see God:' seeing it is impossible a man can be a good Christian (profess what he will) unless he be a good moralist; he must mind the second table duties as well as the first; he must not only attend divine worship, but he must be sober, honest, chaste, meek, just, merciful, charitable, and beneficent, minding his neighbour's interest as well as his own; and in these things following the example of the holy Jesus, his Lord and pattern. But then, the New Testament minister is concerned that men's morals be of the right stamp; that they be Christian morals, and of the same nature with gospel holiness or sanctification; and, in order thereto, he directs men to Jesus Christ, the treasure and fountain of grace and holiness, the fountain of sanctification as well as of justification. Morality, performed in the strength of nature, is still sour fruit, and can never please God, till it spring from Christ as the root; unregenerate morality, however far men advance in it, is still but nature at the best. The heart must be renewed, and the soul united to Christ, before morality can be refined into gospel-holiness, and moral virtues commence Christian graces. The gospel minister teacheth, that all acceptable morality, all true grace or holiness, is the proper result of the soul's union with the holy Jesus, our living head, who is the first and immediate receptacle of the holy spirit, and of all sanctifying influences for the use of his members: and out of his fulness we must by faith receive those vital and quickening influences necessary for promoting sanctification in us. And, O how much would it be for the credit and interest of this and every Christian church, to be duly provided with such able ministers of the New Testament!

III. Let us be diligent in instructing our people in the knowledge of the first principles of Christianity, and especially in catechising of the youth. The most famous of the ancient fathers have gloried in their being catechists. This is a most necessary part of our work: for, if the foundations of knowledge be not carefully laid among our people, our success must be marred, the best sermons will be lost upon them, if ignorance prevail among them. And, seeing youth is the moulding age, and the proper season for receiving instruction, we ought to improve it well, by frequent and diligent catechising. A vessel will long retain the scent of that with which it is first seasoned; so persons are more ready to retain good impressions made upon them in the time of youth, than afterwards. Let us look upon the young as the seed of the next generation, as the lambs of the flock, towards whom a special care and tenderness is to be expressed. The first charge Christ gave to Peter, was, 'to feed his lambs,' the young and weak of the flock. This is the most usual season of conversion, the time when the heart is soonest melted, and the affections are the most pliable; and, if ever we prevail with sinners, youth is the most likely time for it. And, therefore, let us have a tender care of the young in our congregations, and more especially at their first admission to the Lord's table: this is the time of their renewing their baptismal covenant, their becoming Christians by their own voluntary choice, as well as by their parents' dedication; the time of their entering into the adult state of church members; the time of laying the foundation-stone of their spiritual building, their soul's salvation: and, therefore, it should be done with deliberation, holy skill, and deep digging, by humiliation, repentance, self-searching, renouncing self-righteousness, and removing all false foundations, till they win to the rock Christ, and his most perfect righteousness, as the only ground of their justification and acceptance at God's bar. And this being such a critical time for their souls, we ought, according to the assembly's direction, diligently to instruct them before their first admission to the Lord's Supper, particularly as to the covenant of grace, and the articles thereof; and take them solemnly engaged thereunto, and that in a more express way than we did their fathers at their baptism. Let us put such questions to them as these, and wait for their answers:

1. Q. What sense have you of your misery by nature, and while under the covenant of works?

2. Q. Do you see the need you stand in of the Mediator's help to relieve you out of this state?

3. Q. Are you sensible of your breaking your baptismal engagements, by running away from Christ your captain, going over to the devil's camp, and standing long out against Christ's calls?

4. Q. Are you desirous to return unto the Lord, as penitent prodigals, and mourning backsliders with your face Zion-wards, weeping as ye go, willing to renew your baptismal vows, saying, 'Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant never to be forgotten?'

5 Q. Are you content to break with the trinity of hell, and engage with the trinity of heaven! *i. e.* Are you content to renounce the world, the devil, and the flesh; and to accept of God the father as your father, God the Son as

your redeemer, and God the Holy Ghost as your sanctifier, in whose name ye are baptized?

6. Q. Do you admire redeeming love in the Son of God, his undertaking to be a surety and sacrifice for the race of fallen Adam, when he past by fallen angels?

7. Q. Do you heartily approve of this excellent contrivance and gospel-method of salvation, through the suretyship and sanctification of Jesus Christ? Do ye think this a device worthy of God, and of infinite wisdom?

8. Q. Are you therefore willing to renounce your own righteousness and strength, as insufficient to answer the demands of the law, and to accept of a surety for both, and say, 'in the Lord Jesus I have righteousness and strength;' I am willing to make use of a borrowed strength for my performing of duty, and of a borrowed righteousness for my acceptance in duty?

9. Q. Are you willing to go in to this self-denying method of salvation; and are you well pleased with it, as it tends to make you eternal debtors to free grace, excludes all glorying and boasting in the creature, and ascribes all the glory of your salvation to Christ only; takes the crown off the head of *self*, and puts it on the head of Christ?

10. Q. Are you content to accept of Jesus Christ, the mediator betwixt God and man, in all his offices; as a prophet, to instruct and teach you; as a priest, to atone and intercede for you; and as a king, to rule in and over you?

11. Q. Are you content to take Christ as a king to govern you by his laws, as well as a priest to save you by his blood? Are you desirous he should come in as a king to execute his kingly office in your soul, to set up his throne in your heart, and subdue all indwelling sin, and to conquer all your lusts and corruptions?

12. Q. Do you look on your sins as the enemies and crucifiers of Christ? And do you resolve, through his grace, to throw out every one of them, and to harbour none of these murderers; and to give no house-room nor heart-room to the least nail or thorn that pierced Christ?

13. Q. Are you willing to cut off every right hand, and pluck out every right eye for Christ, and not to count any sin too dear to part with for Jesus Christ?

14. Q. Do you desire to come to Christ for sanctification as well as for justification; for holiness as well as for happiness; for conformity and likeness to God, as well as for access to dwell with God?

15. Q. Do you come willingly, as a volunteer, at the sound of the gospel-trumpet, to list yourself under Christ's banner, resolving to forsake the devil's camp, and swear allegiance to King Jesus; to take up arms for him, and fight against his enemies, the devil, the world, and the flesh, all the days of your life?

16. Q. Do you accept of all God's ordinances, his word, sacraments, prayers, &c. as necessary helps to heaven, and means of conveying grace, which you will esteem and make use of with care and diligence?

17. Q. Do you accept of Christ's people, those who bear his image, as your beloved friends, your fellow-travellers; firmly resolving to join with Christ's little flock, his praying flock, his sin-hating flock, his flock that fear an oath, and that notwithstanding of the reproach of singularity?

18. Q. Do you, through his grace, purpose never to follow the multitude to do evil, or join with them in common sins; but stedfastly to avoid and resist all the temptations and snares of evil company, and say with David to them, 'Depart from me, ye evil doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God?'

19. Q. Are you willing to accept of the rod and discipline of Christ's house; to welcome his convictions and reproofs, as well as his comforts and smiles; to take Christ with his cross as well as Christ with his crown; to suffer the world's hatreds and scoffs, and other persecutions, for Christ?

20. Q. Are you resolved, through grace, that no temptation or discouragement should make you prove runaways or deserters from the captain of your salvation; but that you will adhere to him, and abide by his standard all the days of your life?

21. Q. As you are content to accept of Christ, and all that belongs to him, are you not also willing to give up and surrender yourself to the Lord, and all that belongs unto you, to be disposed of by him at his pleasure; all that you are, soul and body, heart, mind, will, conscience, memory, and all that you have, time, talents, relations, enjoyments, &c.

22. Q. When Christ and the devil are striving for your heart, and each of them, saying, "My son, give me thy heart;' and when Christ is putting it to your choice, in the days of youth, saying, chuse whom you will yield unto, chuse whom you will serve; what doth your heart answer unto him?

23. Q. Is it your purpose to engage to all the articles of the covenant in borrowed strength, wholly distrusting your own strength and resolutions; and resolving to trust, not in your promise to Christ, but in Christ's promise to you, that he 'will never leave you nor forsake you?'

24. Q. Do you resolve to live a life of prayer and acquaintance with Christ all your days, that you will always run to God, and consult him in all cases?

25. Q. Are you resolved also to live a life of faith and dependence daily on the Son of God for his righteousness to cover guilt, for his strength to perform duty, conquer sin, resist temptation, bear crosses and afflictions?

26. Q. Are you resolved to make ordinances always trysting-places betwixt Christ and you, and to look still for a meeting with him in every one of them, and to count every sabbath and sermon as lost, wherein you miss his presence?

27. Q. Are you resolved to engage to all these articles in a secret transaction and personal covenant with God, before you come to his table; and then to come in a solemn way to seal and ratify this bargain and covenant before men and angels at his table?

Thus let ministers take pains to instruct young folk in the nature and articles of the covenant of grace, and to take them engaged, with some solemnity, to own and adhere to them, at their first admission to the Lord's supper; and let them, with solemn and fervent prayer, recommend and give up these young communicants unto the Lord; such a course hath been found, by experience, very much to contribute to the welfare and prosperity of the church.

4thly, It would be for the honour and interest of the church, to have our sermons to the people flowing from the heart, *i. e.* for us to be suitably affected and impressed with the truths we deliver to them. A speculative preacher, that preacheth merely from strength of parts, doth not much good, because his light hath no heart accompanying it. That which cometh only from the head, commonly reach-

eth no further than the head: but that which cometh from the heart, is most likely to reach to the heart. The best way to bring our people to believe and be affected with our doctrine, is, to let them see that we believe it, and are affected with it ourselves. Such a preacher was Paul, who 'preached and warned his hearers with tears.' Acts xx. 31. Phil. iii. 18. He knew the strongest reasons and arguments, proposed without affection and warmness, would not prevail: nay, a blunt iron, if hot, will sooner pierce the wood, than a sharper iron that is cold. Our famous countryman, Mr. John Livingstone, who was a happy instrument, in God's hand, of converting many souls, perhaps some hundreds at one sermon,—tells, in his life, that the times when he was most successful, were, when he got his own heart in the most lively, warm, and tender frame, before he went to the pulpit.

5thly, If we would promote the credit and welfare of the church, let us be diligent to know the state of our flocks, enquire into their cases, and look after the fruits of our sermons amongst them. And, for this end, let us frequently visit them in their houses, and thereby give them occasion to lay open their cases to us; and let us improve these times by examination and instruction; for they are apt to forget what we say to them, if we do not cause them speak something relative to the subject themselves. Therefore, let us ask them concerning their proficiency by the word, and what they remember of the sermons they lately heard, and of the Bible and other books which they have read, and what impressions these things made upon them? If they be convinced of the evil of sin, and be humbled for it; and of the necessity of duty, and be excited to it, by what they hear or read? And let us give them advices how to hear and read more profitably for the future. Thus let us go from house to house, like the apostle Paul, to see how our people do, warning every one, as we see occasion for it. Let us act the part of good gardners, who, after they have sown their seeds, look after the springing thereof, water some beds in time of drought, and pluck up the noxious weeds; likewise it is fit we should frequently look after our examine-rolls in our closets, to bring the various cases of our people to our remembrance, that we may mind them in our prayers, and prepare suitable doctrine for them.

6thly, If we would promote the credit and prosperity of our mother-church, let us be frequent in dispensing the holy supper amongst our people. Our unfrequency in this service, is a reproach to us among foreign churches, as well as a real loss to the souls committed to our charge. If ever our people attend to what they hear, or get benefit by the gospel, it is most commonly about the time of a sacrament, and when they are making preparation for it. Though this be not a converting ordinance to the receivers, in the very nature of it, but strengthening and confirming, yet sermons and discourses about this time, upon the melting subject of a crucified Jesus, have been the means of converting many thousands. Besides, the frequent dispensing of this soul affecting ordinance, would be a good way to keep up the remembrance of God, of Christ, and of heaven, among our people; and to keep up the impressions of the evil of sin, the worth of souls, the love of God, in giving his Son to the world, and the love of Christ in dying for us. Likewise, it would be a good mean to help the carelessness of our people's minds, the weakness of their memories, the dulness of their capacities, and their small proficiency in knowledge: for in this ordinance they have a compendious and affecting view of the whole scheme of the Christian religion at once; they have man's fall and disease, together with his remedy and recovery, set forth to the life and in such a way as to make impression upon their outward senses. And, further, would we have our people effectually engaged to family-worship, secret prayer, and a tender walk? Would we have swearing, minch'd oaths, sabbath-breaking, and other vices, kept under constant rebukes? Would we conquer these evils which prevail among our people? let us frequently set before their eyes the bleeding wounds of a crucified Jesus, those sin-killing objects, as represented in the holy sacrament. We have no better way than this to advance the glory of our Redeemer, and the salvation of our people's souls; and, seeing we have so short a time for doing either, we have need to bestir ourselves. Nay, my brethren, as ye would desire to keep glorious Christ in perpetual esteem, sin in continual disgrace, the world in lasting contempt, religion in constant credit among men; and as ye would desire to retrieve the honour of this national church, and wipe off her reproach, I beseech you to administer the Lord's supper oftener than once in the year, in your congregations.

7thly, As I would have you frequent in the administration, so I would have you strict in the admission to it. Our confession of faith declares it to be a great sin in ministers to admit either ignorant or ungodly persons to the Lord's table. It is incumbent on us, therefore, to look well out, that we do not admit any swearer, drunkard, sabbath-breaker, evil-speaker, malicious person, or any other guilty of any scandalous sin, to eat of these holy things; *procul hinc, procul inde profani!* It would be a mean to dart home convictions and awakening thoughts upon sinners, to find themselves excluded from this holy ordinance for want of family worship, for idle walking on the Lord's day, for malicious words or actions, for excessive drinking, for abusing of God's name, for using petty oaths, as, by faith, conscience, &c. And good reason have we to exclude such, seeing the spirit of God distinguisheth betwixt the precious and the vile, by the characters of 'him that sweareth, and him that feareth an oath,' Eccl. ix. 2. And surely they who use minch'd oaths, can never be ranked among them who fear an oath. I myself have the experience of several persons, who have been thankful to me for keeping them back from such things, because the dispensation had been blessed for humbling and reforming them.

Object. 1*st*, It is hard to discover persons who may be guilty of some of these evils.

Ans. 1*st*, Let us endeavour to get faithful and conscientious elders, who will impartially inform us of our people's manners; and, if we want such, let us be willing to take information from others. 2*dly*, Let us pose the consciences of those whom we suspect as guilty of any of these practices, and they may be brought to confess them.

Object. 2*d*, We will be in hazard of disobliging many of our people by such strictness.

Ans. 1*st*, We may edify men, and promote their soul's interest, even when we displease them; 2*dly*, Better displease men, than Him who is our great master and judge. 3*dly*, Let us take pains to convince our people of the awful charge given to us, as the stewarts of God's house, who must give the childrens' bread to the dogs. As Jehoiadah of old set porters at the gates of the house of the Lord 'that

none who was unclean in any thing should enter in,' 2 Chron. xxiii. 19.—so God hath set us ministers as porters to the holy table of the Lord, that no profane sinner, nor swearer, no malicious person, no prayerless man, no man that harbours any known sin, and is unwilling to part with it, may approach to it. As the cherubims stood at the entry of paradise with a drawn sword, to keep Adam from entering in to eat the tree of life: so ministers are to stand with the sword of the Lord's threatnings brandished against every impenitent sinner, every swearer, every drunkard, liar, every sabbath-breaker, every back-biter and hater of his neighbour, every neglecter of family worship or secret prayer, that they do not presume to rush upon this holy ordinance, while they continue in any of these sins. This strictness is necessary for the welfare and reputation of our church, and to wipe away reproach.

8thly, As we would consult the credit and safety of this church, let us consider well whom we appoint for our successors in office; *i. e* let us take care whom we license and ordain, that they be men of piety, prudence and parts, men that will exert themselves for the glory of God, and for winning of the souls of the rising generation, that we may have ground to hope that religion will be entailed to succeeding ages. We see how strictly the apostle enjoin'd 'Timothy to commit the ministry to faithful men, to lay hands suddenly on no man, not to be partakers of other men's sins, but keep himself pure," 1 Tim. v. 22 2 Tim. ii. 2. These commands also oblige us to see that those whom we bring into the holy ministry be faithful men, according to the best of our discerning; men who have pure and honest ends in their undertaking; and not those who aim more to win a livelihood to themselves, than to win souls to Christ, or those who will take unwarrantable methods to thrust themselves into parishes, by courting patrons, or accepting their presentations; a practice which no law requires, a practice which manifestly tends to bring a corrupt ministry into the church, and which hath already brought in great divisions and confusions into this poor church. If patronage be a yoke and grievance to the church of God, as we all profess to own, it must surely be a sin for men, by their own voluntary deed, to bring on that grievance, and to wreathe that yoke about the church's neck; when at the same time they know they are under no necessity from the law to do so, seeing parishes can be planted otherwise, if our preachers would give way to it.

Our present situation is so easy, by the act of parliament 1719, that patronage can do this church no harm, without the active concurrence of a preacher. Well, then, hath the legislature been so kind as to unsting the patronage-act, and so tender of this church's liberties, as to leave her freedom at her own choice; what a shame will it be, in that case, if her own preachers shall turn her oppressors? O tell it not in Gath! &c. But, seeing the plain and free-warnings emitted by this and neighbouring synods, do set the sin and danger of this practice in so clear a light, I need add no more upon it, except by earnest prayer to God, that he may bless these means, so as to put a stop to this most pernicious practice. *Amen.*

9thly, As we would desire the welfare of this church, and prevent her reproach, let us endeavour, as far as possible, to get parishes planted with their own consent and good liking: for, when this is done against their will, it frequently hath a woful issue; congregations are broken, ordinances are forsaken, Christ's flock is dispersed, and the ministry is despised; all which very much tend to our reproach, as well as the hinderance of the kingdom of Christ. Wherefore, my dear brethren, let us take heed what we do in this affair, seeing so much doth depend upon it.

There is a controversy very lately risen amongst us, concerning the people's right to elect their pastors: some take it wholly from them, and give it to the presbytery or church-representative; and the church's friends are distracted by writings on both sides. If I may offer my opinion, I humbly apprehend the state of the controversy is not duly considered by those who handle it. And many of our differences and disputes do proceed from our not stating the question so distinctly and accurately as we should; and, when this is once done, frequently the debate falls.

The question, then, ought not to be stated generally and confusedly, as, whether the people or the presbytery have the right of electing the pastors of the church? Seeing we may safely grant they both have an interest therein, the one without prejudice to the other. Neither is the question to be stated, whether the presbytery or church-representative have a power to elect and ordain pastors, upon some occasions, and for some special employments and services, without the choice and consent of the people? As, for my part, I believe they have; and that these pastors, so elected, are lawful pastors of the catholic church, and ought to be acknowledged as such by the people. Nor is the question to be stated, whether the presbytery hath any power at all in the election of pastors to particular parishes? No, for it is owned they have a great power, in conjunction with the parishes, and ought to preside in the election. But, if the question be stated, whether the presbytery hath the sole power of electing, exclusive of the voice or consent of the parishes to which the pastors are elected? They who espouse that side of the question (in my humble opinion) will have a hard pull to prove it, either from scripture, reason, or fathers. And, that they may know what they had to do, let the question be clearly and distinctly stated, as it ought to be, in a suitableness to the present situation of this church, and then it will run thus: *Quest.* "Whether the presbytery, or church-representative, hath a right to elect and appoint pastors to particular flocks of Christian people, without the call or consent of these flocks, and even when they dissent and reclaim against their deed? And, whether, in such cases, the presbytery hath power to constitute and fix the spiritual and pastoral relation betwixt these pastors and these flocks, so that they must necessarily acknowledge them as their proper pastors, and receive all ordinances from them: yea, be tyed to them so much, that they cannot have access, without the allowance of these pastors, to partake of sealing ordinances dispensed by others? So that all these Christian people, however valuable they be, must be in effect excommunicated, if they do not receive these pastors imposed violently upon them?" Now, if the controversy be thus stated among us, (as it certainly ought to be) the writers for the presbytery's power will find it a difficult task to instruct and support such a power from the word of God, sound reason, or the practice of the primitive church; nay, I am of the mind, all the three will be found to unite against them, seeing all of them declare for the great interest which Christians have in the choice and set.

tlement of those who are to be their spiritual guides, and that they are to be consulted in this important affair. Our most eminent divines, both abroad and at home, have, ever since the reformation, strenuously argued for the peoples' right against the papists and their clergy's imposing power, from the word of God, and particularly from Acts i. 15, 23, 26. Acts vi. 2, 3, 5, 6. Acts xiv. 23 whose arguments I have not yet seen satisfyingly answered, either by papist or protestant. But, besides all these, it may satisfy any unbiassed enquirer, if he but consider the characters which Christ gives his flock, that, "they hear and know his voice in his shepherds," and do distinguish it from the voice of false shepherds, and "will not follow these, but flee from them." John x. 3, 4, 5. and the command that is given to all Christians "to try the spirits," 1 John iv. 1. and to "beware of false prophets, which come to them in sheeps' cloathing," Matthew vii. 15. and to "mark and avoid those who teach unsound doctrine," Rom. xvi. 17, 18. Phil. iii. 2. and to judge of the doctrine which is delivered to them by their teachers, 1 Cor. x. 15. and, for doing whereof, the Bereans are highly commended by the Spirit of God, Acts xvii. 11. I say, it may satisfy every unprejudiced person that seriously considers these scripture-texts, and the commands given to the disciples of Christ therein, that the word of God doth allow a great interest to all judicious Christians in the choice of their pastors; and that it is their unquestionable right and privilege to have a judgment of discretion concerning these pastors, to whom they are bound to commit the guiding, edification, and instruction, of their precious souls: and no patron, no heritor, no body of men, or judicatory whatsomever, can deprive the people of that right and privilege which God allows to them.

But, granting the scripture had mentioned nothing of the peoples' right in this matter, but had given all power to the presbytery (as some would have it), and left them to manage it, as they should be answerable to their great Lord and Master: yet, even in that case, I think it easy to demonstrate, from the general rules of the word, and the dictates of sound reason, that presbyteries ought always to exercise their electing and planting power, with the advice and consent of the Christian congregations immediately concerned, and not in opposition to their declared inclinations and pressing requests. I shall mention two plain scriptures-rules which determine me to think so, viz. that in 1 Cor. x. 31. "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." And that in 1 Cor. xiv. 26. "Let all things be done unto edifying." Now, ministers are more concerned to observe these rules than other men, seeing their office is peculiarly designed for advancing the glory of God, and the edification of this church. And, is it not evident to every rational sober mind, that it is more for the glory of God and the edification of the church, to settle pastors in congregations with their own consent and good-liking, than to thrust them in upon them against their will? When we plant ministers amongst a people, whose persons they esteem, and whose ministry they affect, they will more readily hearken to their instructions, submit to their reproofs, and obey their directions, than they will do theirs against whom they have conceived the strongest aversion and prejudice. The settling of parishes in a violent manner doth stop the success of the gospel, and defeat the great and valuable ends of a gospel ministry, which are mainly these two, (1) The conversion of sinners, and reconciling them to God, Acts xxvi. 18. 2 Cor. v, 20. (2) The perfecting of the saints, and edifying of the body of Christ, Eph. iv. 12. Now, how can any of these noble ends be reached by such ministers, when either the people do not attend their ministry at all, or, if they do, yet their grudges and prejudices against them, do woefully shut their ears against all their instructions and admonitions? O, if gospel-ministers would more closely attend and pursue these great ends of their ministry, the groans of the oppressed would not so much afflict us, as they are like more and more to do, if God in his tender mercy prevent not. I grant church-authority is not to be despised; for God hath clothed his ministers with spiritual power and authority in his church: but still we are to remember, when we exercise this power in any case, we ought to do it for edification, and not for destruction, 2 Cor. x. 8. and xiii. 10. We are not to be lords over God's heritage, to do as we list; nor are we to exercise any dominion over their faith or consciences, but we are to promote their comfort and joy, 2 Pet. v. 3, 2. Cor. i. 24. The church's edification is the great rule and end of all church power. We see how closely the Apostle Paul kept this rule in his eye, in all the exercise of his church power and authority, 2 Cor. xii. 19. "We do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying." He regarded the edification, not only of the rich and great, but also of the poorest saints, and the meanest members of the body of Christ; and surely, the edification of such is not below the consideration of the most eminent ministers, or the greatest judicatory of Christ's house. We see what regard Christ had to his little ones, and what wrath he threatens against those who offend them, Matt. xviii. 6. Luke xvii. 2.

Well, then, my brethren, let us have a tender regard to these scripture-rules I have mentioned, in all our actings in judicatories, and especially with respect to the settlement of churches; and if there be any *act* or *rule* in this church, particularly *that* lately made, which hath any thing in it inconsistent with the foresaid rules (as indeed there seems to be, according to the sense now put upon it), I do earnestly wish and pray, that all my reverend brethren may resolve upon addressing the venerable assembly in the most decent and dutiful manner, that they may be pleased to rectify it, so as it may better answer the great ends we ought all to have in view, the glory of God, and the edification of the body of Christ. And this I move, without any design to reflect upon the authority of the assembly, (which we ought to treat with all due regard) or to give any offence; and neither should any take it, seeing there is none of our courts that pretend to infallibility; as they have altered, so they still can alter, their acts and rules when they see good reason for it. And the administration we live under (blessed be God) is so mild and gentle, that we have liberty to address our superiors, both civil and ecclesiastic, concerning what is gravaminous to us: and why should we not improve our liberty in addressing both of them, for removing whatever hinders the advancement of the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, to whose service we ministers are peculiarly devoted?

10*thly*, If we would promote this church's welfare, and prevent her reproach, let us join fasting, weeping and mourning, together with our prayers; as we are directed both in text and context, Joel ii. 12. "Let us weep betwixt the porch and the altar," in sight of all the people, and bewail those sins and backslidings, which grieve God,

[illegible] him to give up this church to reproach. And, [illegible] of our sins, we have cause to confess and lament our impenitency, and neglect of observing days of fasting and humiliation for our own sins, and the sins of the land and church of which we are members and office-bearers. Alas, what a bad token is it! When judgments are visibly impending over us, that there is so little of an inclination or willingness to appoint and keep such days with our people, for enumerating, confessing, and spreading out our heinous and God provoking-sins before the Lord, such as our ignorance, unbelief, atheism, unthankfulness, unfruitfulness, treacherous dealing, &c. See a more full enumeration of our sins in the postscript of this discourse.

11thly, If we would advance the church's credit, and avert her reproach, let us all be careful to preach to our people by our lives as well as by our lips, to confirm our doctrine in the pulpit by our conversation out of it. Let us mind, that a loose way of living will soon demolish all that is built by the most lively way of preaching; for our people have eyes to see how we walk, as well as ears to hear what we say. Hence it was that the Apostle Paul gave such a weighty advice to Timothy, a young minister, 1 Tim. iv. 12. "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." And as the Apostle advised others, so he lived himself: observe how he appeals to the Thessalonians, among whom he had laboured, concerning the exactness and exemplariness of his ministerial walk, 1 Thess. ii. 10. "You are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe." And this holy and shining conversation of the Apostle contributed much to the success of his doctrine. Alas, shining doctrine, without a shining walk, will never enlighten nor enliven our hearers. If, after we have preached against pride, passion, covetousness, injustice, intemperance, lightness, unchastity, contention, uncharitableness, unmercifulness, malice, revenge, &c. we ourselves should be found guilty of any of these evils; if we be worldly, intemperate, malicious, unjust, contentious, or unmerciful; if we be light or frothy; if any corrupt communication proceeded out of our mouths; then we just pull down with the one hand, what we build up with the other. We tempt people to think, we do not ourselves believe what we would persuade them to believe; that we only talk of these things because it is our trade, and we get our living by it. It is not easy to express the mischievous influence which looseness in a minister's walk hath upon the interest of religion amongst a people; hence it is that the spirit of God saith to ministers, Isa. lii. 11. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." And Christ saith to his disciples, who were designed to be ministers, Matt. v. 16. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works." It adds greatly to the credit and prosperity of a church, when her ministers have holy and shining conversations; whereas it exposeth her to sad reproach when it is otherwise. "Lord give not up thy heritage in Scotland to this reproach."

Quest. When may it be said, that a minister's conversation is of a shining character? and how shall we attain it?

Ans. In order thereunto, let us, 1*st*, study meekness, patience, and peaceableness of spirit; and, when we meet with provocations, let us labour to rule our spirits, and keep reason upon the throne. Let us neither be soon angry, nor long angry. To be patient under reproaches and bad usage, and ready to forgive injuries, is such a sweet Christian disposition, as would very much adorn our character. That is a noble advice the apostle gives, 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves."

2*dly*, Let us study justice and righteousness in all our dealings with others, even to a shoe latchet, that we may be able to appeal to our people, with the prophet Samuel, whom have we injured or wronged? So doth Paul appeal to the Thessalonians, with respect to his just dealing among them, 1 Thess. ii. 10. The least appearance of injustice or unfair dealing in a minister, is most reproachful to his character, and exceedingly marrs his success; and therefore the apostle directs the man of God to be just, and follow after righteousness, 1 Tim. vi. 11. Tit. i. 8.

3*dly*, Let us be clothed with humility, which is a shining ornament in a minister's conversation. We are not to be puffed up with our parts or attainments, or to despise those who fall short of us; but we must be willing to become all things to all men, and servants to every one, for the good of their souls. And thus we would resemble our master who was meek and lowly, and taught us by his example to humble ourselves to serve one another. It has been observed, that God uses to bless the labours of those of meaner parts, who are humble and diligent, when those of greater parts, who are lifted up, are blasted.

4*thly*, Temperance, sobriety, and chastity, are very adorning to a minister's walk. He ought to have power over his appetite, to restrain it, as to eating or drinking, and never to be enslaved to any base lust, Tit. i. 7, 8. 2 Tim. ii. 22.

5*thly*, If we would adorn our character, let us be disengaged from the world as much as may be, that we may attend our spiritual work of serving God, and winning of souls without distraction. Our eyes should not be dazzled with the glittering lustre of gold and silver; but we ought to show a generous contempt of these things, as those who firmly believe the great and everlasting things of that world we preach to others, and unto which we press men to elevate their minds and affections. What a reproach is it to those who preach this doctrine to others, and live contrary to it themselves?

6*thly*, Let us study, when we converse with others, to mix something that is spiritual and edifying. We are called the salt of the earth, and therefore ought to season the places and companies where we are, with some savoury and useful discourse; this is much better than foolish talking and jesting, which is not convenient for those of our character, Eph v. 4. For a minister to have nothing of God, of Christ, of heaven, or of serious godliness in his mouth, but when he is in the pulpit, is an evidence that he is not very zealous to promote the great ends of his office, the glory of God and the salvation of men's souls; for, if he were, out of the abundance of the heart the mouth would speak, and be ready to drop something now and then to the honour of God, and the confirmation of those truths we deliver in public.

Thus I have mentioned several things that would make a minister's conversation of a shining character; which, if studied would tend very much to promote the reputation and welfare of this church, and to avert her reproach. And,

having said so much to my brethren of the ministry, I shall now conclude with,

A WORD TO THE PEOPLE.

LET me exhort you to join with ministers in this necessary work of weeping and wrestling for the church of God, and especially for his heritage in the land of your nativity. Though the command in the text be directed to ministers, yet elsewhere we find it extended to the people of all ranks, Psal. cxxii. 6. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper, that love thee. Well, then, let me beseech you all to weep, and cry with us, "spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach." And with your tears and prayers see that ye join your most earnest endeavours, to promote the credit and welfare of the church, according to the station wherein God hath set you. 1. Are ye magistrates? Exert yourselves, both by your authority and example, to discourage vice and immorality. 2. Are ye elders? See to assist ministers, by reproving sin, and informing against it. 3. Are ye teachers of youth? Labour to instil the principles of religion and virtue into the young generation very early, and train them up in the abhorrence of vice, and whatever hath a tendency to it. 4. Are ye parents and heads of families? See that young ones be taught both to read and pray; catechise both children and servants upon the sabbath evening; call them to an account what they remember of the sermons they have heard; perform family-worship with them in all its parts: be careful to reprove sin, such as lying, swearing, sabbath-breaking, neglect of prayer, &c. And whatever be your walk or station in the world, I exhort you to set apart time for mourning and weeping for your own sins, and the sins of the land, which may provoke the Lord to leave us and give us up to reproach. Pray for the ministers which are planted among you; and pray earnestly for a faithful soul-winning ministry to be raised up in the church, and planted in vacant congregations; and that all impediments in the way may be removed, and the incoming of a corrupt ministry prevented, pray that the Spirit of God may be poured down from on high upon us and all our endeavours, which would retrieve the credit of the church, and avert her reproach. Amen.

POSTSCRIPT.

CONTAINING AN ENUMERATION OF SOME SINS TO BE CONFESSED AND MOURNED OVER, UPON FAST-DAYS, AND OTHER OCCASIONS.

1. THE abounding atheism of many in the land, both in heart and life: the practical atheism of those who live as if there were no God nor Providence to govern the world, who put the creatures, the world, and self in God's room, and ascribe their mercies to fortune, their own wisdom and industry, rather than to God.

2. The gross immoralities which abound among us, as drunkenness, uncleanness, lying, backbiting, defrauding, profane swearing, false swearing in matters of commerce, profaning the Lord's day, by walking and travelling unnecessarily, transporting goods, and otherwise.

3. Our woful security in these evils, and obstinate cleaving to predominant sins, despising all reproofs for them, and warnings to forsake them.

4. The inordinate setting of our hearts upon earthly enjoyments and sensual satisfaction, to the sad neglect of these things, wherein our chief happiness doth consist, viz. the enjoying of God, and communion with him.

5. The great ignorance of God and of gospel truths, which continueth in a land of such light. The great ignorance of Jesus Christ, of his mediation and offices, and of the way of making use of Christ for justification and sanctification, for strength in duties, and for access to and acceptance with God.

6. The neglect of the worship of God in families, and in secret, and the great restraining of prayer before God.

7. Our unfruitfulness under the means of grace.

8. The backslidings of all ranks from God, and leaving their first love; the great decay of the life and power of godliness, and of holy and tender walking, both in ministers and professors.

9. The sloth and contempt of many, in not attending upon God's holy ordinances.

10. Our attending ordinances for the fashion, and not making them trysting places for meeting with God, and means of communion with him.

11. Our contenting ourselves with man's teaching, and not seeking after the teachings and influences of the spirit, in hearing of the word.

12. Our sinning away the Holy Spirit from ordinances; our not lamenting for his withdrawing, nor wrestling for his return.

13. Our formality in prayer, and not making use of the intercession of Christ, nor employing the assistance of the spirit in this duty.

14. Our resting upon an outward attendance of ordinances, and a name to live, without seeking after a work of grace and regeneration in our souls.

15. Our not valuing the news of redeeming love which the gospel brings to us, nor embracing glorious Christ as offered to us therein.

16. Our not living a life of faith upon Christ, nor making continual use of his meritorious blood, and imputed righteousness for our justification, sanctification, subduing sin, performing duty, acceptance with God, and peace of conscience.

17. Our going about to establish our own righteousness, by putting our religious duties, our just dealing, or moral honesty, in the room of glorious Christ, who alone is the Lord our righteousness.

18. Our unfrequency and sloth in celebrating the memorials of redeeming love, and of the death and sufferings of our blessed Lord, in the holy supper.

19. The profanation of the Lord's table, by the approach of those who are ignorant, prayerless, or ungodly livers.

20. Our neglecting solemn preparation for this near approach, by self-examination, secret humiliation, and wrestling with God for his presence, and renewing covenant with him.

21. Our not keeping up the impression of sacramental vows, and of the matchless love of Christ displayed to us, so as to be thereby constrained to live to Him that died for us.

22. Our not imitating the pattern of the holy Jesus, in his meekness, holiness, self-denial, mortification to the world, patience under wrongs, thankfulness for mercies, diligence in prayer, zeal for God's service, concern for the good of others, willingness to die, and resignation to God's will.

Postscript.

23. The neglect of masters and families in instructing their children and servants, and using their authorities to suppress sin amongst them.

24. Our unthankful forgetting of the many signal deliverances which God hath wrought for this church and land; and our unthankful abuse of the many valuable mercies we still enjoy.

25. Our perfidious dealing with God, in breaking both national and personal covenant; and our want of zeal for maintaining truth, purity and piety, in opposition to abounding error, superstition and profanity.

26. Our indifferency about the coming of Christ's kingdom; our little praying for the peace and prosperity of Jerusalem; and our minding our own things, more than the things of Jesus Christ.

27. The heaven-daring attacks made upon the gospel revelation, by infidels among ourselves.

28. Our impenitency and insensibleness under spiritual judgments, and manifold tokens of God's anger, such as, withdrawing his spirit from ministers and professors, blasting of ordinances, dividing us in his anger, giving us up to spiritual oppression and persecution, letting loose a spirit of error and delusion, &c.

FINIS.

A

SACRAMENTAL DIRECTORY;

OR, A

Treatise

CONCERNING

THE SANCTIFICATION

OF A

COMMUNION SABBATH.

BY

The Reverend JOHN WILLISON, Late Minister

OF DUNDEE.

Montrose:

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1815.

A SACRAMENTAL DIRECTORY.

PREFACE.

THIS directory being first published in the year 1716, the preface was added to the second edition of it in the year 1726, in which now I have made some additions and alterations. The book itself also is considerably enlarged from what it was at first, namely in proving and pressing the necessity of communicating, in obedience to our Lord's dying command; and it is to be regretted that there should be still so much need for urging it. Ah, that so many Christians, who profess respect to Christ as their Saviour, should live in the neglect of his dying charge! Perhaps, my friends, upon viewing the hazard of eating unworthily, some of you may think you are on the safest side to keep away from this ordinance altogether; not considering, that the danger of unworthy refusing is fully as great as that of unworthy receiving: for you see those who make light of Christ's invitation to the marriage-supper escaped no better than he that came without the wedding-garment, Mat. xxii. 7, 13. Likewise I have adduced many arguments to press frequency in communicating, and have answered objections against it; which, if you duly consider, you must own that frequent partaking is most advantageous and necessary for the exigencies of your souls, and highly acceptable unto God. If there be "a book of remembrance written before the Lord, for them that feared the Lord, thought upon his name, and spoke one to another," Mal. iii. 16. we have no ground to question, but there is a book of remembrance written for them that love their Redeemer, and often remember his death and sufferings in the sacrament which he hath instituted for that end. And as I would have you come frequently to this solemn ordinance, so I would always have you coming with suitable preparation; and, for your help in this matter, I have composed the following directory. Special care should be taken, that our frequency do not breed formality, but that we be as devout as frequent; and, though we communicate never so frequently, that we trust not to former preparations, but that we examine and prepare ourselves of new for every communion.

But seeing it is in vain to exhort Christians to frequent receiving, unless ministers do also frequently administrate this ordinance, and call their people to partake thereof; it may be proper to speak something of the necessity of frequent dispensing of the Lord's supper. All the arguments and reasons which I bring in the ensuing treatise, to prove the necessity of peoples frequent partaking, do as much prove the necessity of ministers frequent dispensing: seeing, if ministers do not dispense, the people cannot partake: but, besides these, I shall, with all humility and becoming respect, add some things here, which, I hope, may be of weight with myself, and other ministers of the gospel, to persuade to frequent dispensing.

I. The inspired apostles of Christ, and other pastors of the church, that were contemporary with them, did (in obedience to the intimation which their Lord and master gave them at the first institution) frequently dispense the Lord's supper to the Christians in their days; yea, it was their ordinary custom to do it every Lord's day, Acts ii. 47. Acts xx. 7. The inspired penman of that book doth mention the breaking of bread as a constant concomitant to the apostles' doctrine and prayers, Acts ii. 4 .

II. In imitation of the apostles, the pastors of the ancient church did keep up the practice of celebrating the Lord's Supper every Lord's day, through the second, third, fourth, and fifth centuries. To evidence this (if it were called in question) I might cite many passages from the histories of Eusebius and Socrates, and the writings of Justin Martyr, Cyrian, Chrysostom, Hierom, Ambrose, Augustine, and several others. who on that account used to call the Lord's day *Dies Panis*: but, it being a matter of fact so notour, I need not blot paper with quotations to this purpose. Nay, it is plain, from the foresaid ancient writers, that the Lord's supper continued to be dispensed in some places, not only every Lord's day, but also every day of the week, and that for several centuries: which practice Augustine (who lived in the fifth century) doth not seem so heartily to approve; for *Lib. de Ecclesiasticis*, *cap.* 53. he hath these words: "*Quotidie communionem Euchristicæ nec vitupero nec lauda; omnibus tamen Dominicis Dieubus communicandum suadeo*," *i. e.* "I neither praise nor dispraise daily receiving of the Lord's supper; but I would have all men to communicate each Lord's day." Moreover, learned men, who are best acquainted with the antiquities of the Christian church, do observe, that unfrequency in celebrating this sacrament did creep in together with other antichristian errors and defections, into the church of Christ.

III. I shall therefore pass the ages of darkness and defection, and come to the two last centuries of the church, and take a short view of the practice of some Protestant churches since our reformation from popery. I grant, the Lord's supper hath not been celebrated so oft since that time, as in the first ages of the church. We have the reason pointed at in a book which represents the practice of the church of Geneva, particularly in celebrating the sacrament of the Lord's supper, which was four times in the year. The book is entitled, *Laws and statutes of Geneva*,

ancient ecclesiastic discipline, translated out of the French, and printed London, *anno* 1643 p. 7. we have these words: "For as the supper hath been instituted by our Saviour Jesus Christ to be frequented and used, and also it hath been observed in the primitive Christian church, until such time as the devil hath turned all upside down, setting up the mass instead thereof, which fault ought to be corrected, and also the rare celebrating thereof: we have determined and ordained, that it shall be ministered four times a-year."

Again, let us look into the practice of the reformed churches of France, whilst their liberty continued. In the acts of the national synod held at Charentoun, printed London, *anno* 1644. cap. 12. art. 14. we have these words: "although it hath been a custom in most of the churches in these parts, to celebrate the holy communion only four times every year; yet it is much wished and desired that it might be used more frequently."

As for the reformed churches in the United Provinces, or the Dutch churches, we see what was their practice, in *corpus disciplinæ*, published by the ministers and elders of the Dutch congregation in London, anno 1645, cap. 3. sect. 2. art. 3. "It is appointed that the Lord's supper be administered every two months (*i. e.* six times a-year) wherein the churches under persecution are left to their liberty."

As to the churches in New England, we have account of their practice, *Brief narrative of the practice of the churches in New England*, printed London, anno 1651. p. 8. "As for the administration of the Lord's supper, because Christ desires us to do it often, we commonly have it monthly, though we tie not ourselves to any set time, but alter it as often as reason appears."

Let us come to the church of Scotland, and consider the ancient practice of our worthy reformers in this matter. And, in the *first* place, if we look to the old Scots liturgy or the *book of common order*, which was written by John Knox, first for the order of the English kirk at Geneva, whereof he was minister, and approved by John Calvin, printed at Geneva, *anno* 1556, and afterwards received and used by the reformed king of Scotland · we will find, in the 10th chapter, concerning the manner of administration of the Lord's supper, these words: "the day when the Lord's supper is ministered, which is commonly used once a month, or so oft as the congregation shall think expedient, the minister useth to say as followeth," &c. From which it appears, that the first practice of our reformers, after the reformation of this nation from popery, was to administrate the Lord's supper commonly once a month. Afterwards, it seemeth, they found that the people did not so generally fall in with the foresaid order for monthly sacraments as could be wished: and therefore in the General Assembly which was held at Edinburgh in December 1562, they thought fit to condescend to a less frequent administration of this ordinance; for, in their act thereanent, recorded by Cald. in his history, page 816, we have these words: "It is ordained, that the communion be four times ministered in the year within borough towns, and twice in country parishes"

Here, indeed, there is a distinction made betwixt the frequency in boroughs and country parishes: but, in the first book of discipline, which was compiled by severals of our famous reformers, by way of address to the civil government, and much about the same time approved and established both by church and state, we find four times in the year condescended upon for the sacrament, without any distinction of congregations, *cap.* 2. *parag.* 2. They tell us indeed, that the order of Geneva, concerning the ministration of the sacraments, was at that time used in some of their churches, *i. e.* the *book of common order* forecited, which declareth for monthly sacraments; but, in *cap.* 11. *parag.* 5. they give their judgment for quarterly communions, in these words; "four times in the year we think sufficient to the administration of the Lord's table, which we desire to be distincted, that the superstition of times may be avoided so far as may be; for your honours are not ignorant how superstitiously the people ran to that action at Pasch, even as if the time gave virtue to the sacrament; and how the rest of the whole year they are careless and negligent, as if it appertained not to them but at that time only. We think it therefore most expedient, that the first Sunday of March be appointed for one time to that service, the first Sunday of June for another, the first Sunday of September for the third, the first Sunday of December for the fourth. We do not deny but any several kirk, for reasonable causes, may change the time, and may minister oftner; but we study to repress superstition."

From all which we may see what it was that came to be the more general, settled and declared mind of the church of Scotland after the reformation, concerning the frequency of the Lord's supper, viz. that it should at least be celebrated once in the quarter, allowing liberty to any minister or congregation to administer it oftner, if they thought fit. Some perhaps may doubt if it was altogether right in our reformers to reduce the primitive practice of celebrating the Lord's supper once a week to once in the month, and afterwards to once in the quarter; but we are to suppose they had weighty reasons for it at that time: but there are many now of the mind, that we of this age cannot so well account for reducing the ancient practice of this church in administrating this sacrament once in the quarter, to once in the year. Is not this a lamentable deviating from the sentiments and practice of our great and zealous reformers? What can our unfrequency in celebrating this Christian commemorating ordinance be imputed to so much as a sad decay of love to a crucified Jesus? Alas, that love to our unchangeable lovely Redeemer should cool by length of time! We sadly verify what he foretold of the latter days, Mat. xxiv. 12. "Iniquity shall abound, and the love of many shall wax cold." But oh! are not Christ's benefits as great as ever, his blood as fresh and efficacious as ever? Why then should not Christian love be as warm as ever, and their respect to his gospel institutions as strong as ever? O that the Christians of this age were sensible from whence we are fallen; how far we have departed from the zeal of our ancestors, and left our first love to a crucified Christ; so that all ranks were concerned to revive and recover it, in and by the use of the means which God hath appointed for that end; that by degrees we might again attain our reformers frequency of celebrating this Christ-exalting and love-inflaming ordinance, and so change our annual to quarterly communions! I know it is affecting to some hearty well-wishers of the prosperity and credit of the church of Scotland, to think that a church, so excellently well constituted, and which had attained to a greater pitch of reformation in other things than her neighbours, should yet lie behind them in this point.

I acknowledge that matters were so put out of order in this church, by reason of the long oppression she groaned under, and the great defections of many, before the late happy revolution, that ministers in several places were afraid to dispense this sealing ordinance to their flocks for some time: and finding themselves very much straitened betwixt the indisposition of their people, and the hazard of a total omission, they came to an unfrequent celebration of this ordinance, perhaps but once in two or three years, till this unfrequency became customary and too general. Serious Christians indeed flocked unto those places where it was dispensed, whereby their loss at home was in some measure repaired.

But the General Assembly, being sensible of the evil of this unfrequency, began to take notice of it, and make several excellent acts for the more frequent celebration of the Lord's supper, as in the years 1710, 1711, 1712, and 1721. Though these acts have not hitherto had their full effect, yet they have been so far effectual, as to bring the ministers generally to administrate this ordinance in their congregations at least once in the year. I know several worthy ministers have some years ago given a laudable example to their brethren, in celebrating the Lord's supper in their congregations twice a year; though indeed it is to be regretted that so few hitherto have copied after it.

The authority and judgment of the great Calvin (whom the church of Scotland doth most deservedly regard and esteem) concerning annual and frequent communicating, hath very great weight with me: we have it in his institutions, lib. 4. cap. 17. par. 46. mihi fol. 507, after he had shewed what was the practice of the ancient church in purest times, he hath these words: "*Et sane hæc consuetudo quæ semel quotannis communicare jubet, certissimum est diaboli inventum, cujuscunque tandem ministerio invecta fuerit.—Quum certa lex de una quotannis communicatione posita est, qua factum est, ut fere omnes quum semel communicaverunt, quasi in reliquum anni tempus pulchre defuncti, in utramque aurem securi dormiant. Longe aliter factum opportuit: singulis ad minimum, hebdomadibus proponenda erat Christianorum cœtui mensa domini, declarandæ promissiones quæ nos in ea spiritualiter pascerent; nullus quidem necessitate cogendus, sed cohortandi omnes, & stimulandi; objurgandus, etiam ignavorum torpor.*" *i. e.* "And indeed this custom which commands to communicate once only in the year, is most certainly the invention of the devil, whoever was instrumental to introduce it. When there was a law made for communicating once in the year, it came to pass, that almost all, when they had once communicated, turned slothful and slept securely throughout the rest of the year. But it should have been far otherwise: every week, at least, the Lord's table should have been set before the assembly of Christians, and the promises therein set forth upon which we should feed spiritually: no man indeed should be compelled to come by force, but all should be exhorted and excited; and the sloth of all the negligent reproved." And upon the margin, we have these words; "*Papistica autem consuetudo, quotannis semel communicare jubens, execrandum est inventum;*" *i. e.* "The popish custom, which enjoins men to communicate once a-year, is a cursed invention." And certainly the godly and judicious Calvin, his observation is most just: for when we call our people to come to the Lord's table but once in the year, and there believingly to remember a crucified Christ for the remission of their sins, the most part are tempted to think, when they have done that, their main work is over for that year, and so fall asleep and turn secure through the rest of the year: upon which account he calls this *popish custom, a cursed invention*, and an *invention of the devil.* It is to be hoped, that the church of Scotland, which so much abhors popery and all popish customs, will at length throw out this of *annual communicating*, as well as they have done others.

Objections answered.

Object. I. By divine appointment the passover was celebrated but once in the year: and now the Lord's supper is come in room of the passover.

Ans. 1st, It must be remembered, that as the passover served to signify and prefigure Christ's death and sufferings to the Jews, and their spiritual redemption thereby; so it was instituted to preserve the memorial of their temporal freedom and deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, which God wrought for them on the fourteenth of the first month, Exod. xii. 17, 18. And therefore he appointed them to keep the passover annually upon that day of the month. But the Lord hath fixed no certain day of the year for the Lord's supper under the New Testament times; but only in general hath enjoined a frequent celebration of it.

2dly, The Jews did not need a very frequent celebration of the passover to put them in mind of the coming, death, and sufferings of the Messiah; seeing, besides the passover, they had, by divine appointment, many other lively types, figures, and institutions, which were designed for that very same end, such as the sacrifices of slain beasts, which they frequently witnessed in the temple: yea, every day they had, both morning and evening, a lamb killed in the temple, its blood poured out, and its flesh burnt on the altar, for a sacrifice to God for their sins; which did in a most eminent and lively manner represent to them the death, bloodshed, sufferings, and bitter agonies of Christ, the great sacrifice for the sins of the world, just in the same manner as the passover did; only it was not eaten in every house, as that was. So that we see a plain reason why the Jews did not stand in need of such a frequent celebration of the passover to be a remembrance of Christ under the law, as we do of the Lord's supper under the New Testament times, when we have no other ordinance instituted to keep up the remembrance of Christ's death and sufferings, but this alone: and therefore it ought much more frequently to be celebrated than the Jewish passover was.

3dly, Supposing the Jews had no other ordinance but the passover, to keep up the remembrance of the Messiah that was to come; yet, seeing our Messiah hath now come, and actually sacrificed himself upon the cross for our redemption, hath fully completed the work, and made far more bright displays of his love and glory to us Christians than he did to the Jews under the law, and hath instituted the Lord's supper for a memorial for what he hath done and suffered, limiting us to no time, but enjoining frequency in the use of it; I say, seeing the case is so with us, we are under many strong ties to be more zealous and frequent in celebrating the memorials of Christ's love to us in the Lord's supper, than the Jews were to do it in the passover. The apostles and primitive Christians were so sensible of this, that they thought themselves bound to remember Christ crucified once a week in their gospel-passover, which the Jews did but once a year in theirs. From all

which, we see no argument can be brought, from the Jews' annual custom in celebrating the passover, to justify annual communion.

Obj. II. To administrate the Lord's supper frequently, would tend to diminish the respect and reverence which is due to it, and at length bring it into contempt among the people.

Ans. 1*st*, If we make conscience of our duty, our Lord will see to the credit of his own ordinance.

2*dly*, Will any say, that the apostles and primitive pastors brought this ordinance into contempt by celebrating of it every Lord's day? Did they not esteem and prize it much higher than we who celebrate it but once a-year? And why should we think, that the administrating of the Lord's supper twice, thrice, or four times in the year, would at all derogate from the credit of it.

3*dly*, Were this reason valid against the frequent dispensing of this ordinance, why not against other ordinances also? And so we should but seldom preach, or read the scriptures in the audience of the people; we should seldom pray or sing psalms with our flocks, lest we contribute to lessen the esteem and reverence due to these ordinances, by the frequent use of them.

4*thly*, Are not there many serious exercised Christians, who communicate almost every Sabbath during the summer season, when they can have the occasion, in neighbouring congregations, who can tell us that they reap spiritual advantage by so doing; that their esteem of the ordinance is much increased, and that they do not at all find that their frequent partaking tends to bring this awful institution into contempt with them? And why should it be thought that their communicating twice, or even four times a-year, in their own congregations, at a convenient distance, would produce that bad effect? No: I am persuaded it would not: for the oftener that this sacrament is worthily received, instead of diminishing our respect, it increaseth our reverence of God, and our affection to our Saviour. I am sure, a conscientious owning of God's authority is a greater sign of holy reverence, than the neglect of his institutions.

5*thly*, We may perhaps think to keep up the credit of this solemn ordinance, among those who are not the better sort, by seldom dispensing it; but it should be minded, that is not true esteem which ariseth merely from the rarity of a thing, but that which springeth from knowledge of its intrinsic worth, and experience of its usefulness: and those people who have no heart-acquaintance with precious Christ, and the ends, uses and success of his ordinance, will never have a due respect unto them. Let us by all means recommend to such persons the worth and excellency of Christ, shew them their daily need of him, and his daily usefulness to them, and press their making suitable prepation, by searching themselves and closing with him, before they be admitted to partake; and then we need not much fear the freqnency would detract from the reputation of this ordinance: for frequent experience of its usefulness would beget the highest esteem of it, and sharpen the appetites of people for it. As he prayeth best, and with most delight, that prayeth oftenest; so a worthy-communicant increaseth in the love of God and of religion, the oftener he receives: the more acquaintance and communion he attains to with Jesus Christ in this ordinance, he values it still the more. I cannot think this blessed sacrament will be undervalued by frequent repetitions, but by persons most unworthy, who ought not much to be regarded; for no true-hearted Israelite would loathe his heavenly manna because it is common, and afforded us in plenty.

Lastly, And, with all due submission to others, I do strongly incline to have a great regard to the judgment of the famous Mr. Calvin, and many learned and godly divines, who are so far from thinking that annual-communicating is a mean to preserve the esteem of this ordinance, and prevent peoples carelessness and formality in receiving, that they rather judge it a device of Satan, to cherish sloth and security in sin, to stifle true Christian love, to discourage endeavours after serious godliness, and to obstruct very much the life and continued exercise of religion.

Object. III. We see how much the other sacrament, baptism, is contemned, because of its frequent repetition; and so might it also fare with this.

Ans. 1*st*, If the people's contempt of sacraments be a good argument against the frequency of one sacrament, it is as good against the frequency of another: and so we ought to set up for the administration of baptism but once in the year, to preserve the esteem and solemnity of it, as much as we do for that of the other sacrament. Are they not both precious institutions of the same Lord? Both seals of the same covenant? Why then should we put the one at so great distance from the other, and seek to raise its honour so much above the other?

2*dly*, Though baptism be frequently administrate, yet the Lord doth still keep up the reputation of his ordinance, so that no man is easy to be excluded from it: Yea, people generally have stronger impressions of the necessity of this sacrament than of the other, notwithstanding of all our endeavours to maintain the credit of the other more than this; which may teach us, that we ought still to go on in the way of our duty and leave it to God to see to the credit of his own institutions.

3*dly*, It is not so much because of the frequent administration of baptism, that people do slight it, as because they, not being to partake of it themselves, do commonly apprehend they are no more but spectators (though indeed there is much more incumbent on them:) but were they bound to partake frequently of this sacrament, as of the Lord's supper, and that under the pain of Christ's highest displeasure, if they either did neglect it, or perform it slightly; all sober people would reckon themselves obliged to attend it when they had the opportunity of doing it, and that with some awe and fear too.

Object. IV. There is more slightness and formality amongst the communicants in those churches where the Lord's supper is frequently dispensed, than where it is seldom.

Ans. 1*st*, This is not generally true; for as there may be much slightness and formality in some places where it is but seldom dispensed, so there is much devotion and seriousness in other places where it is frequently administered.

2*dly*, The people's slightness in receiving, may proceed very much from the pastors's slightness in administrating. Were due pains taken to keep back the unworthy, to inform people of the greatness of the work, to warn them of the danger of unworthy receiving, to observe fasts, preparation and thanksgiving days; to chuse suitable texts, preach awakening doctrine, make particular application, and to fence the Lord's table with awful solemnity, perhaps there would not be such slightness among the people in receiving.

Object. V. It will not be easy to get different texts and subjects suitable to such frequent communions.

Ans. A crucified Jesus is a subject most suitable, and one so large and copious as cannot be exhausted. The apostle, while he preached at Cornith, determined to know nothing among the people, "but Christ and him crucified," 1 Cor. ii. 2. He resolved to make this the great and constant subject of his sermons; and can any think it too much to preach upon this theme, twice, thrice, or four times a year?

Certainly a crucified Jesus is the spring and scope, the matter and end, of all gospel-preaching. Every thing we say is reducible to him; and the design of all is to exalt him, who is the great founder of our religion, and the foundation of all our hopes: when we dehort from sins and vices, we do it mainly because they were the cause of Christ's sufferings, and do tend to crucify him afresh: when we exhort to duty, we do it chiefly from this topic, that we should live to him that died for us: and that the love of Christ should constrain us to follow his pattern, and obey his precepts. We press duties as a necessary fruit of faith in Christ, and of love to him; and we teach, that they are only to be performed by his strength, and accepted through his merits. Nay, Christ crucified is the scope and substance of the whole Bible; "for to him give all the prophets witness," Acts x. 43.

A crucified Christ is a subject so pleasant and so fertile, that we cannot be strained to preach directly thereupon many times a year, if we take a view of these thing in him, *viz.* the infinite dignity and glory of his person; the perfections of God that shine in him; the freeness and greatness of his love; his eternal undertaking; his glorious suretiship; his wonderful incarnation; his threefold office, significant metaphors and types, whereby Christ and his benefits are represented; his manifold sweet relations to his people; his mediatory fullness; his deep humiliation; his innocent life; his holy example; his heavenly doctrine; his unparalleled sufferings; his meritorious death; his victorious resurrection; his triumphant ascension; his prevalent intercession; his glorious coming again: the excellency of that covenant he hath confirmed; the sufficiency of the sacrifice he hath offered; the necessity and completeness of the righteousness he hath wrought; the innumerable benefits of his death; the unsearchable riches of his grace; his exceeding great and precious promises; the incomparable virtue of his blood; our union with him by faith; our adoption by relation to him; our justification by his merit; our santification by his spirit; our fighting and conquering under his banner; our protection under his shadow; our bearing burdens by his grace; our performing duties by his strength; our holy walk in obedience to his injunctions; the thankfulness we owe to him in heart and life; and the sweet communion believers have with him in duties and ordinances. Yea, we have blessings unspeakable, grace and glory, peace and pardon, light and life, strength and growth, riches and wisdom, joy and hope, perseverance in grace, comfort in affliction, conduct in life, throughbearing at death, resurrection from the grave, absolution at the tribunal, happiness through eternity, and all things coming to us with and by a crucified Jesus. So that in this noble subject there is a perpetual plenty and variety of suitable matter for sacramental occasion.

Object. VI. To administer the Lord's supper so frequently, would occasion very much labour and toil to the administrators.

Ans. 1*st*, Did we dispense this sacrament more frequently, probably the labour and toil would be lessened; we might come to find our people habitually in a better case for that solemn ordinance than at present generally they are: so that less pains, in exciting, instructing and preparing them for it, might be more successful than greater is now.

2*dly*, We have no cause to distrust our faithful and kind Lord, who doth not fail to give strength and furniture to his servants, as their needs require, according to his gracious promise, Deut. xxxiii. 25. "As thy days so shall thy strength be." We have experience hitherto of his pitying our weakness, supplying our wants, and helping us in time of need; so that we may assure ourselves that he will send none to warfare upon their own charges.

3*dly*, If we put the glory of our Master, the advantage of our people, and the increase of our reward, in the balance with our labour, I hope we will not think it deserveth once to be mentioned. Though we had no more to expect, it is a great reward in itself, to be honoured, to bring glory to our Redeemer, and to advance the salvation of immortal souls: and seeing the season of our capacity for either is so very short, with what cheerfulness should we bestir ourselves to ply that blessed work? What a pleasure would it be to see Christ in esteem, sin in disgrace, the world in contempt, and religion in prosperity amongst men? Well, then, would we contribute thereto in our station; would we have a lively remembrance of God, and Christ, and heaven, kept up in the world; would we have our people closely and constantly to bear in mind the evil of sin, the preciousness of immortal souls, the love of God to mankind-sinners, the death and sufferings of the son of God in our room:—Let us frequently administer the Lord's supper in our congregations.

Would we help the carelessness of our people's minds, and the weakness of their memories; would we give our hearers a compendious and affecting view of the Christian religion; would we bring them to have fresh and lasting impressions of its truths and doctrines;—I know no more effectual means for it: for, in this solemn ordinance, we have man's fall and disease, together with his recovery and remedy, set forth to the life; and that in such a way as makes impression on the outward senses, so that the eye may affect the heart.

Would we have sin and vice kept under constant rebukes among our people, let us keep their eyes always fixed upon the bleeding wounds of a crucified Jesus: would we have them carefully to maintain family-religion, secret duties, and a holy tender walk; let us constrain them to it by the love of a dying Jesus, frequently set before their eyes in this ordinance. This, through the divine blessing, would be an excellent means and help to carry about with us always the dying of the Lord Jesus, and to make the print of his wounds deep and lasting on our hearts.

If we duly ponder these things, I hope it will appear, that the advantage of the frequent celebration of the Lord's supper will abundantly recompense our small toil and pains.

Object. VII. The unworthiness of the people is a great discouragement to the frequent celebration of the Lord's supper among them: we have but few that are in any measure fit to be admitted to it.

Ans. 1*st*, If this reason were valid, it would conclude as strongly against the dispensing of this ordinance at all, as against the frequency of it: and we know, an argument that would prove too much proves nothing.

2*dly*, I know many are unworthy, but all are not alike; and the unfitness of many cannot excuse us from administrating to those that are in some measure fit. As it is a sin for parents to keep back from their children their due and necessary food, because of some unworthy persons that are in the family; so it is a sin for pastors to withhold the soul-nourishing meal from those of their people that have a right to it: for, though not a few do slight and abuse it, yet there are others hungry and needful of it; and these ought not to be denied the advantage of frequent partaking, for the fault of their neighbours.

It is the saying of one, that we find fault upon good ground with the papists for denying one of the elements to the people: and how can we justify those that deny both elements to their people, at least for a long time?

3*dly*, Though the number of our communicants be small, that should not discourage us from our duty; for the divine blessing is not tied to numbers. God did own the institution of the passover, though there were but few that eat it together; and our blessed Saviour had but a small number that did partake with him at the first communion: but, for our encouragement in that case, he graciously promiseth, that, "where two or three are met together in his name, he will own them with his presence and blessing."

Object. VIII. To administrate this sacrament so frequently as before mentioned, would require considerable expences to furnish communion-elements, and otherwise; and we have no sufficient fund for that charge.

Ans. 1*st*, Though we should be put to more charge this way than formerly, I hope no faithful minister will say, that this consideration should be laid in balance with the glory of God, and good of souls; we should all be willing to spend and be spent for Christ: and whatever we expend of our private goods this way, is surely lent to the Lord, who will repay it.

2*dly*, The law provides a fund in every parish for such expences; and, where it is not settled, our judges are very favourable to the church, and give a liberal allowance to such ministers as do apply for it: and, no doubt, if the sacrament were more frequently celebrated, they would not grudge to augment the fund, when it is not sufficient.

3*dly*, If a sufficient fund cannot be had otherwise, let collections be made in parishes for defraying this charge, as Eusebius tells us was done by the primitive Christians in this case; and surely there is no honest hearted Christian or communicant but would contribute liberally for that effect, rather than the Lord's work should be hindered.

Lastly, We may see from the old acts of assembly, that the General Assembly 1638 had this very objection under their consideration, and declareth that the charges should rather be paid out of that day's collection, than that the congregation want the more frequent use of the sacrament. But I hope the General Assemblies of this church will in due time take this and other objections under further consideration, provide effectual answers and remedies thereunto; so that this solemn ordinance shall be more frequently celebrated amongst us than it is at present: and I wish all may pray fervently, that, together with the foresaid laudable practice, something of the warm love and zeal of the ancient Christians may be happily revived in our land.

Before I conclude this preface, there is another thing I would advertise the reader, that in the following treatise I have endeavoured to keep by the form of sound words in use amongst us, avoiding both the extremes of Antinomianism and Legalism, seeing the principles of this church do guide us equally to evite both the one and the other. And it must be acknowledged, that it is not easy to shun these extremes; for people commonly, when their zeal is excited against one extreme, are in great hazard of sliding insensibly into the other, according to the old proverb, *Dum vitant stulti vitia, in contraria currunt.* And indeed, not only fools, but some of the greatest and wisest of men, have erred in this respect: it was Mr. Baxter's zeal and great keenness against Antinomianism, that drove him to some rash and dangerous assertions on the other side. And this should be a warning to us, always to take heed to ourselves, and be careful to guard on all sides; for we are still in hazard this way, and especially when things come to warm disputations with us.

It is possible that some who preach the gospel, may pick out some of the glorious truths thereof; such as, "the freedom of grace in the salvation of sinners, our justification by the righteousness of Jesus Christ, as our surety, the excellency of faith in Christ, the privileges of the covenant, and blessings of Christ's purchase", and may make these truths almost the only subject of their preaching; and yet perhaps manage them so unhappily, as not to lead people to study regeneration of heart, holiness of life, abhorrence of sin, tenderness of walk, and the conscientious practice of all commanded duties. And surely in this way of doing they in great measure miss the design of our Saviour's incarnation, and the end of the doctrine of grace, which is, "to destroy the works of the devil, and to teach men to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world."

On the other hand, it is as possible that others may insist very much in enforcing morality, and make very fine rational harangues of its excellency; and yet make little use of gospel-motives to press it, and be at little pains to shew the gospel-principles from whence it must proceed. Likewise they may preach against vice and immorality, and warn people of the evil of it; and yet take up but little time to teach them concerning the root and spring of vice (viz. our fall in Adam, and the corruption of our natures), and the necessity of an inward change by a work of regeneration, for healing of the inward disease and plague of the heart. Also they may press holy duties very much, and yet make little mention of the true fountain and source of holiness (viz. our union with Christ by faith, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost), and speak little of the necessity of Christ's blood to wash our performances. Now both these extremes, in the way of preaching, are equally to be avoided.

It is a prevailing conceit among many, that there is no more requisite to make a man a Christian than morality, or a blameless walk before men. Morality indeed is a very comely thing, and most necessary both to beautify and preserve human societies; and therefore it is to be wished that there were much more of it in the world than we see there is, and every preacher of the gospel ought strongly to recommend the practice of it: but yet it is certain that morality is not sufficient to make a man a Chris-

tian, seeing it hath been found in heathens, and those that were ignorant of Christ and the way of salvation through faith in him.

Christianity indeed doth enforce morality and moral virtues, by the strongest motives and arguments; but in the mean time it teacheth us that these virtues are never good and acceptable to God, until they be the fruit of the Spirit's operation, and spring from their proper principles, faith in Christ, and love to him: they must be grafted in Christ as their root, have a new principle to quicken them, and a new end to direct them, before moral virtues can commence Christian graces. Unregenerate morality will never please God: let men advance it never so far, yet, till the heart be renewed, it is still but nature at best; and the fruit is always sour that grows not upon the root Christ: it can never be acceptable unto God, while Christ's strength and spirit is not sought and employed in it, nor his righteousness to cover it. So that there is a great difference betwixt morality and gospel-holiness.

A moral man, then, though he profess himself a Christian, yet he really is not so, if he lives not as one that looks for and receives daily influences from Christ; if he hath not Christ still in his undertakings, duties and affections, and be not saying, "how empty and vain are all my duties without Christ! yea, though I could do never so much, I should be utterly lost and undone, if it were not for Christ my surety, and his righteousness. I count all but loss and dung, that I may be found in him."

This church a good many years ago manifested much zeal against Antinomianism, and doctrines which seemed to tend that way: and surely it is incumbent upon all churches to watch and take care that the obligations of Christians to holiness and good works, and to all kinds of duties, both of the first and second table, should never be in the least weakened, by the preachers of the gospel, under the specious pretext of exalting free grace; seeing free grace and strict holiness do nobly consist together.

Again, on the other hand, it should equally be the church's concern to labour to prevent the spreading of Legalism, or the preaching of morality and the practice of duties in a legal strain; that is, in a way tending to the neglect of Christ and his righteousness, or to the disparagement of the doctrine of free grace. It was the flagrant reports of the abounding of that sort of moral preaching, especially among younger clergymen, that occasioned the bringing in an overture to the General Assembly 1726, for an act to discourage the same, and to direct to the right method of preaching Christ, and how to preach morality in an evangelical strain. But, though endeavours were used by severals to get this overture turned into an act, it was hindered by some leading men, lest it should reflect upon the characters of some preachers to whom they had respect: so that an act of this kind could never be got brought to a bearing until the Assembly 1737: and then those who were most zealous to promote the act, in order to get it the more unanimously agreed to, were fain to drop out of its preamble the true cause of making it, namely, the abounding of legal preaching in the land, or of a wrong strain of preaching the gospel. But, notwithstanding of this, the act itself is of excellent use, if duly regarded and put in execution; and without this the best acts in the world signify nothing. O that I could persuade all ministers and preachers of the gospel to consider and observe the foresaid act! It would surely fare the better, both with themselves and their hearers: and if no more may be done for that purpose, let me at least use some means to get the act made known to them, by transcribing it in this place.

VII. Act concerning Preaching.

"*Edinburgh, May* 21, 1736, *Sess.* 8.

"The General Assembly, being moved with zeal for the honour of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, especially at a time when the Christian revelation is openly impugned, and infidelity, deism, and other errors, do so much prevail: they do hereby recommend to all ministers and preachers, seriously to consider and observe the directory of this church concerning the preaching of the word, which is approved by the General Assembly 1645: and, in particular, that they be careful to warn their hearers against any thing tending to Atheism, Deism, Arianism, Socinianism, Arminianism, Bourignianism, Popery, Superstition, Antinomianism, or any other errors. And that, in their sermons, they insist frequently upon the truth, necessity and excellency of supernatural revelation, the supreme Deity of the Son and Holy Ghost, as well as of the father; together with the Oneness of the Godhead, our sinful and lost estate by nature, the necessity of supernatural grace, and of faith in the righteousness of Christ, without which the best works cannot please God: and that they make it the great scope of their sermons, to lead sinners from a covenant of works to a covenant of grace for life and salvation, and from sin and self to precious Christ. And the General Assembly recommends to all who preach the gospel, when they handle the doctrines of God's redeeming love, and of his free grace in the justification and salvation of sinners, the blessings of the Redeemer's purchase, and privileges of the new and better covenant, to study to manage these subjects, so as to lead their hearers unto an abhorrence of sin, the love of God and our neighbours, and the practice of universal holiness; seeing it is one great end of the gospel, to destroy the works of the devil, and to teach men to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. Upon which account, it is incumbent on all who preach the gospel, to insist, not only uponthe necessity and excellency of faith in Jesus Christ for salvation, but also upon the necessity of repentance for sin, and reformation from it; and to press the practice of all moral duties, both with respect to the first, and second table of the law, as indispensably necessary, in obedience to God's command, to testify our gratitude to him, to evidence the sincerity of our faith, and for the benefit of human society, the adorning the profession of religion, and making us meet for eternal life, seeing without holiness no man can see the Lord.

"And the assembly do seriously recommend to all ministers and preachers of the gospel, that in pressing moral duties, or obedience to the law, they shew the nature and excellency of gospel holiness, and enforce conformity to the moral law, both in heart and life, not from principles of reason only, but also and more especially of revelation. And, in order to attain thereto, it is necessary to shew men the corruption and depravity of human nature by their fall in Adam, their natural impotence for, and aversion to, what is spiritually good, and to lead them to the true and only scource of all grace and holiness, viz. union with Christ, by the holy Spirit's working faith in us, and renewing us more and more after the image of God: and to

let their hearers know, that they must first be grafted into Christ as their root, before their fruit can be savoury unto God; that they must have a new principle to animate and a new end to direct them, before their actions become gracious and acceptable in the sight of God: and that they teach them the necessity of living by faith on the Son of God, in a constant looking to and dependence upon him as the great author of all gracious influences for the performance of every duty: and withal, that after their best performances and attainments, they must count them but loss and dung, in point of justification before God; and to make it their great desire only to be found in Christ and his righteousness. And that ministers, in the application of their sermons, do endeavour rightly to divide the word of truth, speaking distinctly to such various cases of the converted and unconverted, as arise natively from the subjects they have been handling; and that, in the whole of their discourses, they take care to suit themselves to the capacity of their hearers, as to matter, method, and expression; and to the prevailing sins of the time and place, with all prudent and zealous freedom and plainness: as also, that they make gospel-subjects their main theme and study, and press with all earnestness the practice of moral duties in a gospel-manner: and that they forbear delivering any thing in public, that may tend more to amusement than edification; and beware of bringing into their sermons and public discourses, matters of doubtful disputation, which tend to gender strife rather than to promote the edification of Christians. And the assembly exhort all to study to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

"And, finally, the General Assembly recommends to all professors of divinity, to use their best endeavours to have the students under their care well acquainted with the true method of preaching the gospel, as above directed; and that presbyteries, at their private censures, enquire concerning the observation of this act."

Now, blessed be the Lord that there is such a public act in record, as a standing witness for Christ in the midst of all our backslidings and defections: may God put it in the hearts of all who preach the gospel among us, to observe the directions of it; that the scope and tendency of their sermons may still be to exalt Christ, and raise him above all in the business in our salvation; to press the doctrine of regeneration and the new birth; to preach up justification by Christ's righteousness alone, apprehended by faith, and the necessity of the inward operations of the Holy Spirit, which Christ hath purchased and promised for working that faith in us, and for bringing about the gracious change of the new birth, and carrying on a work of sanctification in us, and for enabling us to live the spiritual life! This being the scope of the act, happy were it for the land if it were also the main scope of our sermons. But, after all, if professors of divinity do not their part in training up students according to it, and if presbyteries do not theirs in calling to account those who do not observe the act, the church will not reap much benefit by it, as I fear she hath not yet done: for, if she had, "what meaneth the bleating of the sheep," and "the lowing of the oxen," which we still hear? what means the murmuring of serious Christians from several corners, for want of the proper food of their souls? what mean the continued complaints of the growth of Deism and infidelity through the land? It is a just observe, that when moral preaching in a Christless way doth much abound, it makes way for the increase of deism and infidelity; for when persons do long hear moral sermons, and little of Christ in them, or the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, they are tempted to think there is but little difference between them and the discourses of Seneca and other heathen moralists; and therefore, that they may be safe enough, and win to heaven, without Christianity at all, and that every moral man is a good enough Christian.

Oh! this is a fundamental defection, of most heinous guilt; it is a God-provoking and unchurching evil, which all the ministers and lovers of Christ should be deeply concerned about: for if we suffer ourselves and others to fall from our regard and love to glorious Christ, neglect to exalt him in our sermons, and to preach salvation to men only through Christ's suretiship and sacrifice, and to tell the world, and inculcate it daily upon them, that this, and this only, is the way for them to obtain pardon, peace, grace, glory, and every good thing; I say, if we turn careless and negligent in what so nearly concerns Christ's glory, and our own office as Christian preachers, may he not justly plead a controversy with our church, smite us with the most awful judgments, suffer a flood of infidelity, error and profanity, to invade us, withdraw his spirit from ordinances and judicatories, infatuate our councils and conduct, mingle a perverse spirit in the midst of us, and give us up to the most unnatural divisions and mournful breaches among ourselves? Ah, how much is this the case with us at this day! And no wonder, seeing Christ's glory is so little minded, notwithstanding of the foresaid excellent act of assembly, and many other good acts, that are sadly neglected this day by ministers and preachers among us. And how can we expect that any individual man should pay regard to them, and particularly to the 7th act of assembly 1736, concerning preaching, when he sees whole judicatories pay no respect to the 14th act of that assembly against intrusions, nor to the 10th act of assembly 1712, and the 9th act of assembly 1715, concerning the usurpation of patronage upon the church, and her right of calling her own ministers; which acts are conform to other ancient acts of this church and to our reformation principles declared in *second book of discipline (see chap. 3. par.* 4. and 5. *chap.* 12. *par.* 9. and 10.) and which are sworn to in our *national covenant*, and ratified by many acts both of church and state.

Now, how strange and surprising is it, to see men deliberately going contrary to these excellent acts and deeds of the church, both ancient and modern (which are well founded upon the word of God and sound reason), by drawing on the yoke of patronage upon the church without necessity, voluntarily strengthening the hands of patrons in their spiritual tyranny, and encouraging men in that vile church-breaking and soul-destroying practice of *accepting presentations* (which no law doth require), and adhering to them in opposition to the people's choice? and yet this way is continued, even after conviction, by long dear-bought experience, of the pernicious effect of it. I well remember the time (yea, it is not above twenty years ago) when it was thought to be the universal opinion, that accepting of presentations was inconsistent with Presbyterian principles, and the rights and rules of this church, which we are solemnly engaged to maintain by our *Formula* 1711, and otherwise: at that time, *presentation-hunters* among Presbyterians would have appeared as mon-

sters, and their society frightful; but now, alas! they are become tame and familiar creatures to us. It is this woeful practice, together with the itch of pleasing great men, that hath of late been the great snare to draw in judicatories to go cross to our declared principles maintained in this church ever since the reformation (which we should have firmly cleaved to, and never declined from in any case), by making *intrusions* and *violent settlements* in Christian congregations, to the ruin, alas! of the glorious gospel, and of precious souls therein: and upon that account alone, though we had no acts nor declared principles against intrusions, it is astonishing to think how any man, that hath the glory of his master and the saving of souls at heart, should ever concur in a violent settlement that is manifestly destructive to both. That is an awful threatening to ministers, Jer. xxiii. "Wo be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture, saith the Lord:" and yet, notwithstanding, we see many, who go under the character of wise men, still persisting in that miserable infatuation and destructive course, driving multitudes of hearty friends and serious Christians out of the church, and never gaining any to it of those they intend to gratify; yet acting as if they were joined in conspiracy against the Commons of Scotland, and were carrying on a plot to strengthen the secession from the church. But let me tell these wise brethren, if our conventions and parliaments had paid so little regard to the inclinations of the people of Scotland, as our judicatories do now, we would not have had these courts at this day to sit in. I shall not insist here upon this melancholy subject, having said so much on it elsewhere: only let me add this word, if leading men go on in these methods, though they may enjoy their ease, power and preferments, for a while; yet upon their gravestones it is too likely it may be written, "Here lie the men, who did destroy the most beautiful national church and constitution that was in the world."

But, alas! we have cause not only to lament our departing from reformation-principles, and weakening the establishment, but also our shameful defection from vital and practical religion. The power of godliness is at a very low ebb among us, and little of God's Spirit is to be found in our administrations: God is angry, and threatens to cast us off. Ah! great ground have we to bewail our mournful case, and cry with the prophet, under the fearful tokens of God's anger, Jer. xiv. Lam. v. "Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? Hath thy soul loathed Zion? Why hast thou smitten us, and there is no healing for us? We looked for peace, and there is no good; and for the time of healing, and behold trouble. We acknowledge, O Lord, our wickedness, and the iniquity of our fathers: for we have sinned against thee. Do not abhor us, for thy name's sake? do not disgrace the throne of thy glory: remember, break not thy covenant with us. The anger of the Lord hath divided us. The crown hath fallen from our head: wo unto us that we have sinned. Wherefore dost thou forget us for ever, forsake us so long time? Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned: renew our days as of old." There are many other passages in Jeremiah's writings very suitable to our present case, such as Jer. xii. 10, 11. "Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness. They have made it desolate, and, being desolate, it mourneth unto me." Well, what can the sons of Zion do for their mother in such distress? They must even bring her case to the Physician of Israel, when it is wholly desperate and incurable as to human help, and cry, as in Psal. lx. 2. "O God, give us help from trouble; for vain is the help of man." Let us fall in with Christ's call to the man with the lunatic child, whom his disciples could not cure, Mat. xvii. Bring him hither to me, saith our Lord. Let us bring the case to Christ, when it is desperate and incurable by all others. The church's extremity is Christ's opportunity: he can help her, even then when all her friends are going with their hands on their loins in the greatest anguish and trouble; according to that word, Jer. xxx. 6, 7. "Wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble." Yet even then, when Jacob's trouble comes to that extremity that none can match it, the Lord pities and adds that word, "But he shall be saved out of it." A matchless trouble cannot nonplus his saving skill. Now, how doth he save Jacob out of such extremities? Not by human might or power, but by his own Spirit, Zech. iv. 6. O that God would help all *Zion's friends* to plead with him for an out-pouring of his Spirit upon ministers, preachers, students, and all ranks, for saving his covenanted land out of extreme darkness, and reviving primitive Christianity among us! This, and nothing else, will do it. O that he would speak such a comfortable word to Scotland, as that he said to the Jews when their state was low, Hag. ii. 5. "According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you." Fear ye not! He hath remembered his covenant with Scotland in former times, and surprised our fathers with gracious effusions of his Spirit: let us steadily look up to him, who hath still bowels of pity, and can help us as well as others in distress.

We have heard of the wonderful goodness of the Lord of late, in pitying other nations and countries, when under great darkness, deadnes and distress, by sending down his Spirit to revive his work among them in an extraordinary manner, which may be ground of hope to others. How glorious was the appearance of his sovereign grace about eight or nine years ago in Saltzburg in Germany, in determining about twenty thousand of the inhabitants to embrace the reformed religion, merely by reading of the Bible; yea, and to become so zealous, for it, as to be willing to forsake houses, lands, temporal goods, and relations, and all they had in the world, that they might enjoy the preaching of the gospel.

How marvellously did he display the riches of his grace, and the work of his Spirit, in the wonderful conversions of great numbers in Northampton, and other parts of New England, by the ministry of Mr. Jonathan Edwards, and others in that country, about five or six years ago, of which we had a well attested narrative published among us?

Nay, within these two years we have most surprising accounts of the goings of our God, and the effusions of his Spirit on several places of Old England and Wales, our neighbouring countries, where, by the ministry of Mr. George Whitfield, Mr. John Wesley, and others (who insist mainly on the doctrine of the new birth, and justification by faith in Christ), great numbers, even of the most profligate, are convinced and pricked in their hearts, and brought to cry out, "What shall we do to be saved?"

Which extraordinary work I hear doth still continue in divers places of England.

And this very same year we have the like accounts from Georgia, New-Jersey, Pensylvania, New-York, and other of the English plantations in America, by the ministry of Mr. Whitfield and others. Likewise, we have very strange accounts of the success of the gospel in many different parts of the world, even among the heathens, by Count Zinzendorf, bishop of the Moravian church, and his missionaries.

Verily these good news which we now hear, of God's glorious appearances in the gospel, do look as if God was about to accomplish his promises to his church in the latter days, "when the whole earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord." O how refreshing are the remotest dawnings of the glory of these days!

Also, they serve to teach us how easy it is for God to rise up, when he pleaseth, for the revival of his work in decayed churches, when their case seems to be very hopeless. How easy it is for him to raise up instruments to preach his gospel with such life and power, as to awaken whole towns and countries of sleepy sinners together to hearken to the gospel-call? He can make a nation to be born at once; which should encourage us to wait on him still. And now when our blessed Lord is graciously pleased to mount his white horse, as king of Zion, and make his circuit in our countries, to give such evidences of his glorious power, and send down pleasant showers of his grace among them, and make many to bow down at his feet: may we not hope that he hath a great work on the wheels, and is on his march to go through his church in a conquering manner, to confound deists and infidels, and quell the daring boldness of his adversaries? And, in that case may not Scotland look for a visit from him among the rest, and even plead that ancient kindness may revive towards it? May we not draw hope from the second Psalm, and other scripture passages, where God promiseth to "give his son the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession; and that the isles shall see his salvation, and wait for his law," among which places Scotland certainly is? And though it be a land that is little and despised among the nations, yet he, whose thoughts are not like man's thoughts, has shewed a distinguishing respect to it, by his early sending the gospel to it; and, when overspread with darkness, promoting reformation in it against both the power of the mighty, and counsels of the crafty; nay, advancing reformation so far, and making gospel-light so clear and powerful in it, by the remarkable down-pouring of his Spirit, that Scotland was noticed by divines of other places, and called *Philadelphia*, and *the morning star of the reformation*. Nay, he took Scotland into covenant with himself in a peculiar manner, and gave singular tokens of his presence with his people: he hath wonderfully appeared for the interest of religion, when almost sunk in it: he hath raised up Saviours on our mount Zion, and brought about great deliverances for it (as for Israel of old) when grievously oppressed and brought low. And, from these ancient and peculiar proofs of our Redeemer's care, may we not humbly hope that he will not leave the land that is given him by his father, and solemnly devoted to him by its inhabitants?

Our decays and backslidings from God, indeed, are very great, fearful, and threatening; yet, he hath still left a mourning and praying remnant in the land, who are sensible of the want of his Spirit and presence in ordinances, desire to lament after the Lord, and cry for all the abominations that are found in the midst of the city: and though her desolations are mournful, the breaches in her walls many, and the glory of the Lord is gone up from the cherub; yet it seems still to hover and stand over the threshold of the door, and there is a remnant among us wrestling and pleading against his departure. There is a number who take pleasure in our Zion, have a kindness for her stones and rubbish, and cease not to lift up a prayer for the remnant that is left: and we see gracious promises made to the prayers and tears, wrestlings and witnessings, of a small godly remnant, Psal. xii. 5. Psal. cii. 13, 14, 17. Alas, that this remnant in our land is so sadly broken and divided in the way and manner of their witnessings at this day! O that the meek Jesus, who rules in Zion, would meeken all their hearts, save from a spirit of bitterness, and from dangerous extremes in separating from one another! O that the God of peace, that hath the command of hearts, would unite his broken remnant together, give them a Christ-like spirit, and make them one stick in his hand! It is nowise difficult to him to accomplish this union, even when the case is most hopeless in our eyes, and instruments to meditate for healing breaches are out of sight. Let us remember and plead that promise, Jer. xxx. 17. "For I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord, because they have called thee an outcast, saying, This is Zion whom no man seeketh after." Many of God's worthies, now in glory, have gone off the stage in the belief and hopes that God would yet arise and have mercy on his Zion, that he would signally build her up, and appear in his glory; yea, that there would be more glorious gospel-days seen in Scotland than either we or our fathers have beheld. Surely these considerations may encourage God's remnant in Scotland, to wait and pray in hope, however dark and cloudy our day be at present.

In the mean time, let us rejoice and bless the Lord, that he is pleased to pour out his Spirit, make bare his holy arm, and glorify his power in other parts of the world, yea, and get himself a great name amongst those that have not known him, whatever he doth with us: may his right hand, and holy arm, get him the victory among them more and more, that we may hear gospel songs from the uttermost parts of the earth?——Likewise, let us mourn for those sins, both old and late, which provoke God to make our heavens as brass, and to withhold those pleasant showers from us he is letting fall upon others: and let us plead that Scotland, which formerly was the glory of all lands, for the effusions of the Spirit, may not now be past by and left behind all others. O let her fleece be dry, when many others have their fleeces wet; and, when they are getting abundance of rain, may we have a little cloud appearing like a man's hand, to prognosticate a shower a coming! May the Lord rise up from his place, and come mercifully to decide the quarrel between deists and us; and let infidels, and the profane scoffers of these last days, see, that the Bible is the word of God, and that the preaching of it is his institution; that there is a supernatural power attending it, for changing men's hearts as well as lives! May he let the world see, it is not fine moral harangues, nor the enticing words of men's wisdom; but the plain

preaching of a crucified Jesus, is the only remedy for lost sinners, that becomes the power of God to the conversion and salvation of men!'

But some have their questions, "by whom shall Jacob arise? will he shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise him?" These, indeed, are non-plussing difficulties to us, but none at all to him who raiseth the dead, and calleth the things which be not, as though they were. He hath still spirit and clay enough for new instruments; yea, he can make strangers build up his walls, and the greatest enemies become zealous for his glory. And, however unlikely the appearance of things may be at present, both scripture and experience assure us, that the time of God's peoples extremity (as I said before) is his usual season of appearing for them; "it is in the mount that the Lord will be seen:" so may the text be rendered, Gen. xxii. 14. God did not appear any way for Isaac's deliverance all the three days journey he made with his father, till he came to the top of the mount, and was just ready to be sacrificed: neither did he interpose for the Jews in Esther's time, until the decree was past, and day fixed, and but a hair-breadth betwixt them and ruin; then God steps in, and posts are instantly dispatched to stop the execution. Thus the Lord acts agreeably to his promise, Deut. xxxii. 36. "For the Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and that there is none shut up or left." Here, then, is food for faith and prayer in the most straitening times. O for grace to pray in hope, mourn in hope, labour in hope, and wait in hope, seeing our dearest Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is our hope, is gone up, and sits at the helm! O when shall the power of this great Lord be present to heal us! Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. *Amen.*

Dundee, September 30, 1740.

INTRODUCTION.

IT being our great business in the world, to promote God's glory and our own salvation, and, in order thereto, to seek acquaintance with and secure an interest in the Lord Jesus Christ (the sole mediator betwixt God and men), and also to labour for the comfortable persuasion and assurance of this interest; it hath pleased God, for our assistance in this matter, graciously to prescribe to us the use of several outward means, as the word, sacraments, and prayer, and also to promise the inward influences of his Holy Spirit, for making these means effectual for the ends foresaid, to such as conscientiously attend and use them.

The sacrament of the Lord's supper, one of these means, being instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, as a bright representation and compend of the whole Christian religion, and an ordinance nobly adapted for carrying on the ends of God's glory, and our souls' salvation, and particularly for clearing up our interest in Christ, and improving our acquaintance with him? it highly concerns every Christian to make conscience of attending in a due and suitable manner.

I have elsewhere shewn, that the Lord's day is of divine appointment, and the celebration of the Lord's supper is the proper work of this day, and one special design of its first institution. Now, if ordinary sabbaths do require great diligence and care in our preparing for them, and improving of them; much more do communion-sabbaths, which are solemn and high days, and, in a special manner, days of the Son of man; these being times wherein we make near approaches unto God, and he makes most near approaches unto us; and so may be called days of heaven upon earth; for they do eminently represent the employments and enjoyments of the glorified saints in heaven; and, by the right improvement of them, we come to be prepared for living amongst that blessed company. It is, then, our great duty and interest, carefully to make ready for these sabbaths when they draw nigh, and to improve every hour and minute of them with the greatest diligence, when they actually do come.

The subject of the Lord's supper is pretty fully handled in my Sacramental Catechism, both in a doctrinal and casuistic manner. And, seeing it is needless to repeat what is there written, I must refer my reader to it, for a more full explication of several things relating to this ordinance than what is here to be expected; seeing I mainly design in this treatise to give practical directions for the right improvement of communion-sabbaths. The subject is still very large and copious, after all that hath been said and written upon it; and there is room for much more. What I here intend may be comprehended under the three following heads:

I. Directions how to prepare for a communion-sabbath before it come.

II. How to spend it when it is come.

III. How to behave ourselves when it is over.

CHAPTER I.

CONTAINING DIRECTIONS HOW TO PREPARE FOR A COMMUNION-SABBATH.

DIRECT. I.—*Carefully endeavour and study to have a just and right uptaking of the nature, ends, and uses of the Lord's supper; and the work of communicating while at the Lord's table.*

THERE are many who have wrong notions of this ordinance, do greatly mistake the ends and designs of it, and therefore cannot rightly partake of it: but, if we would be worthy communicants, we must seriously ponder and rightly understand the nature and ends of this solemn institution of our Lord Jesus Christ, that so we may approach his table with distinct uptakings of our works and business there.

This ordinance was not instituted to turn bread and wine into the true body and blood of Christ, for people to worship it; nor to sacrifice Christ again to the Father to be a propitiation for the sins of the quick and the dead, as the papists do absurdly affirm. Neither was it appointed to make atonement for former sins, to purchase a remission, and insure heaven to us *opere operato*, as some ignorant people do imagine. Nor was it designed to cloak some wicked practises, or maintain a good name among men, or any other worldly end, as hypocrites do intend. But it is appointed by our great Lord and Saviour, as a *visible representation and commemoration of his death and sufferings for his people, till he come again to judge the world.* And, in obedience to his command, all his people ought to come to his table, to celebrate this ordinance; and, while partaking of the outward symbols of bread and wine, they are believingly and thankfully to remember Jesus Christ, and

his dying love; and also to receive and embrace him, as their bleeding high priest, into the arms of their faith, apply his benefits, rest upon his merits, seal a covenant with him, look upon him whom they have pierced, with a mourning heart, and a solemn resolve to pierce him no more.

This is a short account of the nature of this sacrament, and of the works of communicating. But, in order to give a more full and distinct view of this great, and solemn ordinance, we may consider and take it up under these several respects following:

I. As a *peculiar sign and distinguishing badge of the Christian church from the infidel world, and a visible token*, that we profess and own a crucified Jesus for our Redeemer and Saviour, and that we depend only upon his death, and the merit of his blood, for the remission of our sins, and our reconciliation with God.

II. As a *lively representation and memorial of Christ crucified, and the inestimable purchase of his death.* This sacrament is a compendious map of the gospel, and a visible preaching of Jesus Christ. The word preached holds him forth to the ear; but this sacrament represents him to the eye, and, in a lively way, displays his redeeming love, his mighty acts, and unparalleled sufferings for lost sinners. This ordinance is a lasting public monument to the world, of Christ's glorious victories and triumphs, as the Captain of our salvation; of his vanquishing death and hell, his spoiling principalities and powers, and his obtaining peace for us. Likewise, we are to look upon it as a sure pledge of Christ's second coming, and a taste of the new wine which believers will eternally drink with him in his Father's kingdom.

III. As a *special mean appointed by God for our spiritual advantage;* namely, for the weakening of corruption, and the strengthening of grace. The death of our glorious Redeemer, represented in this ordinance, gives such a discovery of sin to the believer as makes his soul to abhor it. And God blesseth it as a mean to excite and quicken the graces of repentance, faith, love, hope, joy and thankfulness, in believers; by giving them something of a clearer view of the attributes of God, than they had before; as of his wisdom in the contrivance of our redemption by Jesus Christ, and his suretiship for us; of his mercy, love, and compassion, in sparing poor, guilty, and hell-deserving sinners, such as we are, of his justice and holiness, in punishing sin in such a manner, yea, rather punishing it in his own son, than suffering it to go unpunished; of his veracity and faithfulness, in accomplishing the Old Testament types and prophecies, and confirming the covenant of grace with the mercies therein promised, by the death of Jesus Christ.

IV. As a *great feast, wherein Christ holds communion and fellowship with his people*, and richly entertains them. This sacrament is the supper of the great God: the feast-maker is God the Father, the provision God the son, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed: the guests are a company of poor unworthy sinners, for whom the crumbs beneath the table are too good; yet to such doth God give kindly welcome, saying, *Eat, O friends; drink*, &c. Cant. v. 1. A strange feast! Christ is both the maker and matter of it, the feeder and the food, the giver and the gift! O what noble provision is Christ's flesh and blood to the soul! John vi. 55. As bread and wine afford strength, comfort, and nourishment to the body; so the flesh and blood of Christ, received here by faith, do yield the same to the soul. How great is the variety of heavenly dainties presented to us in this feast! viz. pardon of sin, reconciliation with God, adoption into his family, peace of conscience, spiritual strength, increase of grace, the precious promises of the covenant, the gracious presence of Christ, the smiles of his countenance, the comfort and quickening influences of his spirit. O what rare and delicious dishes are these for hungry souls! O for appetites for the full feast which Christ doth furnish us in this wilderness.

V. We ought to view this ordinance as the *solemn sealing and confirming of a covenant betwixt God and us.* This sacrament is one of the seals of the covenant of grace which God makes with believers in Christ; and by it he gives them sasine and infeftment of all the benefits of the covenant, and of the glorious inheritance purchased for them by Christ. It was usual for people in the eastern countries to ratify their covenants by eating and drinking together; so did Isaac and Abimelech, Jacob and Laban, &c. Gen. xxvi. Gen. xxxi. 2 Sam. iii. This sacrament is a covenanting feast, wherein a bargain is solemnly ratified and sealed betwixt God and us. God's exhibiting the elements to us, is a seal of the covenant, on God's part, that he will be our God, and doth freely give us his Son with all his purchase, and will fulfil his promises to us in him: our taking the elements is a seal on our part, of our accepting of Jesus Christ upon the terms of grace, our engaging to be his people, and that we will, in his strength, perform all the duties required of us. Here Christ gives us his body and blood to save us, and here we give our souls and bodies to serve him.

VI. As a *solemn military oath, whereby we bind ourselves to be true and faithful soldiers to Jesus Christ, our Captain and General* in the spiritual warfare. For the word sacrament, according to its ancient use among the Romans (from whom it is borrowed), doth import so much. Let no communicants then consider what they do at the Lord's table. You do most publicly, before men and angels, swear allegiance to the King of heaven, over the broken body and shed blood of the Son of God. Now, if the dust of Christ's ministers' feet will be a witness against the slighters of his gospel, and cry for vengeance on them; surely Christ's body and blood will be a more terrible witness against perfidious communicants. Nay, the oath you here swear is not an ordinary one, but an oath attended with solemn imprecations. When ye transact with God in this sacrament, you do on the matter say, "If we be in league with sin and satan, while we are professing to give ourselves away to the Lord; then let that wrath, which Christ suffered, fall upon us: and as certainly as we crumble the sacramental bread betwixt our teeth, let the mill-stone of God's wrath grind us to powder: and as we drink the sacramental cup here, so let us drink the cup of God's unmixed wrath eternally, if we deal falsely with God in this covenant." And thus we see how unworthy communicants and dissemblers with God, do "eat and drink judgment to themselves," with a witness.

VII. We should take up this sacrament, not only as a feast of love betwixt Christ and believers, but also as a bond of mutual love and unity among believers themselves.

As this feast of love is a remembrance of the greatest love that ever was manifested, viz. of Christ's dying love to sinners; so it is an excellent mean for procuring and advancing unity and love among the saints and servants of God.

It is a mean, not only of uniting believers more firmly to

Christ, their head, but also of uniting and endearing the members of his mystical body to one another.

Let us view the Lord's supper in the foresaid seven respects, that we may see what a weighty ordinance it is, and have some distinct uptakings of its nature and ends, before we approach to it.

DIRECT. II.—*Be firmly persuaded, that partaking of the Lord's supper is a most necessary duty; and the neglecting of it is a very great sin.*

That *communicating* is a necessary duty incumbent upon us, and not a matter of indifference which we may do, or not do, as we think fit, will appear from the following obligations which God hath laid upon us:

I. We have the command of our great Lord and lawgiver, to partake of this feast, oft repeated by the *Evangelists:* he saith to all his disciples, *take;* he saith to them, *eat;* he saith to them, *drink ye all of it;* he saith to them, *do this in remembrance of me.* His precepts to pray, praise, hear, read, meditate, &c. are not more plain or express, than his precepts to communicate. So that we are as much bound to give obedience to this, as to those.

II. Gratitude strongly obligeth us to obey this command, if we remember what he did for us, who gave it. O believer, did he not offer up himself, soul and body, as an atoning sacrifice to satisfy divine justice for thy sins? and, will not this engage you to obey him! surely, every time you read or hear these words, *do this in remembrance of me,* your heart should melt and warm within you, when you consider what he, who spoke them, hath done for you; even more than father, or mother, wife, brother, and all your relations could have done; yea, more than a million of angels could have done for you. And, shall not his command have weight with you.

III. Remember the time when he gave you this charge. It was that night he was to begin his bitter and bloody agonies for you, and wade through a sea of wrath and sorrow upon your account. It was then when he beheld heaven, earth and hell, justice, men and devils, all conspiring against him. Just at the time when he was going to offer up himself a sacrifice in your stead, to save you from eternal flames, he gave you this charge, "do this in remembrance of me;" as if he had said, "now I am just ready to be offered up, to die a cursed death for you, and with my blood to seal my testament, wherein I bequeath to you, pardon, peace, life, light, grace, and glory; and now there is one request I ask of you, that, when I am dead, you keep up the remembrance of my love and sufferings for you, by eating bread and drinking wine together with my people at my table; and there show forth my death till I come again to judge the world." The words of dying men used to be of great weight with their surviving friends; and will not the words of your dying surety, your dying elder brother, be of weight with you to obey his dying charge?

IV. Consider how small and easy the charge is he gives you: it is not to sacrifice your first-born, cut off a member of your body, give all you have to the poor, go in pilgrimage to the ends of the earth; it is not to go to the holy land, to visit Christ's sepulchre; or to the top of Mount Calvary, where the cross stood, "in remembrance of him." These he required not, because you might have judged them hard; and yet, as hard as they seem to be, had he demanded any of them, could you have been answerable to disobey such an one as a dying Jesus? How far less will you be able to answer at the great day for disobeying him, when he requires no such burdensome task, but graciously injoins an action that is most easy, pleasant and profitable to you; "eat and drink at my table, in a thankful remembrance of what I have done for you?" and will you not please him in so small a request?

V. Christ gives you this charge, not for his good, but for your own. And your obedience to it contributes highly both to your pleasure and your profit.

First, O believer, is it not pleasant to set and keep a tryst with your dear Saviour? Well, this ordinance is the solemn trysting-place where he hath appointed to meet with you; it is there you may "see the King in his beauty;" there doth his glory shine. O how glorious is he in his "dyed garments and red apparel!" With what desire should we go to see such a beautiful sight? How sweet is it to hear his voice in this ordinance, which is the very music of heaven? How refreshing for a doubting soul to hear him speak as from the cross, "it is finished, the ransom is paid, and justice is satisfied?" Can there be sweeter melody, than to hear Christ whisper in the soul's ear, "fear not, I am thy salvation; the Lord hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die; Son, be of good cheer, all thy sins are forgiven thee!" How pleasant must it be to eat and drink at Christ's feast, with such heavenly music sounding in our ears?

Secondly, Is not this action as profitable to us as pleasant? Knowest thou, O man, what injury thou dost to thy immortal soul by neglecting it? Canst thou have any other but a lean, hungry, starved soul, whilst thou slightest the food God hath appointed for it? Dost thou know what benefit some of thy neighbours have got at this feast? some have come to it poor, and have gone away laden with riches: some have come to it hungry, and have gone away satisfied as with marrow and fatness: some have come thirsty, and have got floods poured out upon the dry ground: some have come blind, and gone away seeing? others lame, and have gone away walking. Here they have got all their diseases cured, and their wants supplied. And, have you not as great need of these mercies as others: Come, then to this enriching and soul-upmaking ordinance; take but a view of the benefits and blessings which Christ presents to you, and which he faithfully offers to seal and apply to you in this sacrament, even his own body and blood, and all the benefits and virtues of the same; surely Christ and all the benefits of his purchase is a vast portion: behold, O believer, in this ordinance you have a seal and pledge, an earnest and taste of them all.

More particularly, 1*st*, you have here a sealed remission of sin presented to you, with the blood that was shed for the same, Matt. xxvi. 28.

2*dly*, A sealed freedom from wrath and damnation: for a crucified Jesus here represented endured that for you; and he promises that he who eats this food shall "never die eternally," John vi. 50, 51.

3*dly*, Adoption into God's family, and a right to the children's privileges confirmed; for your being admitted to sit at your father's table, and eat of the children's bread, is a pledge of it.

4*thly*, The weakening of sin, and subduing of corruption; for here you have food that kills sin.

5*thly*, The increase of sanctification, and strengthening

of grace: for here you have food that nourisheth grace: and the sanctifying Spirit is promised in that covenant, which is here sealed, Ezek. xxxiv. 27.

6thly, Union and communion with Christ in the most intimate manner; for, saith he, John vi. 56. "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him." We dwell in him, by faith and love, and he in us by his Spirit.

7thly, A title to eternal life, John vi. 51. "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever."

8thly, A sealed promise of a glorious resurrection, John vi. 54. "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

9thly, A sealed right to all the promises of the new covenant, which are great and precious, *viz*. That God will "put his laws in our inward parts, and write them in our hearts, Jer. xxxi. 33. That he will forgive our iniquity, and remember our sins no more, Jer. xxxi. 34. That he will take away the stony heart and give us a heart of flesh, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. That he will put his fear in our hearts, and give us hearts to fear him, Jer. xxxii. 39, 40. That he will cause us to walk in his statutes, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. That he will not turn away from us to do us good, and that we shall not depart from him, Jer. xxx. 40. That he will send sanctified rods and afflictions when they are needful, Psal. lxxxix. 32. That he will put his Spirit within us, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. And thereupon we shall have quickening, strengenthing, and sin-mortifying influences. And, lastly, which comprehends all, that he will be our God, and we shall be his people," Jer. xxxi. 33. Thus you see what a soul-profiting ordinance this is; to slight it then, must be a dreadful despising of your mercies, and a wronging of your own souls.

VI. Let me put you in mind with what gladness the Israelites of old did welcome the news of the celebration of their passover, in the room of which Christ hath instituted to us the Lord's supper. O what joy did it occasion in Jerusalem, when the trumpet was blown by the priest, to give intimation to the people of the day of the passover? how cheerful was the psalmist's heart, when he saith, Psal. lxxxi. 1, 3. "Make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob: blow up the trumpet in the new-moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast-day!" This feast was still observed upon the fifteenth day after the first appearence of the new-moon: and not having almanacks, as we have, to forwarn them of it, they used to send men to the top of the hill to watch for the appearance of the new moon, who, as soon as they saw it, did run to tell the priest, that he might blow the trumpet, and give the welcome notice of it to the people, who received the news with universal joy. And have not we, Christians, more cause to rejoice at the intimation of our gospel-passover, in which we have Christ crucified, with all his benefits, far more evidently set forth before our eyes, than the people of the Jews had?

Alas! it is sadly to be regretted, that in our age many people do oft hear the silver trumpet of the gospel sounding loud and long, calling them to the feast of the great King, but are not suitably affected therewith. Were this great gospel-ordinance, like the Jewish passover, to be celebrated but in one place in all the world; with what zeal and desire would people flock thither, to behold it and partake of it? And, why should we not come with the same affection and devotion now, when we have it celebrated in many places? Shall our hearts be evil, because God is good? Shall we despise mercies when they are given in plenty? Surely the frequent occasions we have of this blessed feast, should fill our hearts with the greatest thankfulness to the bountiful Maker of it, as they did the Christians in the apostolic age.

But, besides these arguments for the necessity of the duty of communicating, I shall, in the next place, show the greatness of the sin and danger of neglecting it.

I. You are hereby guilty of disobedience to the command of the highest King and Sovereign in the world; nay, of that King to whom you have sworn allegiance in baptism. Is Jesus Christ your sovereign, and will you not obey his laws? Perhaps, if you neglected any other of his commands, such as to pray, give alms, or to hear the word, for one Lord's day, concience would smite you for it; and have you no check for disobeying this command which he gave in the most solemn manner; nay, a charge which our dying Testator gave us when his heart was full of sorrow for us, and when he was going to underly God's wrath in the garden, be bound as a malefactor, and led away to the cursed tree for us? As the sovereign Lord, who gave us this command, hath an undoubted right to our obedience both by nature and dear purchase; so, by the neglect of it, we are at once guilty both of despising the authority of just power, and the obligation of astonishing love.

II. What a sin must it be to despise a sacrament, which is one of the most solemn ordinances of this great King? You will readily acknowledge, that it is your indispensible duty to receive the sacrament of baptism, and that it is a great sin to neglect it. And why do you not own the same of the Lord's supper, seeing the same Lord who said, Matt. xxviii. 19. "Go teach and baptize all nations," said also Luke xxii. 19. "Do this in remembrance of me?" So that you have the same authority for both sacraments. What absurd inconsistency are some then guilty of, who think if their children die without baptism (though there be no sinful neglect in the case) it endangers their salvation, but are not afraid themselves to live and die without the Lord's supper, though their neglect be wilful and sinful? Surely the practice of many, who overvalue one sacrament, and undervalue another, is most unacountable.

III. By declining to partake of the Lord's supper, you do upon the matter renounce your baptism (tho' the sacrament you pretend to esteem), seeing hereby you refuse to be Christians of free choise, and in effect say, you will not stand to these engagments your parents took on in your name, but will be at liberty to believe what you please, practise what you fancy, and serve the devil, the world, and the flesh, as long as you think fit. You may profess the Christian religion; but you are never Christians by any act of your own, until you present yourselves at the Lord's table, and there personally own your baptismal engagements, and openly avouch the Lord Jesus Christ to be your Saviour, consent to his religion, and dedicate yourselves to his service. Hearing of sermons is not a sufficient test of your doing so; for many do this from curiosity or custom, more than any other principle; but the Lord's supper is the ordinance which Christ has instituted chiefly for the foresaid ends. How great then must the sin and danger of wilful neglecting it be? In effect, it is no less than an open denying of Christ before men; and such, he says "he will deny before his Father in heaven." I would have all who bear the name of Christians, to remember this; and, as they would not be reckoned among those

that renounce Christ and his religion, let them not contemn that ordinance, which is the appointed badge of the Christian profession.

IV. To neglect the Lord's supper is a most unthankful requital of the kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, in coming to free us from the burdensome service of the legal sacrifices, rites, and institutions. If we did rightly consider what we are bound to by the subjection we owe to a sovereign Lord, and by the gratitude we owe to a kind benefactor; though he had enjoined a great number of costly and laborious rites, and had laid upon us a yoke more heavy than that of the Jewish ceremonies, yet in justice we should have thought all but a small homage to his greatness, and a small acknowledgement of his infinite love. But now, when in his mercy he hath freed us from the yoke of ceremonial bondage, and, beside baptism, hath appointed but this one sacred rite for us to observe, and one that is neither costly nor troublesome, but most easy and pleasant; what monsters of ingratitude shall we make ourselves, if we slight this his gracious institution!

V. By neglecting this divine ordinance, you put greater contempt upon the true and living God, than heathens do upon their dumb idols. How great is the respect that some brutish idolaters show to idols, who cut their flesh, shed their blood, sacrifice their children, and stick at nothing, though never so hard or painful, to testify their homage and obsequiousness to their ugly deities! And shall we, Christians, professed servants of the glorious Son of God, our sovereign Lord and Redeemer, neglect his easy institution, and refuse to please him in so small a thing! Surely the barbarous savages will rise up in judgment with many professed Christians, and condemn them for their disobedience. You, perhaps, on some occasions, will profess to pity the blind heathens and brutish Indians, who are strangers to Christianity, and live and die in darkness; but, have not we as much reason to pity you, who disown and pour contempt on that holy religion you were educated in, and thereby put yourselves in a condition worse than theirs? For, the apostle tells us, that it is "better not to have known the way of truth, than, after we have known it, to turn away from the holy commandment," 2 Pet. ii. 21. And our Saviour saith, that it will be more tolerable for the dark cities of "Tyre and Sidon, at the day of judgment, than it will be for the enlightened Capernaum and Bethsaida," Matt. xi. 22. Your knowledge and profession of the truths of the Christian religion do very much aggravate your disobedience to the laws and institutions thereof. You think their condition dreadful, that say there is no God, and no doubt it is so; but what better is your case? you acknowledge there is a God, but live as if you defied him, by open contemning and neglecting of his ordinances.

VI. By slighting this ordinance, you contemn the most advantageous offer that ever God made unto men. Here God the Father offereth to make over Christ to you, and all his purchase, and seal your right thereto. Particularly to give you his blessed Son, as your "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," 1 Cor. i. 30. As your wisdom, to enlighten you, and free you from ignorance; as your righteousness, to justify you, and free you from the guilt of sin; as your sanctification, to make you holy, and free you from the reigning power and pollution of sin; as your redemption, to restore you to the liberty of the sons of God, bring you to the inheritance, and free you eternally from sin and satan, hell and wrath. Now, O sinner, if thou declinest to come here and take Christ as thy wisdom, how foolish and ignorant must thou still remain? If thou refusest Christ as thy righteousness, how naked and guilty will thy soul be? If thou refusest Christ as thy sanctification, how vile and polluted must thou still continue? If thou refusest Christ as thy redemption, who will redeem thee from the wrath to come.

Consider also the near and happy relations which Jesus Christ himself offereth to stand in to those who cordially receive him in this ordinance; such as that of a master, a father, a captain, a shepherd, a bridegroom, and husband. And, how great must our sin and danger be, if we slight such kind offers! If you refuse Christ as a master now, will not he refuse to own you as a servant in the great day? If you refuse him as a captain, will he not reject you as one of his soldiers? If you refuse him as a shepherd, will he not deny you as one of his sheep? If you refuse him as a bridegroom and husband, will he not disown you as his bride and spouse? And, if Christ thus disown you at the great day, how fearful will your condition be for ever?

VII. Neglecting this feast of memorial is a thing most unreasonable in itself, as being against all the rules of humanity and gratitude. Surely it is most agreeable to reason and equity, that all Christians should love their Redeemer and benefactor, and keep up the memorial of his great adventure for ransoming their souls. Is it not a most reasonable demand, and a very small return he requires of you for all his love, only "eat and drink in remembrance of me?" It is not, go to a scaffold; but go to a well covered table: It is not to bleed and burn, but to eat and drink: It is not to feed on the bread of affliction, or water of adversity, but bread that strengthens the heart, and wine that cheers the drooping spirit; delicious fare, which your Saviour hath blessed and sweetened for you. Now, must it not be against all reason to refuse this agreeable demand, in order to preserve the memory of the love of your *incomparable Benefactor*, and the sufferings of your *dying Friend*, which he patiently endured for you?

Ingrateful world! Can ye not endure to think on that which Christ refused not to endure for you? Did he leave the glory of his Father, to be clothed with your nature and to dwell in a fleshly cottage? Did he live a life of sorrows and sufferings, and at last undergo a shameful, painful, and cursed death? Did he rise again, and ascend on high to prepare mansions, and take possession of them for you? Doth he there abide to agent and plead your cause with God? And do ye believe that he is shortly to come again to receive you to himself? And, will ye not for a short while here keep up the remembrance of his love? O, did Christ drink vinegar on the cross for you, yea, vinegar made bitter, tart, and poisonable, with your sins? And will ye not drink wine at his table, that is sweetened and made delicious with the choice blessings of his love, and consolations of his Spirit? Did he drink a cup of wrath for you, and will ye not drink a cup of blessing for him, nay, for yourselves? For the advantage is only yours.

O Christians, had we the due impressions of the amazing goodness and incomparable love of our matchless Redeemer, the remembrance whereof he enjoins us to keep up in this ordinance; we would say, Lord, what is sufficient to be done in memory of this love? Every one of our hearts would echo back at Christ's call, "do this in remembrance

of me?' *Do this!* Lord, what is it that I would not do for thy sake? Glorious Jesus, didst thou pass by the angels, and wouldst have no nature but mine? I'll then stop mine ears against the solicitations of the world, and have no will but thine. *Remember thee!* Whom shall I remember if I forget thee? "If I forget thee, O my Saviour, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth: If I remember not thee, let my right hand forget her cunning." Lord, I cannot but blush when I think that I should need any *memento* or token to keep up the remembrance of thee: Ah! shall the trifles of the world find room enough in my heart and memory, and my Redeemer's love have scarce any place there? Lord, hadst thou required the dearest of my blood and choicest of my substance to be offered thee in acknowledgment of it, yea, hadst thou demanded my life, I owe it to thee, nay, a thousand lives, if I had them: and, shall I not cheerfully give thee up my memory and thoughts when thou art pleased to ask them.

O then, if there be any obligations in the highest authority, any allurements in the sweetest love, any reality in your professed subjection to Jesus Christ, give him this proof of it, cheerfully obey his dying charge, meet with his people, and remember his love at his feast of memorial, and join hymns of praise therewith. O please him in this so easy and so small a request.

VIII. Finally, I would have you to remember how provoking the neglect of this ordinance is to him that instituted it. You are guilty of despising the greatest preparation which the King of kings makes for his subjects; for in this ordinance he doth, as it were, kill the fatted calf, and furnish his table with the choicest rarities of heaven, and send forth his servants to invite us, saying, "I have prepared my supper, come eat of my bread, and drink of my wine which I have mingled; all things are ready, come to the marriage." So great and costly is this feast, that it cost the maker of it his own life to prepare it. "Pardon of sin, peace with God, and communion with him," which are the dainties here set before you, cost Jesus Christ no less than his life to purchase them for you. And, do you think this glorious King can take it well at your hands, if you make light of this rare and costly feast, and slight all the preparation he hath made for you? Can you ever expect to enjoy communion with him in heaven, if you slight the offer of communion with him upon earth? Nay, you provoke him to cut you off eternally from his presence: for, as of old, the Lord threatened cutting off to the soul of him that neglected to keep the passover, because he brought not the offering of the Lord in his appointed season, Num. ix. 13, so he threatens the same to those who should slight the gospel-feasts typified thereby, Zech. xiv. 16, 17, 18. Luke xiv. 24. We see how his wrath was kindled against those that neglected to come to the marriage of the king's son, and how severely he punished them for it, Matt. xxii. 5, 7. "They made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise." But, when the king heard thereof he was wroth, and "he sent forth armies and destroyed these murderers, and burnt up their city." He reckons your *eating not*, no less sin than *eating irreverently*; for, as by this you are guilty of profaning the Lord's body, so by the other you are guilty of despising it, and preferring your lusts before him, which is a crime as heinous.

Objections Answered.

Here it may be proper to answer some objections which are made against partaking of the Lord's supper; whether by the profane, slothful, or scrupulous.

Object. I. Some profane persons think meanly of this ordinance, and hence they neglect it. What needs so much noise (think they) about this matter? It is but eating a little bread, and drinking a small portion of wine; what efficacy can there be in that action?

Ans. This ordinance is of divine authority, and not appointed by men like ourselves. It hath the stamp of our Lord's institution, which should make it to be highly valued by all Christians: for, as he hath wisely instituted it for most important ends and uses, so he will certainly make it effectual unto these ends. A little parchment, with ink and wax upon it, is in itself a small thing; yet, being of legal authority and institution among men, it serveth to convey a right and title to a great inheritance, and so it becometh highly valuable. The brazen serpent, that was lift upon a pole for healing the Israelites, was mean to the outward view; but, being of God's appointment, it was effectual for healing, and therefore none would despise it. So the elements in this sacrament, however common or mean in themselves, yet being of God's appointment, and consecrated for sacred uses, they are powerful and efficacious to the believing receiver, for the great ends of their institution.

Object. II. We may remember Christ in the word; and what need is there for doing it in the sacrament.

Ans. 1*st*, It is abominable presumption to think ourselves wiser than Jesus Christ, who is the *Wisdom of the Father*. Hath he thought this ordinance needful, and will any man judge it needless?

2*dly*, The word only presents Christ unto the ear, but the Lord's supper sets forth a crucified Christ unto the eye.

3*dly*, There is more than a simple remembering of Christ required in the Lord's supper; there is also a renewing of baptismal engagements, and a ratifying our covenant with God. And, besides, our Lord hath reserved some special blessings and communications to this ordinance, which are nowise to be undervalued or slighted.

Object. III. It is hard to be at so much pains, and to employ so much time in meditation, examination, prayer, &c. as is requisite to prepare for communicating.

Ans. 1*st*, There are many who do not grudge to be at much pains and travel, and frequently to hazard their lives, both by sea and land, for a little temporal gain; and, will you grudge some pains to prepare for this ordinance, which seals a right to the unsearchable riches of Christ, and by means whereof you might, through the divine blessing, be enabled to subdue your sins, reform your lives, grow in grace, and be made ready for death and judgment? Is not this spiritual gain better than the gain of a whole world?

2*dly*, Are there not many who throw away their hours in needless pleasures and pastimes? And, with what face can such pretend they have not time to examine themselves, and prepare for this blessed ordinance? What are these transient pleasures of time you are so fond of, to the comfortable views of an interest in Christ, and of living with him throughout eternity, which may be got at his table?

3*dly*, Will you be at no pains to please that King and Sovereign to whom you have sworn allegiance, or to obey the command and dying charge of your great Master and Saviour? That vile impostor, Mahomet, forbade his disciples to drink wine; and this command hath been rigourously

observed among them: and, shall our renowned Saviour, who is Lord of angels, and son of the most high God, enjoin us in the use of the wine in the sacrament; and, will any of his disciples adventure to disobey him? "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon." Let not this be told among Turks, Jews, Infidels, Atheists, and the rest of the adversaries of the Christian religion, lest they should insult and triumph.

4thly, Our Lord Jesus had a thousand more difficulties and discouragements in the work of our redemption, and yet he did not shrink back, as you do from communicating. He never objected, "The sea is deep, I cannot wade it; the cross is heavy, I cannot bear it; the cup is bitter, I cannot drink it; the wrath is terrible, I cannot endure it." He did not plead, though he had cause, "The work is hard, it will cost me dear: and I shall meet with an unthankful world, that will slight my love, refuse my offers, and despise my institutions." No; he overlooked all that, and went cheerfully through his sufferings: "With desire have I desired (saith he) to eat this passover; the cup that the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" When the Father called him to drink the very dregs of the cup of trembling for you, he readily answerd, "Lo, I come, I delight to do thy will." But when he calls you to take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord; what grudging and backdrawing is there with you? Had Christ so great desire after the bitter cup of God's wrath on your account; and have you no desire after the cup of blessing in the sacrament! Did he go so cheerfully to die for you; and, are you unwilling to go and feast with him? Be astonished, O heavens, at this ingratitude!

How wretched and perverse a creature is man! Still he would be flying in the face of God's authority: for when God said to him, "Eat not of this forbidden fruit;" then he will needs eat, though it ruin him. But when God saith, "Eat of this bread;" he is backward to do it, though it be for his eternal welfare. O how long doth a patient and merciful God bear with us!

Object. IV. I am so stated with my worldly business, that I cannot get time to prepare myself in secret, and give such attendance in public as is needful, and so I cannot come.

Ans. 1*st*, Doth not your business afford you time to eat, drink and sleep, and converse with unprofitable company; and can you find no time to converse with God in his ordinances, or to prepare for meeting and dwelling with God throughout eternity?

2dly, Can you have any greater, any better business in the world, than to remember the love of a dying Saviour, to put your souls in order to meet with him at his table, and there to seal a covenant with him, and receive pledges from him of his pardoning and redeeming love? Is there any business upon earth so preferable to this!

3dly, When sickness and death come, you must find time to attend them whether you will or not; all your business must of necessity give place to them. And, must you find time to be sick and die how soon the summons cometh; and will you not find time in your health to prepare for sickness and death before they come? Now, if you would take time duly to prepare for the Lord's supper, you should not be found unprepared for death; for the same preparation is needful for both.

Object. V. But, say some, we are not fit for the Lord's table (and perhaps it is very true:) Why? We have but loose lives and conversations; there is some bad company we cannot be free of, some sins we cannot get left; and so we cannot come to the Lord's table.

Ans. 1*st*, God will surely look upon it as no other than a mocking of him, to say, you are not dressed for this feast, when indeed you never went about to make yourselves ready. Nay, he will look upon it as the most heinous wickedness, for you to go on wilfully in your sins and wicked courses, and then to make your sins an excuse for the neglect of those duties he commands you.

2dly, If you say, you are not fit for the Lord's supper here; you must confess you are less fit for the marriage-supper of the Lamb above. And, how can you live one day contentedly in that condition you dare not venture to die in; or, if you die in it, you must be eternally excluded from heaven? Consider then, O profane sinner, although you may now sit Christ's charming call to come to his table and remember him, you cannot sit his alarming call to come to his tribunal to answer before him. And, how can you think to look upon that face with comfort at that day, which now you have no pleasure to behold in the symbols of bread and wine?

3dly, Let me ask thee, O profane man, do you intend to repent and leave your sins; or do you not? If you do not intend it, then it is in vain to treat with you, seeing you wilfully make choice of everlasting burnings. But there are few so graceless and wicked, but will say they have intentions to do it. Well, if your intentions be hearty and sincere, surely you will put them speedily in execution: and, if you do this, your objection evanisheth; your bad life can no longer hinder you from this ordinance, seeing all penitent reforming sinners are welcome to Christ, and to his table also, whatever their former lives have been.

Object. VI. But (saith one) I am not in charity with my neighbours; I am at variance with such a person that hath injured me; and so I cannot come to the Lord's table.

Ans. 1*st*, I do acknowledge, the want of love to our neighbours, and the entertaining of angry strife and discord with them, do very much discompose and unfit us for approaching to this feast of love; and therefore we should use all endeavours to remove these impediments before-hand.

2dly, Suppose thy neighbour hath done thee wrong, and given you just ground of displeasure with him; yet you ought to use endeavours to get the difference removed, by seeking to convince him of his fault, and showing your readiness to forgive him, and be reconciled with him.

3dly, Suppose thy neighbour, after all Christian methods taken with him, persists in his injuries without repentance or reparation; it is no uncharitableness to be displeased with him, if thy anger keep within just bounds, and thou dost not hate his person, or study revenge against him. The apostle saith, Eph. iv. 26. "Be angry, and sin not," whence we see, that anger may be separated from sin. Now, what is not sin, doth not make us unfit for this holy ordinance. A man may be innocently angry, when he is justly displeased with another, both for offending God and himself; but in the mean time, is so far from desiring revenge, or seeking his hurt, that he pities and prays for the injurious person, and is ready to render good for evil. Now, when this is the case, as our anger or displeasure doth not indispose us for the sacrament, so neither should our neighbour's unchristian behaviour and backwardness to reconciliation, deter us from our duty, or tempt us to deprive ourselves of the benefit of thi ordinance.

4thly, But if you be of the number of those who keep up quarrels with your neighbours, are of unforgiving and revengeful spirits; you are altogether unfit for this ordinance, and should tremble to approach it in such a condition; seeing in effect you renounce Christ as a Saviour, reject his example, and despise his precepts. You cannot pray as he directs, "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us; "for this were no other than a fearful imprecation of wrath against yourselves. Would you then have forgiveness of the injuries you have done to God? would you have this blessing sealed to you in the sacrament, and openly declared at the great day? then be ready to forgive those that wrong you, lay aside quarrels, abhor revenge, let not the sun go down upon your wrath, seek peace and friendship with all. Remember that those who harbour wrath and malice in their hearts, are as unfit to appear at God's tribunal as at his table.

Object. VII. "Though we be not in case for this, yet we resolve to prepare and go to the next communion."

Ans. 1*st*, All delays in well-doing are highly dangerous, and particularly in the present case. For, 1*st*, Your lives are wholly uncertain, you may not live to see another communion. Many were alive at the last communion, that are now dead, and fixed in their everlasting lot; and many now living will, in all likelihood, be in the same state before the next communion; and you know not but you may be among them. And, if so, consider what stinging reflections the slighters of Christ and his institutions will have through eternity; therefore neglect not the present opportunity.

2dly, Though God should spare you to see another occasion of this sort, what ground have you to think you shall be more willing or fit to communicate then, than at present?

Do you not know that by delays the heart is still the more hardened, and the habits of sin the more strengthened? And, if you refuse to hearken to God's call now, he may refuse to hear your cry afterward, Zech. vii. 13.

Object. VIII. "But, say some scrupulous and doubting souls, this is an awful and tremendous ordinance: and it is not safe for such poor, unworthy and unprepared creatures as we are, to meddle with it."

Ans. 1*st*, It is very ordinary for people to run into extremes about this ordinance. Either they entertain too low an opinion, or else they have too frightful thoughts of it: and both these are to be equally guarded against. Remember, that the sacrament was not instituted to terrify believers, but to bring them into converse and familiarity with their Lord and Saviour, and to give them the tokens and intimations of his love. And why should a feast of love be terrible to us?

2dly, Every man, in a legal sense, is unworthy to approach to this holy table: we are all as an unclean thing, and our righteousness, as filthy rags before God. But he is graciously pleased to accept of them who abhor themselves for their pollution, and seek shelter under the covert of Christ's righteousness.

3dly, How long will you make use of this excuse of unfitness and unpreparedness? Do ye intend to do it all your days? Or, will it be of any use to you when you are called to die? When God commands you to die, will you have confidence to say, Lord, I cannot obey at this time, for I am not prepared? No no; it would be in vain then to hang back, seeing death will not spare when it gets commission, whether prepared, or unprepared. Would you not, therefore, in such a case, set about immediate preparation, and do what you are able to get yourselves prepared for death? So do in this case: when Christ commands you to come to his table, though matters be sadly out of order with you, yet set about the work in obedience to his command, prepare what ye are able, and look to him for strength, who pities the weak, and accepts of sincere mints at duty.

Object. IX. "But (some may insist to say) we are unworthy; for we have not only many defects in our lives, but also many inward distempers, heart plagues, hardness, deadness, darkness, prevailing corruptions," &c.

Ans. 1*st*, No wonder you complain of many distempers, when you refuse the means of healing. May not God look upon it as dissimulation, to complain of the hardness of your heart, while you come not to apply the blood of Christ to soften it; or of the prevailing of your corruptions, while you come not to Christ's cross to subdue them? No wonder that God withdraw from your souls, when you withdraw from your duty. No wonder you are strangers to spiritual joy, when you will not come to draw water out of the wells of salvation. No wonder you complain of the weakness of grace, when you will not make use of the means for strenthening it. Many have found at this ordinance a cure for all their diseases, a supply to all their wants, and an answer to all their complaints.

2dly, Study to do your part by serious preparation, and you may expect God will not fail to do his part: Spread out your sores and diseases before the great Physician and look unto him for healing; press through all doubts and discouragements towards him, believing you shall be healed, if you can but touch the hem of his garment. If you sincerly, heartily, and impartially, repent of all known sins, and rely on Jesus Christ for mercy and pardon, you have no reason to question but you shall be welcome guests at the Lord's table, although you find in your hearts many infirmities and plagues, and in your lives many defects and shortcomings.

Object. X. "But (say some) that word *damnation* frights us, 1 Cor. xi. 29. "It is terrible to eat and drink damnation to ourselves, as unworthy communicants do."

Ans. It is very true, unworthy communicants are liable to damnation; but so also are all other sinners: whosoever hears the word unworthily, or prays unworthily, incurs the peril of damnation, as well as he that communicates unworthily; and yet you do not think you ought to desist from hearing or praying on that account, and why only from communicating? Every sin, indeed, is damning in its own nature, and so is unworthy receiving in a special manner: But sincere repenting and believing in Christ is an expedient against this as well as other sins; for "the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sins."

Object. XI. "We are afraid (say some) to come and enter into covenant with God, and take on vows at the Lord's table, lest we do not keep them, but fall again into new sins, and so increase our guilt.

Ans. 1*st*, If it were left, as a matter of indifference, to come to or absent yourselves from the Lord's table, as you pleased, your objection might be pertinent; but remember, this is a duty enjoined under the highest pains. You see what fearful destruction came upon them that refused to come to the marriage-supper, Matt. xxii. 7.

2dly, It is good always to be jealous of ourselves; for we have good reason for it, considering the deceitfulness

of our hearts. But this should not keep us from the ordinance, or make us to neglect our duty.

3dly, Breach of vows, or sins committed after a sacrament, though they be of greater guilt than other sins, yet we are not to judge them unpardonable; for, who is it that liveth and sinneth not? Such a notion perhaps hath possessed the ignorant Muscovites, who endeavour to fall asleep as soon as they have received the sacrament to prevent, by that means, any occasion of sinning.

4thly, There is ground to suspect, that this excuse or pretence is not real with many; but rather, that they are unwilling to come under new bonds and engagements to a holy life. They entertain some affection to their old sins, and are not willing to renounce them altogether, and prepare sincerely for this holy ordinance.

5thly, If you be so much afraid of sin, and of sinning after the sacrament; why are you not afraid of this sin of neglecting the sacrament, which I showed before to be very heinous? Now, why do you live in this sin so quietly? Surely, if you were afraid of all sin, you would be afraid of this heinous sin too; and so would make conscience of preparing yourselves for the Lord's table, that you might be preserved from the guilt of slighting this solemn ordinance.

Lastly, Consider you are not to vow and engage here in your own strength, but in the strength of the Lord Jesus; you are to trust and rely upon him, "who performeth all things for us," Psal. lvii. 2; for he is become surety for our duty, as well as for our debt. Now, whatever be our own weakness, we should not scruple to engage with such an able surety.

DIRECT. III. *Believe and be persuaded, that communicating is not only a duty, but that it is a duty incumbent upon you to communicate frequently.*

BAPTISM being a sacrament appointed for the initiation and implantation of believers into the church, it is to be received but once by the same person, and not to be reiterated: but the Lord's supper being a sacrament instituted for the nutrition, increment, and growth of believers, it is often to be received and repeated by them. And this may be confirmed by many reasons:

I. Frequent partaking of the Lord's supper is injoined by the same authority which instituted it. For Christ tells us, that we are not only to eat of this bread, and drink of this cup, but we are to do it *often*; as is recited by the apostle, 1 Cor. xi. 25. "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." And again, ver. 26. "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." Now when our Lord doth expressly command the duty in these words, *Do this in remembrance of me;* and doth twice over annex the word often, as necessary in the doing of it; it is all one as if he had said, *Do this often in remembrance of me.* So that for Christians to communicate seldom, is disobedience to Christ, and a contempt of divine authority: for our Redeemer is God, and we are to look upon his commands as the same with the commands of God the Father, seeing he approved of our Mediator, and of every thing he did. Had not his institutions been agreeable to the Father's will, he had not been so welcomed at his return to heaven, and advanced to such royal dignity to sit upon his throne of glory.

II. In obedience to Christ's authority, the apostles and primitive Christians did frequently partake of the Lord's supper; yea, it was their ordinary practice every Lord's day, as is evident from Acts xx. 7. "And, upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them." The Christians there, are brought in as meeting together for partaking of the sacrament (which is oft expressed by breaking of bread), without any previous warning, because it was their ordinary custom so to do. And this practice was kept up in the church for several centuries after the apostles' death, as is testified by the historians and fathers of the ancient church. And, from their practice of constant breaking of bread every Lord's day, the day was anciently called *Dies panis*, *August. Epist.* 118. And this primitive practice (according to some) was grounded upon the word, Ezek. xliii. 27. "And when these days are expired, it shall be on the eighth day, and so forward, the priests shall make your burnt-offerings upon the altar, and your peace-offerings, and I will accept you, saith the Lord God." Now, this vision containing a prophetical description of the gospel times, and of the ceasing of the ceremonial law for daily-sacrifices, by the eighth day they understand the Lord's day, as being the eighth day following upon the seventh, viz. the Jewish sabbath, in room whereof it was to succeed. By burnt-offering, the Lord's supper, as being the remembrance of the great burnt-offering, whereby our peace was made. By peace-offerings, prayer, and thanksgiving, which are called sacrifices, Hebrews xiii. 15. and are the proper work of every Lord's day. The primitive Christians were peculiarly fond of the Lord's supper; when they had the opportunity of a public assembly, though upon a week day (as severals do observe from Acts ii. 46.) they could not think of parting till they had celebrated the memorials of Christ's dying love. They reckoned this piece of worship a principal part of the Christian religion, which, in a manner, doth comprehend all other parts of it, and is an epitome of the whole. They accounted it a chief means of conveying to them the benefits of their Redeemer's death. And they would not slight the occasion of taking this provision and *viaticum* in those stormy times, when they knew not but they might be snatched away by the fury of persecutors before the next day of public meeting.

III. The Lord's supper was appointed for the commemoration of the death and sufferings of Christ, and of his love to us manifested therein; and therefore we ought frequently to celebrate it for that end. Though gratitude to a merciful God, and love to him that loved us, and washed us in his blood, should engage us constantly to remember redeeming love: yet, alas! we are naturally unmindful of God, ungrateful to Christ our Saviour, and apt to forget his matchless love: and therefore we frequently need this help (which he of purpose hath instituted) to renew our remembrance of him. Say not, you can remember Christ frequently without this; for this were to make yourselves wiser than the institutor of this ordinance. Besides, may not experience tell you what faint thoughts and languid remembrance you ordinarily have of him, notwithstanding of the word read and preached, until this solemn ordinance doth return and revive the memory of his love, and fix your thoughts more solemnly upon him. Ah! the body of death doth hinder us from remembering the Lord of life. It is not sufficient to commemorate his love once a-year; there ought to be a constant and habitual re-

membering of our Redeemer's death, and this habit must be acquired by frequent and reiterated acts of communicating. But supposing we would remember him without this; yet surely it would be base ingratitude to neglect to remember him in his own method, and by the means of his own chusing, when he might have put far harder conditions upon us.

IV. Christ hath appointed this sacrament as a spiritual meal for the nourishment and strength of his people, and for the growth and increase of their graces: and therefore it ought to be frequently received. Meals for the nourishment of our bodies must be often repeated, because of the frequent recurring of our needs; we are all so sensible of it, that we do not refuse to come frequently to our stated meals: and though it be not told us how often we should eat and drink, yet our craving appetites, and the sense of our want of food and strength, are sufficient to direct in this matter. And, should not the sense of our souls' need of spiritual food and strength, direct us to frequency in communicating? We are in a journey, and we need strength to go forward. We are weak of ourselves, and the best are liable to frequent decays of grace, and we have all need of frequent supplies of strength, to enable us to perform duties, bear crosses, resist enemies, and beat down lusts: and, consequently, we have frequent need of this quickening, restoring, and strengthening meal, which Christ hath graciously provided for us in this ordinance. It is hereby that faith is strengthened, repentance renewed, love inflamed, desire sharpened, and the soul encouraged and confirmed in the ways of God.

V. This ordinance was instituted for bringing us to near communion with God; and therefore should be frequently celebrated and attended by us. Hence it is that we call it the *communion*, according to that word, 1 Cor. x. 16. And, as the apostle tells us there, ver. 19, 20. that the partaking of things sacrificed to idols, was a fellowship with devils; so here the partaking of that which was sacrificed to God, is a fellowship with God. In this ordinance there is more communion to be had with God, than in any other; more than in prayer or praise: for we have not so near communion with a prince or great man, by petitioning him, or returning him thanks for a favour received, as we have by sitting with him at his table, and partaking of the same bread, and the same cup with him. It is here that believers sit, feast, and converse familiarly with Jesus Christ. Christ was "made known to the disciples in the breaking of bread," though they knew him not before in the opening of the scriptures, Luke xxiv. 30, 31. Now, if it be our duty to seek frequent communion and converse with God, and frequent views and discoveries of Jesus Christ, then, surely, it is our duty to make frequent approaches to the Lord's table. Do we think that we can too oft behold a crucified Jesus? Can we too oft clasp about our bleeding High Priest? Can we too oft hear the music of his voice, or see the beauty of his face? Surely, if we love him, we will desire frequently to be in those ways where we may meet with him.

VI. This sacrament is an excellent mean for the weakening of sin, and keeping it under; and therefore we should frequently attend it. The soul is most animated and resolved against sin, when it sees God's wrath and indignation manifested against it: now, where can we behold this so well as in this ordinance, which represents the dreadful agonies and sufferings of Christ our surety? Here we may see Christ sacrificed to justice, overwhelmed with blood, made a curse, and bearing all that wrath and vengeance which the law threatened for sin. The souls looking upon Christ here, doth open the spring of sorrow for sin, Zech. xii. 10. Our frequent approaches to a wounded Saviour here, do kindle frequent resolutions against sin that pierced him, and make us look and cry to him for grace to subdue it. Now, this is what we are constantly needing: for there is still a root of bitterness in us, always sprouting up; but frequent approaches to this ordinance do contribute to curb and crop it. Sins and lusts of themselves are apt to revive and gather strength, but the sacramental cup is poison to them. Do you think, then, that we can too oft take this cup into our hands, or put our hands into Christ's wounds, or take a view of the sin-killing blood?

VII. This ordinance is a choice mean for strengthening our faith in the promises, and confirming us in the sense of Christ's love; and therefore it should be frequently celebrated. It was upon this account, that so great joy and gladness did attend the keeping of the passover of old, 2 Chron. xxx. 21, 26. It was the frequent breaking of bread that made the primitive Christians to continue in their gladness of heart, Acts ii. 46. And no wonder a man's heart be glad, and be encouraged to go on his way rejoicing, when he gets a new seal of his pardon and peace with God. We frequently contract guilt, and thereby blot our evidences, and disturb our peace; and therefore we need to come frequently to this ordinance, to get the blood of sprinkling applied, for removing our guilt, clearing our evidences, sealing our peace, and renewing our joy. It is matter of joy to see the rainbow appearing frequently in the clouds as a sign of God's minding his covenant, and securing the world against a destroying deluge: in like manner, it should rejoice the heart, and strengthen faith, frequently to behold this sacrament, which (like the rainbow in the clouds) is a sign of God's securing the believing world against the overflowing flood of God's wrath.

VIII. We need frequently the influences of the holy Spirit, and therefore should come frequently to this ordinance. For, in this sacrament it is most likely that the Spirit will work and exert himself; when the office of the Spirit, and end of the institutions, do meet and agree in one. The office of the Spirit is to bring things to our remembrance, and the chief designs of this ordinance is to bring a crucified Jesus, and his love and sufferings, to remembrance; now, surely it is the most likely time for the holy Spirit to come and exercise his blessed function, and join in with the end of the sacrament. Hither, then, should becalmed souls frequently repair, and wait for the Spirit's gales.

I might add many other arguments, but surely, if we had a due sense of our souls' necessities, we should need no more to convince us of the necessity of frequent communicating. Do we not feel our needs frequently recurring, our graces languishing, faith weakening, love cooling, affections turning dead? Are we not apt frequently to grow cold and formal in hearing and praying, yea, dull and lukewarm in all our performances? And have we not frequent need of this reviving and enlivening ordinance, to recruit us with new strength and quickening? But, alas? we have little sense of our souls' wants, and little sense of our Saviour's love; otherwise we would not be so unwilling frequently to remember such an incomparable friend and benefactor, who took our sins upon himself, and cast upon us the robe of his righteousness. Did primitive Christians think once

a week little enough to commemorate his love; and shall modern Christians reckon once a-year sufficient? Is this our kindness to the always lovely and loving Jesus? O will we not remember him frequently, who remember believers perpetually?

Objections Answered.

Object. I. "But (say some) the zeal and devotion of the apostolic age is now gone; and Christians are become more careless and formal in religious duties, than in those days, and so are unfit for frequent partaking of this solemn ordinance.

Ans. 1*st*, I grant, indeed, the first Christians were animated with more life and love, and were habitually in a better frame for this love-feast, than, alas! the most of us are: yet, I am persuaded, you will not deny but we are under the same obligations of love and gratitude to our dying Redeemer that they were, and have as much need of the frequent application of his blood, and of a confirmed interest in his meritorious death, as they had. And, seeing our obligations and exigences are the same, our differing so widely from their practice cannot be justified.

2*dly*, The ancient church did follow the example of the apostolic age, in communicating generally every Lord's day, for several hundreds of years after the apostles' days; as might be made appear, by many quotations (if it were needful) out of the histories and writings of *Eusebius*, *Socrates*, *Cyprian*, *Chrysostom*, *Ambrose*, *Augustine*, and many others of the ancient fathers. As the blood of Christ is as fresh and efficacious in the present, as the first centuries of the church; so it should be as dear and precious to Christians in this as any former age.

3*dly*, It is most sad that Christians should be so easy under the decay of piety and love to a crucified Jesus, that is so visible in these latter days. Should not the consideration hereof be matter of bitter lamentations and complaint to all the lovers of Christ, and put us incessantly to cry to Heaven, "Wilt thou not receive us again? Renew our days as of old."

4*thly*, Is there not ground to think, that the decay of piety and Christian love, in our days, is much owing to the neglect and unfrequent use of this soul quickening ordinance? No wonder that our hearts turn hard, when we so seldom have recourse to Christ's blood for softening them, that our graces grow weak and withered, when we so little use Christ's appointed means for cherishing and strengthening them; and that we have but little of the smiles of his face, when we so little regard his dying words. Frequent communicating in Christ's own way and method, might be a mean, through his blessing, to revive decayed religion, to keep sin under constant rebukes and disgrace, and Christ in continual esteem and respect among us. This might contribute to cure and prevent that formality in duty, carelessness of spirit, and forgetfulness of Christ, which so woefully prevails in our land.

Object. II. "If we communicate as often as you urge us, we are afraid frequency will breed formality in this duty."

Ans. 1*st*, The Apostles and primitive Christians found no such bad effect of their frequent partaking; but were farther from formality, and far more serious, fervent, and spiritual in this duty, than those Christians who now partake but once a-year.

2*dly*, Our formality in attending this ordinance is nowise chargeable upon the institution of Christ, or its frequent administration; but upon the corruption and carelessness of our hearts, which all Christians should carefully watch and wrestle against, and labour in the strength of Christ, so often as they partake, to prepare for it with all seriousness and solemnity.

3*dly*, Were this a good reason against frequency in this duty, it might be pleaded against frequency in other duties also; and so we should seldom read or hear the word, seldom meditate on God, pray, or sing psalms, lest frequency should beget formality therein. But it is a bad way of arguing, to say, because frequency in prayer, hearing, or communicating, may occasion formality and heart-wanderings, therefore I will seldom pray, &c. No: the inference should rather be, therefore I will watch over my heart more carefully, I will look for the renewed influences of the Spirit, and strive to be more sincere and fervent in duty.

4*thly*, Though frequency in partaking should have a bad effect on some, yet it hath and will have a good effect upon others, who make conscience of preparing for the duty. Instead of breeding formality; it doth beget the greater liveliness and spirituality in them, and raise their appetite the more after the heavenly manna. It is certain, the oftener we carefully and believingly communicate, the better disposed we shall be for new approaches.

Object. III. "The Jews did partake of the passover only once in the year."

Ans. God fixed the passover to a certain day of the year, to mind them of their temporal deliverance from Egypt, as well as of their future redemption by the Messiah's death at that time; and therefore it was annual. But, besides that, they had their daily sacrifices of slain beasts in the temple, which were lively types of Christ, and a remembrance to them of his death; so that the Jews did not need such a frequent celebration of the passover for that end. But in the new testament church Christ hath settled only his supper as the great ordinance of commemoration of his death and sufferings; and therefore we ought not to confine ourselves to the Jews' annual custom: nay, on the contrary, Christians now, to whom Christ hath made such bright discoveries of his love, in sacrificing himself upon a cross for their salvation, should far exceed the Jew's (who lived in such dark times) in expressing love to their Saviour, and in celebrating the memorials of his love to them. The love of the primitive Christians was so warm this way, that they thought themselves bound to celebrate their gospel passover in remembrance of a crucified Christ once a week, which the Jews did but once a year.

Object. IV. "But," saith one, "my business and calling in the world is such, that I have not liberty for frequent communicating, neither have I occasions near me for doing it."

Ans. 1*st*, I grant that all men cannot communicate alike often, seeing the worldly callings and affairs of one man do administer more distraction than those of another! And some cannot command their time so much as others.

2*dly*, People should do what lies in them to order their affairs so beforehand, that they may have freedom for frequent communicating. But if persons have business brought on them, not by themselves, but by the providence of God, they are excuseable for their omission at one occasion; but then they should be careful to lay hold upon the next. In keeping of the passover, there was a dispensation allowed to those that were under ceremonial uncleanness, or engaged in busi-

ness on a journey, Numb. ix, yet it was allowed, not for a year, but for a month's omission. For when they could not keep it upon the 14th of the first month, they were ordered to keep it on the 14th of the next month, and not to stay until the next annual revolution, Numb. ix. 10, 11. As it would be agreeable to this injunction, so it would be a desirable attainment in the church, and an advantage to the members of it, if matters were so ordered among us, that, when persons are necessarily hindered from partaking of the Lord's supper in their own congregation, they might be sure of an occasion to do it next month, if not in their own, at least in the neighbouring congregation.

Object. V. "The last time I was at the Lord's table I got no benefit by it; nay, I fear I communicated unworthily: now, for me to come frequently in this manner, I fear to contract greater guilt, and do myself more hurt than good. Therefore I will not soon adventure upon another approach."

Ans. 1st, There are some good things implied in this objection, such as, a review of former actions, some sense of sin and trouble for it, and a loathness to offend God; which are some desirable tokens of repentance, and may yield some comfort to an excercised soul.

2dly, In this case, long deferings will do you more hurt than frequent communicating: for as by too much fasting we often lose our stomachs; so, by long withdrawing from the Lord's table, you may come to lose your desire after the food of your souls, and to have a low esteem of Christ, and of his solemn ordinance.

3dly, There is no communicant, but, upon a review, may spy many defects in his frame and preparation, for which he could not answer, if God did enter into judgment with him: but he must not therefore abandon his duty, but flee to Christ's fountain for washing, and to the covert of his righteousness, to screen all his imperfections. We read of severals in Hezekiah's time, 2 Chron. xxx. that were not so suitably prepared for the passover as they should have been, and ate it otherwise than it was written; and yet, upon Hezekiah's praying for them, God pardoned their sin, and healed them.

4thly, It may yield comfort to a troubled soul, if upon a review he can say, it was his earnest desire to communicate humbly, with a lively frame, and the exercise of all the sacramental graces; and whatever short-comings he was chargeable with, they were not wilful and allowed, but matter of grief and mourning to him. If this be your case, then your defects are sins of infirmity, which your gracious God will pardon for Christ's sake.

5thly, Whatever your short-comings formerly have been, you ought to be humbled for them, flee to the blood of Christ for pardon, and resolve in his strength to come more reverently, humbly and believingly, to his table for the future, and that in order to renew your covenant with God, and receive a seal of the pardon of all your former sins, and particularly of the sin of unworthy communicating. And this you may expect, if you persevere in the road of duty, looking to God in Christ, who is still ready to welcome and pardon the penitent believer: but to absent and withdraw from God's ordinance, is to put yourself out of the road of his mercy, and to aggravate your former sin of unsuitable partaking.

Object. VI. "If we did communicate so frequently, we would not have such time to prepare ourselves for this ordinance as were needful, and as now we have."

Ans. If we did partake more frequently, less pains and time about preparation-work might be more successful, and sooner reach the end, than all the pains and time we now bestow that way: for thus we might be helped to keep up a communion-frame habitually, and it would be no such difficulty (as now we find it) to get the tears of repentance poured out, or the fire of divine love blown up, when called to celebrate this ordinance. The believer, when in a right frame, the oftener he comes to the communion, he finds the more nourishment, and hath the greater delight in it; and so he comes to have such a longing for the ordinance as the child hath for the mother's breast.

Direct. IV.—*Be persuaded of the necessity of solemn prepauration before you approach to the Lord's table.*

IF we be required to take heed to ourselves, when we enter the house of the Lord, Eccles. v. 1. much more doth it concern us to look to ourselves when we approach the table of the Lord. Why? This holy table is under the gospel the solemn trysting-place of the great God, where he useth to meet with men, and to entertain converse and communion with them. And have we not then ground to call to you in the prophet's words, Amos iv. 12. "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel?" Remember who it is that trysts with you; it is God, even thy God. Did an angel tryst to meet you at a certain place, against such an hour, would you not prepare with all seriousness and solemnity to keep tryst with him? Oh, but it is the God of angels that trysts with you here; even that God, before whom all the angels adore, and the devils tremble: a holy and jealous God, who hath declared that he will be sanctified in them that come nigh to him, Lev. x. 3. And, can you come so near him any where in the world, as at his holy table? What Samuel spoke to the elders of Bethlehem, in the case of offering sacrifice, may well be applied to communicants in the case of approaching to the Lord's table, 1 Sam. xvi. 5 "Sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice." So, well may your ministers say to you, *Sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrament.* Come here, and behold the sacrifice of the Lamb of God unto divine justice for your sins: for "even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us," 1 Cor. v. 7. Here he is represented as a lamb slain, to pacify a holy God for our impurity and unholiness. It is most fit then that we perpare and sanctify ourselves, when we adventure so near this holy God, and take upon us to celebrate the commemoration of this blessed sacrifice in our gospel passover.

The Jews had their preparation for their passover, John xix. 14. They took the paschal lamb and set it apart from the rest of the flock on the tenth day of the month, but did not kill it till the *fourteenth,* Exod. xii. 3, 6. And during the four days the lamb was kept alive (Jewish rabbies tells us) they tied it to their bed-posts, that hearing the bleatings of the lamb as they came in and went out, lay down and rose up, two things thereby might be brought to their remembrance: *1st,* They might look back to Egypt, and remember the sorrows and bondage they endured there, and be thankful for their redemption; and, especially, for their deliverance from the destroying angel, that night he passed over their houses, which were sprinkled with the blood of the lamb: *2dly,* They were to look forward to the Messiah, and remember the bitter agonies and sufferings he was to endure for their sins. Thus the paschal lamb for several days was to be prepared for its sufferings, to teach the peo-

ple of God solemnly to prepare themselves for eating thereof, and therein to celebrate the memorial of the Messiah's sufferings, which were thereby typified. That the four days separation of the lamb was a continual standing sermon, preaching and preparation, to the Israelites, as if God had said to them, *Be ye also sequestrated from the world, and take time to think on the bleatings of the Lamb, the agonies of Christ, and prepare yourselves for this solemn ordinance.* Oh, what shall we say of those, who, instead of *four days*, never spent *four hours*, in serious preparation for our great *gospel passover!* O worthy communicants, as soon as you hear the Lord's supper intimated, let the lamb be tied to your bed-posts; entertain the lively meditation of your Redeemer's sufferings, and beg preparation of heart from God for celebrating the memorial thereof. Was our Lord so long a time in preparing for them, and shall we take no time in preparing to behold them, especially when it is so highly for our advantage so to do?

We read, that the primitive Christians, and ancient fathers, used to sit up whole nights at prayer, before they approached to the Lord's table, which they called their *Vigiliæ*.

In this ordinance, God makes great preparation for us; he hath provided a feast which hath cost more than ten thousand kingdoms, or a million of worlds: and, ought not the guests who are honoured with an invitation to it, to make great and solemn preparation for it? Were we called to dine with an earthly prince, we would dress ourselves, and see to have every thing about us in good order: but here we are called to feast with a holy and all-seeing God, who will infallibly spy out every unprepared communicant, "when he comes to see the guests," Matt. xxii. 11.

If the linen on the communion-table, or the vessels that contain the elements, were foul, you would be ready to cry out, it is a horrid shame and abomination to see them in such a case; and so, indeed, it would, for there ought to be an outward decency in these things; our Lord would have the very room in good order, where he was to eat the passover. But, O, it is a small crime to have a foul cloth or vessel for receiving the outward elements, in respect of what it is to have a foul heart, an unprepared soul, to receive the body and blood of Christ.

Joseph prepared himself, by shaving himself and changing his raiment, before he went in unto Pharaoh; and wilt thou not prepare thyself, by putting thy soul in the holiest dress and humblest posture, when thou art to go in to the King of heaven and earth? O communicant, thou exceedingly wrongest thine own soul, if thou dost it not. *Preparation* is the seed time, *receiving* is the harvest: "as a man soweth, so shall he reap. He who soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly: and he who soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully. 2 Cor. ix. 6. It is in the duty of *partaking*, as in the duty of *praying*, the more prepared the heart is to pray, the greater is a man's return from heaven, Psal. x. 17. "Thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear." So, in the case of receiving, it may be said, *Thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine hand to give.* When God gives us a heart prepared for duty, it is a token he hath a hand prepared for mercy.

Hence it is, that the Lord makes that gracious promise, Psal. lxxxi. 10. "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." I'll enlarge my hand as you enlarge your hearts. He saith, as Joseph to his steward, Gen. xliv. 1. "Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry." According as Joseph's brethren prepared sacks in number and largeness, so did they carry corn away; and the fewer and smaller sacks they had, the less they carried away. So here, if you bring prepared and enlarged hearts to the ordinance, you shall be supplied with as much as you can carry.

DIRECT. V.—*Consider, that both habitual and actual preparation is requisite for worthy communicating.*

I. HABITUAL preparation is necessary to every communicant, *that is*, that he be a believer, a man in a gracious state, furnished with the graces of the Spirit, endued with knowledge, faith, repentance, love and new obedience. No man is fit to approach the Lord's table, till he have these gracious habits planted in his soul. He must be a man that is renewed inwardly by the Spirit of God, and aims at holiness in all manner of conversation. This new wine must not be put into an old vessel, else the wine will be spilt, and the vessel perish. It was an ancient abuse of this sacrament, condemned by the Carthaginian council, to give it to dead men; so it is an abuse condemned by the word of God to give it to dead souls, and those who have no spiritual life. Under the law, God did forbid the offering of sacrafices that either were blind or lame, Mal. i. 8. and they that were ceremonially unclean, could not keep the passover. The ignorant person's sacrifice is blind, for he cannot give account of his own work: the hypocrite's sacrifice is lame, for he halteth in God's way: the profane man is morally unclean, and so cannot entertain communion with a holy God. Holiness becomes God's house, and in a special manner his table. Habitual holiness is requisite for all that would be worthy communicants. You must be holy universally, holy in the frame of your hearts, and in all the actions of your lives; holy in your shops, by diligence and justice; holy at your tables, by sobriety and thankfulness; holy in the streets, by an innocent useful conversation; holy in your closets, by prayer and meditation. Yea, you must account your whole lives nothing but an opportunity of serving a holy God, and of mortifying sin and corruption; and this habitual holiness would dispose your souls for the acts of immediate worship.

But unholy persons are altogether unprepared for such a near approach to God. Hearts full of rancour and malice, are not meet to come to this feast of love: feet that walk in the ways of sin, are not fit to tread in God's holy place: hands stained with injustice are unfit to handle these holy mysteries; mouths that are polluted with swearing and evil speaking, are not fit to eat and drink the sacred symbols of Christ's body and blood; eyes defiled with unchaste looks, and bewitched with the world's vanities, are unfit to look on the holy Jesus; ears that entertain reproaches of God's people, and hearken not to the counsels of his word, are not fit to hear the joyful sound of pardon intimated at his table. They who expect the King of glory to enter into their souls' at the solemn occassion, must have the doors thereof cleanly and pure. Unhallowed sinners are not fit to receive this hallowed bread and wine. Our Lord's body never saw corruption in the grave, nor will he lodge in those bodies that are as nauseous sepulchres, and corrupt sinks of sin. It lay only in a *Virgin womb and sepulchre*, to show that he will only reside in *virgin souls*, that are devoted and consecrated to his use, and kept pure and chaste for his service, and do not entertain his rivals. I grant, indeed, impure thoughts will sometimes be crowding into the best hearts; but if we do not entertain them, but sincerely strive against them, and earnestly wish for better company, it is a token

Christ's spirit hath entered, and is about his work of purifying the heart.

If we would be habitually prepared for the Lord's table, we must be daily acquaint with the work of mortification and true repentance. We must always eye sin as our Saviour's deadly enemy, have no pity on it, but severely condemn ourselves for every trespass, instantly grieve for it, look to the blood of sprinkling for pardon, renew our resolutions to amend, and pray for special strength against every particular sin. We must daily meditate on precious Christ, and upon his first and second coming, and live continually in the view of death. And, if we lived thus, it would not be so hard to prepare ourselves for the Lord's table. If we lived in a habitual preparation for the day of death, we would also be habitually prepared for the day of communion. Had we God frequently in our thoughts, and lived constantly under the sense of his all-seeing eye; on the communion-day we should find little else to do but to revive our graces by the exercise of prayer and praise.

II. Actual preparation is also necessary before our approach to the Lord's table. Seeing, alas, the most part of Christians in this degenerate age, are so defective in their habitual preparation for this ordinance, they ought to be the more diligent in actual preparation for it. And this doth consist of a great many particulars; such as, 1. Sequestrating ourselves from the world: 2. Self-examination: 3. Humiliation for sin: 4. Renewing our personal covenant with God in Christ: 5. Reformation of what is amiss: 6. Exciting of all the graces to a lively exercise: 7. Meditation on the death and sufferings of Jesus Christ: 8. Earnest prayer to God for preparation and assistance in the work. All these belong to our actual preparation for the Lord's supper; and of them I shall afterwards treat more particularly.

Only I shall here observe that both habitual and actual preparation must go together, if we would be worthy communicants. We must both have grace in the habit, and grace in the lively exercise. All wise virgins that wait for the coming of the bridegroom, do take care to have oil still in their vessels, as well as in their lamps: nay, they must see to have their lamps burning ev[illegible]y day. But when they hear that the bridegroom is actually coming, then, in order to meet him, they do arise and fall afresh to the trimming of their lamps; they snuff them, stir up the light, and apply more oil to make them burn the brighter and clearer. And thus ought you to do, O communicant, if you would have a joyful meeting with your lovely bridegroom in the sacrament. Nay, if you come not with actual, as well as habitual, preparation, the sacrament may prove to you as the summer brooks to the thirsty traveller, of which Job speaks, Job vi. 19, 20. "The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them. They were confounded, because they had hoped; they came thither and were ashamed." Some come to the sacrament with a sort of actual preparation, but have no habitual preparation, no grace in the habit. Some again have habitual preparation, but not actual preparation; they want grace in the exercise. Both these will go from the ordinance, as the troops of Tema and companies of Sheba, disappointed of spiritual refreshment. If we would reap spiritual advantage in this ordinance, we must take care to be ready both ways, habitually and actually; for it is only such that the all-seeing Master of the feast will look upon as worthy communicants.

DIRECT. VI.—*Be convinced of the greatness of the sin, and hazard of unworthy communicating.*

WE are told both the one and the other in very plain terms, 1 Cor. xi. 27, 29. "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." And again, "He eateth and drinketh damnation *or* judgment to himself." So that we see the sin or crime is no less than that of murdering Jesus Christ, and of being found accomplices of the Jews and soldiers, who imbrewed their cruel hands in the innocent blood of the Son of God, which is a most dreadful charge! The hazard which this sin exposes to, is both temporal strokes, and eternal damnation. Seeing I have spoke of the nature and danger of this sin, *Sacr. Cat.* p. 107, 108, 110, &c. (*first edit.*) I shall say the less in this place.

Only to communicate unworthily, is to approach in an unworthy state, or in an unsuitable frame, or with wrong ends. When a person comes to the Lord's table in ignorance, without self-examination, without grief for sin, love to Christ, or faith in his blood, and is unprepared for this solemn ordinance, then he is an unworthy communicant.

Now, this must be a very heinous sin; for it imports your undervaluing the blood of Jesus Christ, as if it were the blood of an impostor or malefactor. For, if you look on the sufferings of Christ here represented, as the sufferings of the innocent Son of God, and the glorious Saviour of mankind, why do you not come suitably affected therewith, and grieved for your sins that were the cause thereof! But, if you do not really own or regard them as such, then, on the matter, you charge Jesus Christ as being the greatest impostor and criminal in the world, in declaring himself to be the Son of God and Saviour of sinners, when, in your esteem, he was not.

If you say, *God forbid we be guilty of this, we own Christ to be the Son of God, and the King of glory;* why then are you guilty of treason, and of offering the greatest indignity to your prince, by throwing his picture or great seal into a mire, by defacing and defiling a statue erected for his honour and remembrance? For any dishonour done to the image or representation reflects upon the original. What horrid contempt would it be for a subject to come in with nasty clothes and filthy hands, and offer to sit down at his sovereign's table, and dip into the dish with him? Now, all this, and much worse, you do, when you sit down unpreparedly at the Lord's table, and eat and drink unworthily.

Nay, you are hereby guilty of the basest disingenuity and of solemn mocking of the Lord Jesus Christ: for, by coming to the Lord's table, you pretend to be doing honour to Christ, to be deeply affected with his sufferings, and to declare your abhorrence of sin, that was the cause thereof. Now, when there is really no such thing, but, on the contrary, sin is hugged and embraced, what is this but horrid dissimulation with an all-seeing God? yea, it is an acting of Judas's part over again, a "betraying of the Son of man with a kiss."

But, which is worst of all, by this sin you become "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord:" for, as he is justly reckoned accessory to a murder, who either consents to it, makes light of it, or that abets and entertains the murderers: so unworthy communicants, who look upon the death and sufferings of the Son of God without remorse for their sins that pierced him, nay, love and lodge these traitors in their hearts that betrayed and cru-

cified the Lord of glory, are plainly accessory to the Jews' horrid guilt of shedding the blood of Jesus Christ.

It is a fearful thing to be guilty of any man's blood, even of the blood of a wicked man: but, how much more to be guilty of the blood of a righteous person, even of the Holy One of God? Simple murder is a crying sin, Gen. iv. 10. "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground." It cries so, that it gives God no rest, as it were, till he come and take vengeance on the shedder of it. Nature's light taught the *Barbarians* that *vengeance would not suffer a murderer to live*, Acts xxviii. 4. But, O what a cry do you think the innocent blood of Christ must have against the guilty communicant! It is terrible to have that blood which pleads for sinners crying against thee. Christ's blood applied by faith, "speaks better things than the blood of Abel:" but when it is trampled on in the sacrament, it doth speak and cry worse things than the blood of Abel; it will cry for more terrible vengeance than Abel's blood did. Wo to that poor soul for whom Christ's blood speaks not, but ten thousand woes to that soul which this blood speaks against.

It is the worst kind of treason, to shed the blood of an earthly king: but what wickedness must it be to shed the blood of the King of kings, one drop whereof is more precious than all the blood which ever ran in the veins of the kings and princes of the world since its first creation! We see what David said concerning the motion for killing king Saul: "Who can stretch out his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless? 1 Sam. xxvi. 9. But, O who can be guiltless that stretches out his hand against the Son of God? "Had Zimri peace who slew his master?" cried Jezebel to Jehu, 2 Kings ix. 31: and thinkest thou to have peace, O communicant, that goest to slay thy Master and Redeemer too? If God declared, that on him who slew Cain, "vengeance should be taken sevenfold? Gen. iv. 15, what vengeance shall be taken on him that slayeth Jesus Christ? Hadst thou never harsh thoughts of the Jews for their cruelty to the Son of God, and yet wilt thou be guilty of worse thyself? The Jews crucified him but once, but thou, by continuing to be an unworthy receiver, crucifiest him often; they did it ignorantly, but thou dost it knowingly. And the time when thou committest this sin, makes thy guilt prodigiously great. Would it not be reckoned a piece of the most barbarous wickedness in a poor traveller, that was found starving by the way-side, and out of pity taken in by a person given to hospitalty, for him to rise up, without any provocation, and stab his kind friend, while he was entertaining him at his own table? What a monstrous crime would this be! But how much more is it for you to pierce and stab Jesus Christ, when he is making a rich feast for you, displaying his banner of love, and inviting you to take sanctuary in his wounds!

It was a dreadful curse and imprecation that the Jews wished against themselves, Mat. xxviii. 25. "His blood be on us and upon our children." And now it has accordingly lien upon their heads these 1600 years, which has made them the most miserable people on the face of the earth. And wilt thou venture, by a rash approach to the Lord's table, to bring the Jews' curse upon thyself? Nay, stand in awe of this sin, and the curse following on it, and say with David (when Abishai persuaded him to slay Saul), "The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed." So when satan or thy own heart would persuade thee to be slight in thy self-examination, formal in thy humiliation for sin, and careless in thy preparation for this ordinance, that thou mightest be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord; let conscience then cry out, *God forbid that I should stretch out my hand against Jesus Christ the Lord's anointed. How can I do this wickedness and sin against God*, and wrong my own soul?

O communicant, if thou venturest on this horrid crime, God will remember it against thee, and make it bitter to thee another day in another place, if mercy prevent not. As Reuben told his brethren when they were in distress, Gen. xlii. 11. "Spake I not unto you, saying sin not against the child, and ye would not hear! Therefore, behold, his blood is required." So, if you approach to the Lord's table in sin, or in a formal way, and without preparation, then look for it, when affliction, sickness, or death comes; or, at least, in the other world, that conscience will fly in thy face, and say, *Spake I not unto thee, saying, do not sin against the holy child Jesus, and thou wouldst not hear? Therefore behold his blood is required at your hands*. And, O, what wilt thou do in such an hour!

If thou wouldst prevent such a challenge, take heed to thy preparation, and notice the frame of thy heart. Remember, God will take exact notice of what respect thou hast to the body and blood of his Son, and how thou preparest to receive it, Matt. xxii. 11, 12, 13. "And when the king came to see his guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment." Christ observes all those that come to his table; and, if there be but one unprepared, he cannot escape his eye, be the number or crowd never so great. He observes with what appetite thou goest to this heavenly feast; he observes with what resolution against sin for time to come, thou goest for pardon of sins past. He notices, O communicant, if thou goest to this gospel-ordinance, in a gospel order. And, wilt thou dare to trample on the blood of the Son of God as the blood of a malefactor, and even when he himself stands and looketh on. Will not the sense of his piercing eye overawe you at such a time? Surely, if in any time of thy life thou wouldest be extraordinarily serious, this ought to be the season. Now thou oughtest so to prepare for this feast, that the master of it may see thou art watchful of his eye, tender of his honour, and fearful of his anger. Forget not what was the fate of that man who came to the wedding-feast without a wedding-garment; when the king challenged him, *he was speechless*, and his sentence was, "bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into utter darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Remember also what strict orders were given concerning Mount Sinai, when God solemnly appeared on it; "if a beast did but touch it, it was to be stricken through with a dart." And, wilt thou venture to touch the table of the Lord with a beastly heart, a heart possessed with brutish lusts? Mayest thou not fear to be stricken through with a dart of God's wrath?

We read of some, as the emperor Henry, and Pope Victor II. that were poisoned with the sacrament, by the wickedness of the priests, who mingled poison with the bread and wine. Didst thou, O communicant, apprehend that the bread and wine before thee were poisoned, would not the very suspicion make thee tremble to eat and drink of it? Well, if thou art an unworthy receiver, there is poison in it to thy soul, and thou hast ground to cry to the minister, as the sons of the prophets did to Elisha, 2 Kings iv. 40, "O thou man of God, there is death in

the pot;' there is poison in the bread, there is wrath in the cup: how shall I partake, till this meal be sanctified to me, and my soul sanctified for it?

Our Lord makes a question, Luke xi. 11, "If a son ask bread of his father, will he give him a stone?" No; he will not deal so with a son that comes to his table sincerely to seek bread for his hungry soul; but with an enemy that comes unpreparedly to him, he will give a stone instead of bread: unworthy receiving makes a *transubstantiation* here, it changeth the *bread* into a *stone*; so that it will no more nourish thy suol, than a stone would do thy body: nay, like a stone, it will choke and kill thee, if the physician of souls do not prevent it.

We are told by the apostle, that unworthy receiving brings on temporal judgments, as well as spiritual and eternal. It brings on sickness and mortality on our bodies, 1 Cor. xi. 30, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." And some think it was the pestilence, or some such mortal distemper, that the Corinthians unworthy receiving did bring on them. Well, let us think on this; surely, if ever the pestilence come into Scotland, we may look on unworthy communicating as a chief cause of this desolating stroke.

What a great risk then, O sinner, dost thou run, when thou venturest to this holy table without due preparation? Thou even runnest upon the bosses of God's buckler, and provokest the vengeance of God against thyself. Thou mayest justly expect that God will turn it into such a feast to thee, as Belshazzer's was to him, who, in the time thereof, saw "a hand upon the wall writing his condemnation, so that his countenance was changed, his thoughts troubled him, and his knees smote one against another." In this ordinance you make a very near approach to God that is *infinitely holy*, and who is terrible from his holy places. The nearer God's altar, the fire of divine jealousy burns the hotter; and a wrong touch or look at that time is criminal, and may cost you dear. The Lord smote Uzza dead for one rash touch which he gave the ark; he smote 50,000 of the men of Bethshemesh, for an irreverent look into the ark? he devoured with fire from heaven Nadab and Abihu, for offering strange incense at his altar: and what he may do to thee for a rash approach to his holy table, none can tell. God may make thee a monument of wrath where thou sittest, strike thee dead with the bread in thy mouth, or cup in thy hand; and, if it be otherwise, thou wilt be highly indebted to the divine patience for sparing thee.

And, indeed, we have cause to be astonished at the matchless goodness and long-suffering of God, in suffering so many thousands of vile murderers to live so long in this world, and that he should suffer them to approach his table, and to wound and stab his dear Son over and over again, when he hath flames and vengeance at command, and can more easily crush them all, than we can do a moth; and, which is yet more, that he should unto such murderers make and repeat his offers of that blood which they have spilt, to wash them from the guilt of shedding it. And indeed it is this, and nothing but this, which is able to do it.

But, though God be patient and merciful, he will not bear always with such criminals; no, he hath many spiritual and invisible judgments, which he inflicts upon them. He makes fearful breaches upon their souls. He frequently lets loose satan against them, so that satan enters in with the sop. And, how fearful a thing is it, for the devil to be permitted to enter into a man or woman, and to do it at the Lord's table, so that the man rises up from this holy table with more eagerness after his lusts, and with more resolution and strength to do the devil's service, than before? And thus the *table of the Lord* becomes the *table of devils*, and the *cup of the Lord* the *cup of devils*, to such persons. And, should God also let loose satan against their bodies, as upon Judas after the sop, what terrible havock would he make among unworthy communicants? How fearfully would he revenge the blood of Christ? Many communion-tables would he turn into Golgothas and Aceldamas, places of *skulls* and fields of *blood*.

As the sweetest wine become the sharpest vinegar, so communion-love, when abused, brings the sorest wrath. The death and sufferings of Jesus Christ are the most serious and awful things that can be represented in the world, and therefore not to be dallied with. The blood of Christ is the most precious thing in the world, and therefore a drop cannot be spilt without a cry for vengeance. And, have not the best of us, alas, ground to fear we have contracted much of this guilt? Were our hearts never hard, our affections dead, our spirits carnal, and our minds wandering, when we have sat down at the Lord's table? Nay, have we not all reason to cry with David, Psal. li. "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy loving-kindness?" Ought we not all carefully to guard and earnestly to pray against this crying sin, and so prepare ourselves for this holy table, that we may not poison our precious souls with that choice cordial, which is intended for our health and eternal welfare?

Direct. VII.—*In order to your better preparation for the Lord's supper, sequestrate yourselves from worldly cares and business some time before.*

When you see the time of this solemn approach drawing near, *separate yourselves from the world*, and set earthly thoughts aside, that you may the better apply yousell to the spiritual work you have in hand. Under the law, the Jews were unfit for keeping the passover at the time appointed, in two cases, Numb. ix. either if they had *touched a dead body*, or were in a *journey*. The first made a man unclean, so that he behoved not to meddle with that holy ordinance, till he were cleansed according to the instituted method, which took up some time to do it. The second made him unfit, in regard his mind and thoughts would be so distracted with the business of his journey, that he could not be in a composed frame for keeping the passover: his heart would be unfixed and disturbed with worldly thoughts.

There are not a few who seem to think, if they be free from a *dead body*, i. e. if they be not defiled with some gross or scandalous sin, they are fit enough for the sacrament; and that they may approach to it, though they have their hearts *in journeys* travelling up and down after their worldly affairs. No, be not mistaken; a *journey* unfits you for the gospel-passover, as well as a *dead body*; a journeying earthly heart, as well as a notour defilement by any gross sin. If you would be worthy receivers, you must be abstracted from the cares and vanities of this lower world, and seek after a stayed, spiritual, and heavenly frame of heart. Be not as men in a journey when ye come to the Lord's table, but lay aside all wandering and earthly thoughts; for, if you harbour these about such a time, you will not be in case

to answer the apostle's rule, 1 Cor. vii. 35. "Attend upon the Lord without distraction."

We are told, that in the temple of Jerusalem, notwithstanding of the great abundance of flesh sacrificed in it, not one fly was to be seen stirring there. And so it should be with us at the sacrament; not a fly of an earthly or wandering thought should be allowed to buzz or stir there. Now, if these flies be not driven away before-hand, they will surely pester you in the temple, and trouble you when you have most to do; nay, they will mar the duty, and corrupt the sacrifice, as that grievous swarm of flies (mentioned Exod. viii. 24) did the land of Egypt.

It is a shrewd sign, then, that those who bring earthly and wandering hearts with them to the Lord's table are Egyptians, not true Israelites; seeing they have the Egyptian plague of flies upon them. In the forecited place we are told, that there came a grievous swarm of flies into the houses of Pharaoh and his servants, and into all the land of Egypt, so that the land was corrupted thereby; but in the land of Goshen, where the Israelites dwelt, there were no swarm of flies. So, if ye would be worthy communicants, ye should be at the sacrament like the Israelites in Goshen, free of that Egyptian plague of flies; you must not have swarms of earthly thoughts to trouble you there with their buzzing noise and importunity. And the only way to be free of them is to drive them away timeously before, and purge your hearts of earthly affections.

You ought to do as Abraham, when he was called by God to sacrifice Isaac, on Mount Moriah, Gen. xxii. 4, 5. "When he saw the place afar off, he said to his young men, abide you here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again unto you." Abraham knew, if they had gone alongst with him, they would have so disturbed him, with their clamour and noise, that he could not have offered the sacrifice with any freedom and tranquillity of spirit; therefore when he saw the place afar off, he orders them to stay behind. The same should we be doing with our worldly affairs when we see the time afar off, and much more when we see the time approaching and at hand: then we should give strict orders to all our earthly thoughts and business to stand aside, and not only not to go to the mount with us, but not to go to our closets and retiring places with us. Possibly at such a time some affair of importance may offer to thy mind, and require to be considered; but treat all secular avocations as Nehemiah did Sanballat and Geshem, when they sent to him, Neh. vi. 2. saying, "Come let us meet together in some one of the villages," &c. But mark how he answers them, ver. 3. "And I sent messengers to them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease, whilst I leave it and come down to you?" And though these companions had so round and peremptory an answer, yet they were importuning him still, ver. 4. "Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort." But he still answered them in the same manner. Thus it will be with a man when he begins to sequestrate himself for actual preparation for the sacrament; this and the other business will be calling upon him, that it may be considered and attended: but let your answer be, "I am doing a great work, I am preparing myself for the sacrament, I cannot wait upon you. Why, should the work of preparation cease whilst I leave it and attend upon you?" And though they haunt and importune you many times after this sort, yet still answer them in the same manner.

Likewise, remember how Nehemiah treated those merchants that violated the sabbath, Neh. viii. 19. "When it began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded the gates to be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath; and some of my servants I set at the gates." Do so with your worldly affairs, shut up the gates on your hearts against them, and let them not be opened till all the duties of the solemn occasion be ended. Perhaps, like those merchants, they will be hovering about the gates for entrance: and therefore set conscience to watch at the gates, testify against them, rebuke and threaten them, as Nehemiah did. Let thy spirit, in a holy indignation, rise against them, check and chace them from you, as coming most unseasonably to the hurt and prejudice of thy precious soul.

As our Saviour says about prayer, Mat. vi. 6. "Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray;" so may I say concerning preparation for the sacrament, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door prepare thyself by meditation, self-examination, and prayer; and especially shut the doors of thy heart against secular cares and earthly thoughts about thy business, and then set about the work. The work is so weighty, that it requires all thy thoughts about it. It concerns you to put your soul in the same order and state, as if God were calling you to surrenrender it to him by death; and, if you be not ready to die, neither are you to receive the sacrament. All communicants should be in such a posture as our Lord directs, Luke xii. 35, 36. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord, that, when he cometh and knocketh, you may open to him immediately." Now, if your hearts be incumbered with worldly things, you cannot be in case to answer this direction; you cannot be in a fit attentive posture to meet with, and wait upon the Master of the feast. O communicant, wouldst thou have this ordinance comfortable? say then, sometimes before it, farewell, my wife and children, friends and secular concerns; abide you here at the foot of the mount: be hushed and mortified, all irregular passions and affections; you are a clog to my soul, I have something else to do than attend you.

It is most lamentable to consider how many come to the sacrament in such an unprepared manner. Many are in their *journeys* when they sit down at the Lord's table; many, Egyptian-like, are environed with a *swarm of flies*, wandering and earthly thoughts; many bring their *servants and asses* to the very mount of sacrifice; many leave the Lord's work in the very middle, to meet with their *Sanballats* and *Geshems*; they open the *gates* on the very sacrament-day to their *merchants*: nay, the world is both in their hearts and mouths about this solemn occasion.

If we should ask the question at many communicants, which our Lord asked the two disciples he overtook going to Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 17. "What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk by the way?" What manner of conference and communications were those ye had together, when ye went home from the preparation-sermon? Nay, those ye had the very morning as ye walked together to the church to receive the sacrament? How ashamed would many communicants be to tell what past amongst them? There are many who could not answer them with these two disciples v. 19. "concerning Jesus of Nazareth;" we were talking concerning a *crucified Jesus*, our lovely Redeemer; concerning the advantage of meeting

with him in the sacrament, and the preparation needful for that end. Nay, it is to be feared, the answer of many would be, if they should be ingenuous, we were talking about our corn, cattle, merchandise, families, relations, &c.; these things, alas, many bring in their mouths to the very church-door. But should we search more narrowly, and propose another question: "What manner of thoughts were those you entertained that night, or that morning, before the sacrament?" Oh, the world would cry, *fy and shame* on the thoughts of many if they were known. Well, remember it, our all-seeing Lord knows them all, and you may expect he will answer you according to the idols of your heart. O purge your hearts from vain thoughts and sequestrate yourselves from wordly business, if you would rightly prepare for this ordinance, and profit in partaking of it.

DIRECT. VIII.—*Set some time apart for the work of self-examination, before you approach to the Lord's table.*

THIS is a duty indispensibly necessary unto worthy partaking, 1 Cor. xi. 28. "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." The word which the apostle uses here, *dokimazeto*, signifies a diligent and narrow search into the nature and properties of a thing, as a goldsmith proves the goodness of his metal. It lies in a close and free communing with our own hearts, by sisting our souls before the tribunal of conscience, and bringing our state and actions to be tried there by the rule of God's word. Self-examination is a reflex act of the mind, whereby we turn our eyes backward, and take a view of our by-past life; and also inward, in order to ransack the state of our hearts, and the principles and scope of our actions, by putting such questions to ourselves as these, "What have we been doing? Wherein have we offended? What are we doing now? Where am I, and whither do I design to go? What shall I do to be saved? Wherewithal shall I appear before the Lord?" This duty supposes a serious pause of the soul, an arresting of the thoughts, and an awakening of our powers and faculties to be attentive to this work, that we may proceed with all calmness and serenity, seriousness and deliberation, in a matter so important, that we may find out the truth of our state, and sincerity of our performances, the corruption of our hearts, and enormities of our lives. And this must be an exact and impartial search. A general survey of ourselves will not suffice to discover things as they really are; for Satan and our own hearts are very deceitful, and ready to impose upon us in this matter: therefore we must be very faithful and particular in our examination before the sacrament, and not sist in generals, or content ourselves with a superficial enquiry. Some, at such an occasion, act like Nebuchadnezzar, Dan. ii. 3, 5. "I have dreamed a dream, (says he) but the thing is gone from me:" so say some, *I have sinned, I have come short:* but scarce can tell wherein, when put to it.

If you would deal faithfully in this work, you must retire from the world, and summon yourselves to the bar of your own consciences, accuse yourselves plainly, and try yourselves impartially by the laws of heaven, registered in the holy scriptures. And if you would have a just sentence pronounced concerning your state and ways, then ye must in the first place look up to God for light, direction, and assistance; and then ye must excite and awake conscience to do its office, and to speak and judge for God: for though a judge be on the bench; yet if he be deaf, dumb, or asleep, he cannot judge. Conscience then must be roused up, and charged to act faithfully; and you should pray to God for a lively and tender conscience, that will give just and impartial judgment. A deaf conscience that hears nothing, a dumb conscience that speaks nothing, a sleepy conscience that feels nothing, is the greatest plague in the world. But O it is a great mercy to have a waking and tender conscience, that will faithfully do its office in the duty of self-examination, especially before a sacrament.

This duty is absolutely necessary; for without it we cannot know how it is with us, we cannot know our plagues and miseries, our defects and necessities; and till such a time as we know these, we will neither value nor apply the remedy provided for us in the sacrament. Nay, we will be ready to mistake our condition, and think we are in a good state, that we have true grace, when really we we have it not. There is much *counterfeit* grace in the world, and many are deceived therewith; yea, there is no grace but what hath its *counterfeit*. What did Moses for a time, but the Egyptian sorcerers did the like? Did Moses bring frogs on the land? so did they. And the magicians blood and frogs seemed as real as those produced by Moses; and yet they were nothing but counterfeits and external appearances. So there is nothing a true Christian hath or can do, but hypocrites may have and do the same as to outward appearances. Therefore, it is necessary we bring our graces and duties to be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary.

O communicants, would you know how matters are with you now, and how it is like to fare with you for ever? Would you have your hearts affected with your condition, and made acquaint with Jesus Christ? Would you have a visit from Christ at his table? Would you have grace quickened, and your wants supplied? Would you be worthy receivers, and prevent your eating and drinking your own damnation? Then examine yourselves before ye approach. Many a Christian can declare, that the time of their searching themselves in their younger years, in order to prepare for the Lord's table, was the very time their hearts were first engaged to Jesus Christ and serious godliness. O wherefore is it that there are so many dead and formal communicants; why so many hard-hearted and impenitent sinners, who could never yet be brought to mourn for their sins, or turn from them to God and holiness? The reason is plain from God's word, Jer. viii. 6. Lam. iii. 40. Psal. cxix. 59. They are strangers to the duty of self-examination.

If you neglect to examine yourselves, remember you have to do with an all-seeing and heart-searching God, who will not fail to examine and find out every careless and unworthy communicant to his utter shame and confusion. Christ, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, will certainly come in and see the guests, and when he comes, he will look narrowly upon them: and, though the house be full of guests, he will spy out "one man that wants a wedding-garment," Mat. xxii. 11. In a great crowd or multitude, one single man might think to sculk and not be found out; but we see that not one man can escape his piercing eyes; far less then can forty, fifty, or an hundred unworthy communicants think to escape in one of our congregations. Again remember what was the fate of the man that came to the feast without the wedding-garment. In the first place, we see our Lord not only spied and singled him out, but he ex-

amined him also. The man had come without examining himself before-hand whether he had this wedding-garment or not; but God smartly examined him. So that we see, those who will not be at the pains and trouble to examine themselves, God will examine them to purpose: yea, it will be such an examination, as the chief captain commanded Paul to be examined with, Acts xxii. 24. viz. that he should be "examined by scourging." Every question and interrogatory that God will put to a sinner, or any unworthy communicant, will have a lash or sting along with it. What a *scourging question* did he put to that man, Mat. xxii. 12. "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment?" It was so sharp, it drew blood of his conscience? nay, it stunned and confounded him; it is said *he was speechless.* Friend, says he, why? Thou professest thyself to be a friend of Christ, and dost associate thyself with his friends; but, in thy heart thou art an enemy to Christ, a traitor that comest to stab him under the fifth rib, "Therefore bind him hand and foot, and take him away," &c. ver. 13. In the meantime, the man is speechless, Christ-condemned, and self-condemned: he had nothing to say against the justice of the sentence. The man that comes without a wedding-garment on his back, shall not go without chains and fetters on his feet, his hands, yea, on his heart, his will, his conscience, and his whole soul. Better for the man to have examined himself, and so to have prevented this terrible examination and sentence.

God's questions to unworthy receivers will be nonplussing and confounding. Consider these stinging interrogatories, Isai. i. 12. "Who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?" Psal. l. 16. "What hast thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth?" Jer. vii. 9, 10. "Will ye steal, murder, commit adultery, and walk after other Gods, and come and stand before me in this house?" These be scourging examinations, that fetch blood at every stroke; and you may look for it that God will come and examine thee thus, either by an awakened conscience in this life, or at a dying hour, or as soon as thou enterest into eternity: "and who may abide the day of his coming." Now the way to prevent such an examination, is to examine yourselves: for, "if we would judge ourselves we should not be judged." David did not fear God's examination, when he had examined himself sincerely before hand; nay, with a humble confidence he doth appeal to God to search him, Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24. "Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me," &c. Wouldst thou prevent the terror of God's search, then put searching questions to yourself before-hand, and see how matters are with your soul. It is better to have conscience awakened to search thee now, than to have it awakened in hell, where there is no place for repentance.

This is a duty incumbent, not only on natural and unrenewed men, and upon those who were not at the Lord's table before, but even upon the best of men, and those who have communicated frequently. We can never be too sure about our soul's estate; besides, we daily contract new guilt, are liable to new decays, new wants, new burdens and grievances; and therefore the best have need to examine themselves every time they repair to this holy feast, but much more they who were never there before.

Now there are several things you ought to inquire into at such a time. 1. The state and condition of your souls. 2. Your sins and shortcomings. 3. Your wants and necessities. 4. Your ends and designs. 5. Your graces and qualifications.

I have discoursed all these points very fully in my sacramental catechism, from page 117 to page 210, (*first edit.*) to which the reader is referred. Some few things more I shall add here.

I. *Of the Examination of our State.*

Seeing this holy feast belongs only to the children of God, and those that are strangers have no right to it, it highly concerns all that design to approach to the Lord's table, to examine what state they are in. As the Lord cried to Adam in the garden, *Adam, where art thou?* so do thou cry to thy soul, O my soul, where art thou? Art thou in the broad way or in the narrow? Whether art thou in Satan's or in Christ's camp? Whether under a covenant of works, or a covenant of grace? Under a cloud of wrath or a banner of love? In a special manner, there are two important questions that every communicant should much think upon; *Whose am I?* and, *Whom serve I?* Happy is the man that can answer both these questions with Paul, Acts xxvii. 23. "It is God whose I am, and whom I serve." It is not the devil, it is not the world, it is not my lusts: but God, whose I am, and whom I serve. Surely Paul, in this condition, though a poor despised prisoner, was happier than Cæsar himself, to whose bar he was then going. Alas, it is to be feared there are many communicants, if they would answer the foresaid questions truly, might say, It is not God, but the devil, or the world, or fleshly lusts, whose I am and whom I serve. "Oh, Lord, pity such, and open their eyes to see what woful masters and bad service they are engaged unto, and deliver them speedily from their bondage."

Look then to yourselves, examine your state, and see if you be among those who have a right to this sacred meal. Have you these characters?

I. Are you priests to God? Under the law, it was not lawful for any to eat of the shew-bread but the priests, Mark. ii. 26.; so, under the gospel, none have a right to eat of this consecrated bread but those who pertain to the spiritual priesthood. Try then if ye be priests to God. 1. Are you set apart and dedicated to God, by your own consent and voluntary resignation? 2. Are you related to the great high priest of the church, Jesus Christ, and do you pertain to his family? 3. Are you consecrated to God, being washed in Christ's blood? Rev. i. 5, 6. "He hath loved us and washed us in his blood, and he hath made us priests unto God." 4. Do you offer up to God the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praises? Heb. xiii. 15. 5. Do you present the sacrifice of Christ's blood and merits, in the hand of faith, to divine justice, whenever you find yourselves accused by the law, or challenged by conscience? Well then, if you have these marks of priests, it is lawful for you to come and eat of this holy shew-bread.

II. Are you members of God's family and household? then have you a right to this precious food: for Christ's flesh and blood in the sacrament is the food that God provides for those of his own household; not for strangers or foreigners, not for dogs or profane-persons, Mat. xv. 26. "It is not meet (saith our Lord) to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs." Are you children of the family? then may you eat of the household provision. But ah, may some say, how shall we be numbered among the children? Have ye faith in a Redeemer! then are ye

among the children, Gal. iii. 2 . "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Are ye born in his house? Is there a saving change wrought upon you? Have you the natures of children? Are ye friends of Christ, and sincere well-wishers to him, his family and interest in the world? then you have a right to the children's bread.

III. Observe the characters of those who were admitted to eat of the passover in Ezra's time, Ezra vi. 21. "And the children of Israel who were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the Lord God of Israel, did eat." Now, there are three characters of these ancient partakers mentioned:

1. They were such of the Israelites *as were come out of captivity;* for, while they were captives in Babylon, they did not eat the passover. Well, try yourselves if you be among Christ's ransomed captives, delivered from the bondage of Satan, the reigning power of sin, and captivity of your lusts.

2. They were such *as had separated themselves from the filthiness of the heathen, viz.* Swearing, whoring, drunkenness, profanation of the Lord's day, &c. these things are the filthiness of the heathens. Examine, if you be separated from all these abominations, not only from the practice, but even from the love of them.

3. They were such as designed sincerely to seek the Lord God of Israel. Well, can you say it is the great aim of your soul, in approaching to the Lord's table, to seek the Lord and Master of the feast; it is not the outward ordinance, but a gracious meeting with the God of ordinances, that your souls thirst for. Then you may come and eat of the gospel-passover.

By these, and such like characters, let communicants examine what state they are in, before they adventure to this holy table. This is a feast for Christ's friends to eat of, Cant. v. 1. And if enemies thrust themselves in among them, it is at their highest peri This ordinance supposes you to be within that covenant which it doth seal; for those who are out of the covenant have nothing to do with the seals of it. It supposes you to have something of that spiritual life which it doth sustain and nourish; so that those who are dead in sin have no right to meddle with it. Uncircumcised persons were not to eat of the passover; so neither are unrenewed persons to eat of the Lord's supper. You must be born before you can eat; you must be united to Christ before you can feed on him; you cannot receive juice or sap from the vine except you are a branch in it. It very much concerns you then at such a time to enquire narrowly into the state of your souls; and in order to attain a true discovery thereof, you ought to put plain and particular questions to yourselves, and charge your consciences, as in the presence of God, to give free and ingenuous answers thereto. And, for instance, see what answers you can give to these questions following.

Quest. 1. "Have I never been spiritually enlightened," and got my eyes opened to see the depravation of my nature, and the sinfulness of my heart and life, and that I am all as an unclean thing before God?

Quest. 2. "Have I been truly convinced and made sensible of the exceeding evil that is in sin?" Is my heart touched with a deep remorse for it, and brought to loath it, and willingly to forsake every known sin! Was I ever brought the length, even to be willing to be loosed from this body of flesh, that I may be freed from the body of sin.

Quest. 3. "Have I been brought to see my absolute need of Christ" to save me from sin and wrath, to bring me unto God, and to give me grace and glory? Have I seen such beauty, and tasted such sweetness in Christ, that he is truly precious to me, and altogether lovely in my esteem, so that I would willingly part with all things for him.

Quest. 4. "Have I a covenant-relation to and interest in God, as mine!" Have I made choice of him as my God and portion, and have I resigned and given up myself to him? Can I say I am thine, Lord, and all I have, both body and soul? Are my eyes the Lord's to behold his wondrous works? Are my ears his, to hear his heavenly word? Are my taste and smell his, to relish his surpassing sweetness in the creatures? Is my tongue his, to proclaim and triumph in his praise? Are my hands his, to work what is good, and to help his people? Are my feet his, to walk in his ways? Is my understanding his, to know his will, and contemplate his perfections? Is my memory his, to treasure up his counsels and promises? Is my conscience his, for a deputy to accuse or excuse under him? Is my will his, to chuse or refuse according to his pleasure? Is my grief his, to mourn for what is offensive to him? Is my hatred his, to abhor and flee from what is hateful to him? Are my desires his, to long and pant for his presence? My love his, to embrace him? My delight his, to acquiesce fully and contentedly in him.

Quest. 5. "Is sin in some measure mortified in me?" Do I find it weaker, or have I more strength to resist it than formerly? is it now my grief and burden to find it moving and stirring in my heart?

Quest. 6. "Doth the interest of God my Creator and Redeemer prevail in my heart" above the interest of the world, or of the flesh? Do I seek chiefly, and above all things, the kingdom of God and his righteousness? Do I prefer Jerusalem above my chief joy?

Now, if you thus examine yourselves, and commune with your own hearts in secret, you may, by the blessing of God, come to find out the truth concerning your spiritual state and condition.

Object. "But may we not mistake in examining our state? Do not we see the most part of men presuming that their state is safe and good, and having little doubt of their right to the children's bread?"

Ans. 1*st.* There are many, we need make no great question anent their state; such as the grossly ignorant, who know not the misery of a natural state, nor their need of Christ; and the openly profane, who go in the broad way of swearing, lying, drunkenness, neglect of prayer, &c. He that runs may read their character, that they are Christless and unconverted: whoever they be that are in this state, and go in it, they are unfit for this ordinance, they are not invited guests, they have no part nor lot in this matter. Ignorant persons cannot examine themselves, nor discern the Lord's body; profane persons mock God, when they pretend to seal a covenant with him: and, if they thurst themselves upon this table, they affront Christ, and seal their own condemnation. We would reckon it a loathsome sight to see some dead corpse, or men full of plague-sores, sit down beside us at our tables: and, do you think that the living and holy God can look with pleasure upon dead sinners, or those with the running ulcers of swearing, drunkenness, &c. sitting at his holy table? Let all such stand off; for they will find poison in the bread, and death

in the cup, and go away worse than they came. This is not a converting, but a confirming ordinance in its own nature, and therefore doth suppose that they are converted, and in Christ, who come to it.

2. There are others who come the length of a form and profession of religion, that yet are in a bad state; and, if they would allow themselves the free use of their reason, and compare their case with the word, they might easily perceive the badness of their condition. Upon a small search they might discover, that though they perform some duties, yet it is not for the glory of God, but to be seen of men, or to satisfy a natural conscience; they rest upon their duties, and make a saviour of them; and though they read, hear, or pray, yet they never notice heart-work; they love the world more than God, and mind the things of the flesh more than the things of the spirit; they are careless about secret prayers, and allow themselves in known sin; they suffer pride, covetousness, malice, revenge, and other lusts, to reign in their hearts, without resisting them, or mourning for them: and surely these are black marks of a Christless state. And if ye would set up a tribunal in your own breasts, and hear what God's word and your own consciences would conclude concerning your condition, ye would find yourselves ranked among the unclean, and such as have no right to the children's bread, while you remain in your present state: but alas, how many such do rush upon this solemn ordinance, without any heart-search, or acquaintance with themselves! They trust to their outward form, and hence flatter themselves that they are safe enough; and so, like the *foolish virgins*, they slumber away their time, still dreaming of heaven and happiness; and nothing that God's word or ministers do say will undeceive them, till the *cry at midnight* awakes them: and behold, then, when they open their eyes, they meet with an eternal disappointment! When they thought of nothing but open gates at the first knock, behold, the draw-bridge of mercy is taken up, and the gates of heaven shut in, and they hear nothing but that terrible voice, "depart from me, I know you not." O that he who searcheth Jerusalem with candles, and knows the heart, would undeceive you and awaken you in time!

3. There are others who are really in a good state, though the evidences of it are not so clear to them: Satan rises many fogs and mists to obscure the sight of grace, and the saving change that the Spirit of God hath wrought in their souls. Besides what I have formerly said, I shall add these few remarks or questions more whereby you may discern it:

1. "Have you got new discoveries of things which ye had not before?" Though perhaps ye cannot tell exactly the time, manner and steps of the change; yet can ye say, with the *blind man*, John ix. 25. "One thing I know, that whereas once I was blind, now I see." Once I saw little evil in sin, but now I see it exceeding vile and damnable: once I thought there was some good thing in me, but now I see my heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, and swarming full of base lusts: once I slighted heart-holiness, but now I see it to be most beautiful and necessary: once I saw little need of Christ, but now I see he is more necessary to my soul than meat and drink to my body: once I saw little beauty in Christ, but now I see him to be the chiefest among ten thousand, nay, among all the thousands in the world." Then to be sure there is a change wrought; though ye were once darkness, yet now ye are light in the Lord.

2. "What are these things you are most taken up and concerned about?" Can you say, once it was my question, "What shall I eat, what shall I drink, and wherewithal shall I be clothed?" But now my great question is, "What shall I do to be saved? Once my main care was to secure and increase my temporal enjoyments; but now it is to lay up my treasure in heaven, and clear up the evidences for it: once the world and temporal things were my uptaking business; but now my Saviour, my soul, and eternity, are my chief concerns, and lie nearest to my heart.

3. How stand your hearts towards secret and spiritual duties, and towards secret and spiritual sins: 1. As for the first, do you earnestly desire and study patience under affliction, meekness under injuries, and contentment with your lot and condition? Do you study humility and lowliness of mind, and desire to have pride brought down, that you may be still lower in your own eyes? Are ye delighted with secret mourning for sin? Are ye desirous of intimate converse with God by secret prayer and meditation? Wherever grace is wrought in the heart, it bends towards God, and centers in him. It is the voice and very first cry of the new creature in the soul, Psal lxxiii. 28. "It is good for me to draw nigh to God." *Nearness* to God is the mean of its livelihood and subsistence. This is given as the mark of Paul's change, Acts ix. 11. "Behold, he prayeth." The Spirit of grace is never a dumb Spirit, Zech. xii. 10. Gal. iv. 6. But, if thou art a stranger to converse with God in secret duties, it is a sad sign of thy estrangement to a saving change upon thy soul.

4. How stand you affected to secret and spiritual sins? Are you grieved for your pride and ambition, envy, unbelief, atheistical thoughts, backwardness to duty? &c. Do ye feel the stirrings of indwelling corruption and heart-lusts, and earnestly strive against them? Doth the eye of God, or the love of Christ, restrain you as much from secret sins, as from open transgressions? Do you abhor the temptations to sin, and start at the first appearance thereof, like Joseph, Gen. xxvi. "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God."

Object. "Alas, I am a poor, dark, confused creature, I know not what to make of my case; I would sometimes fain lay claim to some of the foresaid marks, but presently I am beat off, and all is darkened to me: for, when I begin to consider narrowly, I cannot say that I have any true love to Christ, or that I ever rightly closed with him by faith; I know a little of a work of grace in my heart; I cannot take up the beauty of Christ and of holiness."

Ans. I pity those poor, trembling and doubting souls, who cannot attain to any light or clearness about their condition; who yet are labouring for it, and would give all the world to obtain it: and though, in the mean time, they dare not renounce all hope, yet they can see no solid ground to build upon, and are often tempted to give over all further endeavours.

To such I would say, that you ought to wait on God, and hold on in the way of duty to your lives' end, whatever discouragements you meet with therein, God in his own time will let you know that your labour is not in vain. In the mean time, for thy comfort, I would ask thee some few questions:

1. Thou sayest, thou hast no love to Christ, nor hast thou closed with him by faith. But, *is love to Christ* that which thou would fainest have of any thing in the world?

Is it thy greatest grief, so that sometimes it forceth tears from thine eyes, that thou canst not get thy wretched heart to love him. Then, to be sure, thou art not destitute of love to him. Hast thou not so much love to him as makes every thing that bears his image amiable in thine eyes? You are feared you love him not; but, can you say there is nothing in all the world would please you so much as one ray or love-blink of his countenance? And though he should never own you, yet you resolve to lie all your days at his feet, and look up to him, and to none other, for salvation: then, be of good cheer, poor soul, for these are comfortable degrees of faith and love.

2. What is the object in all the world that thy restless heart is most pointing out after? Canst thou say, if thy heart deceive thee not, it is an *interest in Christ, communion with God, and love to his ways;* and obtaining of these would yield thee more content than all the gold of Ophir? Then, to be sure, there is true grace wrought in thee. There are many true diamonds that are but like sparks in respect of bigger stones, yet these are as true as the other. Every degree of peace is grace; and sincere desires after grace, are certainly true grace.

3. Upon what is it that you spend the strength of your prayers, and what are you most earnest for? Is it, O doubting soul, for the death of sin, the removal of heart-plagues, the curing of heart-wandering, heart-deadness, and backwardness to duty? Again, dost thou spend another great part of thy prayers for the increase and lively exercise of grace, and for the actings of faith and love? Then this is a sure mark of the Spirit's work in thy soul; for, if thou saw not the evil of sin and beauty of grace, thou would not spend the strength of thy prayers for killing sin, and quickening grace in thy soul.

But, lastly, O doubting soul, if thou canst not win to clearness, by poring on the marks of grace and faith (as indeed sometimes doubting believers cannot, since there is no mark that can be given, but a scrupulous conscience will find a back-door), then try another way, endeavour to act faith in a direct manner upon Jesus Christ? for many times a believer will sooner come to a clearness of his interest, by the direct acts of faith, than by the reflex acts. Therefore, if thou canst not see faith in thy soul, then presently flee to Christ, and lay hold upon the offer and promise of life, as if thou hadst never done it before. Run as a malefactor to the city of refuge for protection, as if you had never fled there before: go as a wounded man to the physician for a plaster to thy wounds, as if you had never got one applied before. Go transact and covenant with God in Christ, as if you had never essayed any thing like it before; for whatever you have been, Christ still tenders himself to you to be your Saviour, and you cannot possibly be so willing to accept of him as he is to accept of you. Try this method, and there is good ground to hope, that light will break up, and fears evanish; and so you may with comfort come to this sealing ordinance.

II. *Of the examination of our Sins.*

Examine yourselves of your sins and short-comings; take an account of your debts, and see how great they are: put the question to yourselves, which the unjust steward put to his Lord's debtors, *How much owest thou to my Lord?* And see that ye tell the truth, and do not for a *hundred* write down *fifty*, as many a false conscience doth: but deal truly and ingenuously, for an all seeing God is looking on. Do as the Jews, who, before the celebration of the passover, searched their houses for leaven very narrowly; they lighted candles, and sought every corner and hole therein; and, when they found it, they threw it away with detestation. Some think it is with allusion to this custom, that the Lord is said "to search Jerusalem with candles," Zeph. i. 12. In like manner, you must narrowly search every corner of your hearts for the "leaven of pride, avarice, malice, and hypocrisy," 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. The iniquities of wicked men will find them out, but good men will find out their iniquities. Now, if ye will find them out, ye must set time apart, and convene your souls before God and conscience, and compare your hearts and lives with God's word, and the rule of his commandments. Look back upon your actions, recal the passages of your lives, and remember your faults before the Lord. If you would have your repentance full, ye must endeavour to take a full and particular view of your sins, both original and actual, of omission and commission, of youth and riper age, of purpose and of practice, of heart and of life. View your sins both secret and open, against the first and second table; consider how ye have wronged God, your neighbour, and yourselves; how ye have transgressed every commandment, either in thoughts, words, or deeds: think upon the lusts of your hearts, the sins of your tongues, and outbreakings of your lives. Particularly, search out your predominant and beloved sins, and also the heinous circumstances and aggravations of your sins; and forget not to examine yourselves concerning the breach of former vows, and the guilt contracted since the last sacrament. Let no wound or sore be concealed or skinned over, but search them all to the bottom, if you would have them perfectly cured. Let it not satisfy you to ask conscience in an overly way, concerning the foresaid sins, but wait for an answer, nay, urge it to give it, and put it hard to it.

III. *Of the Examination of our Wants.*

Examine your wants and necessities, and come sensible of them to this ordinance, where ye may find all needful supplies treasured up in Christ's fullness, which is here exhibited; search out your defects and needs, and come to Christ with them. Are you polluted, heavy laden, and under bounds and terror? Do you see yourselves blind, naked, lame, sick, or wounded? Come sensible of thy miseries, O sinner, to Christ, who has a broad plaister for every sore. Dost thou find thy graces weak? Doth thy faith shake, thy hope stagger, thy love decline, thy holy desires abate? Dost thou want wisdom, sincerity, self-denial, meekness, humility, or brokenness of heart? Then come sensible of these defects to Christ for new supplies and reinforcements. Do you want a sight of your interest in Christ, a seal of your pardon, clear and unclouded evidences of grace, a view of the King's face, or strength to vanquish your lusts? Nay, are you trysted with bodily wants and infirmities, crosses and losses, and many outward pressures and afflictions? Then come with a due sense of all these wants and burdens upon your spirits to Jesus Christ, and cast them all upon him. In this ordinance, Christ sets himself upon a throne of grace with a sceptre of mercy in his hand, and waits to hear his people's complaints and petitions. A feasting time is a time of granting requests; see then that you be ready to present your's at this feast? Christ here saith to thee, as the king did to Esther at the banquet of wine, Esther v. "what is thy

petition? and what is thy request? and it shall be granted thee." Or, as he said unto the blind men, Mat. xx. 32. "What will ye that I shall do unto you?" Be ready with them to answer, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened;" or, Lord, that our hearts may be softened; Lord, that such a weak grace may be cherished, that such a strong lust may be vanquished, that such a plague may be removed, &c.

IV. *Of the Examination of our Ends.*

Examine your ends and designs in approaching to the Lord's table. Christ examines the people's ends in going to hear John, Matt. xi. 7. "What went you out for to see?" Much more ought we to examine our ends in going to the Lord's table. See that it be not to observe the fashion of the country where you live, or to get a name, and be the better thought of by ministers, friends, or neighbours, or to make atonement for your sins, as some ignorant persons among us do apprehend, who rest upon the bare ordinance, and outward signs and elements, for pardon and justification, without looking to Christ for it: thus, alas, many content themselves with Elijah's mantle, without asking for the God of Elijah; give them the shell, they ask not for the kernel: let them have their communion (as they call it) though it really be nothing but a bit of bread and a sip of wine, they think all is well, their sins are pardoned, they are sure of heaven, they are ready to die, the devil can have no power over them; and so they use this sacrament as a charm, being ignorant of the true ends and uses of it.

Quest. "What are these ends and designs we ought to have in our approaches to this sacred table?"

Ans. It is of great consequence to be well instructed hereof, and to try ourselves diligently concerning them. Examine then,

(1.) If it be your design sincerely to give obedience to our Lord and Saviour's call. Can ye say, that his authority had a powerful influence upon you in this matter and ye dare not slight it, and that ye cannot think of neglecting Christ's dying charge, and the command he hath left behind him to his disciples, to solemnize and celebrate the memorial of his dying love?

(2.) Is it your design *to show forth Christ's death?* This should be your great business in this ordinance, 1 Cor. xi. 25, 26. You are to show forth and annunciate Christ's death three ways:

1. With respect to yourselves, you are by this sacrament to give a lively representation to your mind of Christ's death, and keep up a fresh remembrance of his sufferings and dying love, and of the great propitiatory sacrifice he offered for you upon the cross, and the great things he hath thereby purchased for you; and hereby you are to raise your faith and hope in a crucified Saviour.

2. With respect to the world, you are hereby to testify your respect to a crucified Christ, and that ye publicly own yourselves to be his disciples; and are not ashamed of a crucified Jesus, or his ignominious death, but glory in it, as the wisdom of God, and power of God; and count it your honour to be his followers. As also, ye declare that ye look to his death and merits as the only hope of your salvation, and reject all other saviours besides him.

3. With respect to God, and that two ways: 1. Show forth Christ's death to a just and sin-revenging God, in a way of faith and prayer: present and plead this sacrifice as a skreen and defence against the sword of justice, the wrath of God, and curse of the law; plead it as the ground of all your hopes and desires. 2 Show it forth to a good God in a way of thanksgiving and praise. Praise God for such a glorious Redeemer, and such an excellent sacrifice; bless him that sent him, and bless him that came. Thanksgiving to God is a special design of this ordinance, and upon this account it is called the *Eucharist*, or thanksgiving. Here it is we should celebrate the praises of our Redeemer, who came from a throne to a dunghill, yea, from the height of glory to the depth of misery, to save us from perishing eternally.

(3.) It is your design to renew a seal and covenant with God in Christ, ratify your baptismal vows, and solemnly bind yourselves to be the Lord's people? As believers here come to get God's seals of his covenant, for confirming their right to the benefits of it; so also they are to seal their covenant engagements, to take God for their God, accept of Christ for their prince and Saviour, give up themselves to him, renounce sin and walk in the ways of gospel-obedience. Now, because many profess to covenant with God in this ordinance, who yet deal falsely with him, you ought to be at great pains to try the sincerity of your hearts in this matter. And, for trial of it, see if you can say, that your wicked hearts are a greater burden to you than all the crosses and troubles you meet with in the world; and that you are more desirous to be rid of sin and heart-plagues, than of any affliction whatsoever. Or, can you say that you desire heart-holiness, and further degrees of grace, of faith, love, and brokenness of heart for sin, more than any honours, profits or pleasures, this world can afford? Or can ye say, that the world's best things are in your eyes, as dung or nothing, in comparison of Christ and his righteousness, and an interest secured therein? And, can ye say that ye are sensible of your own insufficiency and weakness to make or keep any covenant with God; and therefore ye are made to renounce all confidence in yourselves, and to say, "In the Lord only I have righteousness and strength?" Then these are good signs that you are honest and sincere in the making of this bargain, and are likely to be found stedfast in God's covenant.

(4.) Is it your design to draw near to God, and hold intimate communion and fellowship with Christ in this ordinance? And do you earnestly desire that "ye may sup with him and he with you?" This table is instituted for the kindly correspondence of Christ and his people, and their mutual feasting one with another: for, as Christ here sets before you the *dainties and comforts of heaven*, and invites you to feast thereon; so you are to set your graces and affections before him, and invite him to come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruits. You are to come here, not only to receive the tokens of Christ's love to you, but also to give the expressions of your love to him. Here there is a mutual communication of secrets betwixt Christ and his people.

(5.) Is it your desire to get your manifold wants supplied out of Christ's fulness? Is it your earnest desire that his ordinance may be an effectual mean, through the blessing of God, for the weakening and killing of your sins and lusts, the nourishing and strengthening of your souls, the curing of your diseases and plagues, the increase and exercise of your graces; particularly for strengthening faith, inflaming your love, kindling your desires, quickening your hope, and renewing your repentance and resolutions against sin.

Again, is it your design to get clearer evidences of your interest in Christ, the smiles of his face, and comforts of his spirit? Would ye have a seal of your pardon, a display of the riches of free grace, a sight of the "Sun of righteousness, the love of God shed abroad in your hearts," and all your fears removed? Would ye have at this feast furniture for your spiritual journey, support under affliction, strength against temptations, and preparation for suffering? Would ye have a pledge and fortaste of heaven, and the eternal communion that is above? Then these are good designs; and, if you be sincere in them, you may expect a welcome from the master of the feast.

V. *Of the Examination of our Graces.*

A fifth thing you must examine yourselves of, in order to prepare you for this holy table, is your graces and qualifications. Search diligently if you have these sacramental graces requisite in worthy communicants; such as knowledge, faith, repentance, hungry desires, and new obedience.

I. We must examine our knowledge, and see if we have a competent understanding of the principles and grounds of Christianity, and of the nature, signification and use of the Lord's supper. Without this, we cannot know God nor ourselves; we can neither know God's infinite justice and purity, our own natural corruption and misery, nor Jesus Christ our great help and remedy, the knowledge whereof is absolutely necessary to worthy communicating. In some churches, in ancient times, infants and children were admitted to the Lord's supper, and the Greek and Armenian churches do the same at this day: but we justly dissent from them in this practice, because it is necessary, in order to our being fit and worthy partakers, that we *examine ourselves*, and *discern the Lord's body* in the sacrament, according to 1 Cor. xi. 28, 29. neither of which can be done by those that are not come to the years of understanding and discerning.

A man without knowledge is not in covenant with God, and therefore hath no right to partake of the seals of the covenant, Heb. viii. 10, 11. "This is the covenant I will make, &c. all shall know me from the least to the greatest." So that these who know not God have no interest in this covenant, and consequently can have no title to his benefits, nor any gracious communion with God. Observe how the promise runs, Jer. xxiv. 7. "I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God."

It is threatened as a heavy judgment, for persons to die without knowledge, Job xxxvi. 12. "They shall die without knowledge." It is as much as if it were threatened they shall die in their sins, and perish for ever. Now, if it be a sad case to die without knowledge, so is it to come to the sacrament without knowledge; for that which makes a man unfit to die, makes him also unfit to communicate. No man is safe to partake in that case, which he is not in safety to die in.

Neither children nor fools are fit to receive the Lord's supper, because they are not capable to examine themselves and discern the Lord's body. Now, ignorant persons, in God's account, are both children and fools: so he reckons them, Jer. iv. 22. "For my people is foolish, they have not known me, they are sottish children, they have no understanding."

Under the law it was reckoned an abomination to offer that which was blind unto the Lord, Levit. xxii. 22. Now, a blind offerer, that hath the eyes of his understanding darkened, is more abominable than a blind offering.

Error or ignorance makes a man morally unclean before God. When the leprosy affected the head, then the priest was ordered to pronounce the man utterly unclean, and exclude him from the camp of Israel; why? because "the plague was in his head," Levit. xiii. 44. Every ignorant man has a plague in his head, a plague of spiritual blindness and darkness, besides many woful plagues in his heart; for without knowledge *the mind is not good;* (whatever ignorant folk speak of their good hearts, and good meanings) it is full of earthliness, enmity and backwardness to what is good, Prov. xix. 2. 1 Pet. i. 14. Surely then such unclean persons are not fit to come to the holy table of the Lord. It concerns us then to examine our knowledge before we approach. As for the objects, properties and usefulness of this knowledge, I refer the reader to *Sacram. Cat.* (*first edit.*) *p.* 165, *&c.*

II. Examine your faith, before you approach to the Lord's table; for faith is absolutely necessary here. *Without faith it is impossible to please God* in any duty, and far less in this, where faith is highly needful, and so much to be employed. He that would receive Jesus Christ in the sacrament, must have an *eye* to see Christ and his worth, a *foot* to come to Christ, a *hand* to lay hold on Christ, and a *mouth* to feed on him; all these are necessary in order to partake of Christ at the Lord's supper. Now, *faith* is all these to the believing communicant. 1. It is the *eye* of the soul, by which it sees Christ, Isa xlv. 22. "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." 2. "It is the *foot* whereby we we come unto Christ," John vi. 35. "He that cometh unto me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." 3. "It is the *hand* whereby we receive and lay hold on Christ," John i. 12. "To as many as received him he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." 4. "It is the *mouth* whereby we feed on Christ," John vi. 35. "Except ye eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God, ye have no life in you." i. e. except ye believe on Christ. Now, what can you do at the Lord's table without faith? Can a man see without an *eye*, come without a *foot*, receive without a *hand*, and feed without a *mouth*.

Moreover, without faith you can have no right to this holy table, for it is children's bread; and it is by faith you become children. Without it you cannot enter into covenant with God; for faith is the very assent and consent of the soul unto the marriage-covenant which is transacted and sealed in the Lord's supper.

Without faith you can have no communion with God in this or any ordinance; God will surely hide his face from them that come without it, Deut. xxxii. 20. "And he said, I will hide my face from them:" and the reason he gives for it, is, "for they are children in whom is no faith." So that without faith you can't see God in the sacrament; for, how can a man see a veiled or hidden face? Unbelief cuts a man off from God, Rom. xi. 20. "because of unbelief they were broke off." And, how can a man, cut off from God, have any communion with God.

Without faith you can derive no virtue from Christ, nor benefit from this ordinance: for as a rich jewel can do you no good unless it be accepted, nor a sovereign medicine unless it be applied, nor a deep well without a bucket to draw with; so neither will Christ's shed blood or purchased salvation avail you, unless you bring faith to apply it to

your souls. *The well is deep*, said the woman to Christ, *and thou hast nothing to draw with.* So may I say to thee, if faith be wanting. Moses saith of God's kindness to Israel, Deut. xxxii. 13. "He made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock." Now Christ is a rock that yields all manner of necessaries to believers, honey and oil, sweetness and fatness, quickening and comfort. But, how do they come by it from this rock: it is said, "He made him suck honey out of the rock:" There is no honey or oil to be had without sucking, and there is no sucking without the mouth of faith. He that hath faith can suck this honey and oil from Christ in the sacrament; but he that wants it can suck nothing: unbelievers then must have a dry sacrament of it: for they cannot suck, though the breasts be full. Nay, which is worse, unbelief lays restraints on the virtue and healing power of Christ in the sacrament: for we are told, Mark vi 5, 6. "He could there (i. e.) in his own country) do no mighty work because of their unbelief. Why? Could any thing bind our Redeemer's hands, or limit his mighty power? No; but he lays down this order of working which he will not alter, to "put forth his mighty power in and unto those that believe," Eph. i. 19 So that unbelief doth enervate the force and operation of the sacrament.

Without faith you can never prepare for this ordinance, nor partake of its virtue. Without faith you cannot put on the wedding garment, you cannot discern Christ through the elements, you cannot feel the print of the nails, you cannot flee to the city of refuge, you cannot take hold of the horns of the altar, nor grip to the plank of mercy to save thy perishing soul. And, what good can you get at the sacrament if you do none of these? Precious faith is the wing whereby the poor trembling dove doth fly to the window opened in the side of the ark; it is by this that it doth take shelter in the clifts of the rock. In a word, faith is the grace that puts life and vigour in a dead soul, it is the spring and *primum mobile* of all the other graces; it doth set repentance, love, desire, and all the rest on works: so that a man can do nothing at the Lord's table without faith, except it be to wound Christ, and bring wrath on himself.

You see then what need you have of faith at this ordinance, and to examine if it be true and not counterfeit. As Philip examined the eunuch of his faith before he admitted them to the sacrament of baptism, Acts viii. 37. "Believest thou with all thine heart? So should every man examine himself before the Lord's supper; *Do I believe with all mine heart?* Do I esteem Christ most precious? Doth my heart bleed for piercing him? Do I embrace him in all his offices, and say, he is my salvation and all my desire? Well, if thou canst truly say so, thy faith will make thee whole, and thou mayest expect a kind welcome at thy Saviour's table The Lord has furnished you with abundance of marks in his word for the trial of your faith. See *Sacram. Cat. (first Edit.)* p. 172. &c. Try your faith now; for you know not but your faith may come to a fiery trial, as did the martyrs faith of old: and how will you be able to abide such a trial as that, if you never put it to a previous private trial? "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, how wilt thou contend with horses?" How wilt thou abide a fiery trial, that cannot endure a closet-trial? Men will not buy oxen for plowing, but they are desirous to put them to trial, Luke xiv. 19. "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them;" and, will communicants pretend to such precious jewels as faith, love, &c. and yet not desire to prove them, and especially at a time when it is so highly requisite, and so very much depends on the doing of it.

III. Try your repentance before you partake: for, without a *broken heart*, you cannot expect to meet with a *broken Christ* in the sacrament, but a *broken and a contrite heart is a sacrifice he will not despise.* You must *sow in tears*, if you would *reap in joy:* for a wet seed-time doth here prognosticate a sun-shiny and plentiful harvest. It was of water that Christ made the choicest of wine at the marriage-feast in Canna of Galilee; so the water of true repentance will produce the choicest wine of consolation in the sacrament. When Joseph's brethren came to be sensible of their sin in selling him, then it was, and not till then, that he made them a feast, and kindly entertained them at his table: so till such time as we be sensible of our sins, and repent for piercing our Redeemer, he will not feast us, nor smile upon us at his table.

Now, because there is much counterfeit repentance in the world, go retire in secret, and put questions to yourselves concerning your repentance: say, "Am I a penitent in heart, and a secret mourner for sin, when no eyes see me but God's? Do I mourn for inward and secret sins, as well as for outward and open sins? Do I mourn for the dishonours done to God by the sins of others, as well as by my own! am I troubled more for the evil of sin, than for the evil of affliction? Am I more grieved for abusing the mercy and goodness of God, than for exposing myself to the sword of his justice? Do I cry with the penitent prodigal in my confessions, as in Luke xv. 18. "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee?" Alas, I have wronged a kind and loving father, whose goodness towards me hath been as the dropping dew: ah, I have pierced my compassionate Redeemer, and crucified him over again by my sins; and, what do I deserve at his hands?"

Again, what are the effects and fruits of our repentance? Doth it beget in you a vehement hatred and indignation against sin, and a watchfulness to prevent it? Wherever there is true repentance, there will be a hearty aversion to sin. As *a burnt child will dread the fire;* so a Christian, who hath truly repented of sin, is so sensible of the weight of sin, and the wrath of God, that he has resolved never more to touch these burning coals. David, who before his repentance had his conscience so hardened, that he could even drink the blood of Uriah; yet, after his repentance, his conscience was so tender, that he refused so much as to to drink of that water which had been but the occasion of hazarding men's lives.

And, *lastly*, doth thy repentance work in thee a holy revenge against sin? Dost thou look upon it as the enemy of God, the murderer of Christ, and destroyer of thy soul? and, upon that account, that it doth not deserve to live? It was Esau's expression, Gen. xxvii 41. "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; and then will I slay my brother Jacob." But say thou, O communicant, "The days of mourning for the death of my dear saviour, and everlasting father, are come; and now will I slay my most beloved lusts, now will I be revenged on them for seeking to rob me of my spiritual birth-right, and wrong me of my eternal blessing, and, which is worse, for actual crucifying of my glorious Redeemer. Shall sin be suffered to live in my soul, that would not suffer my Saviour to live in the world? Away with it, away with it; crucify it, cru-

cify it." By such marks as these, try the sincerity of your repentance.

As for the trial of your love, desires, spiritual appetites, new obedience, and other graces, seeing I have no new thing here to add, I refer you to *Sacr. Cat. (first edit.)* p. 139. &c.

Some objections of doubting Christians, relative to the former doctrine, answered.

Object. I. "By what I have heard (may some say) I fear I am not fit nor prepared for this solemn ordinance; and it being a thing so dangerous to come to it unpreparedly, I tremble and fear to go forward to that holy table."

Ans. 1. Did you always keep the fear of God in your souls, preparation-work would be less painful, and an approach to God less frightful than now it is; for then you might go to the Lord's table with holy fear and reverence, and slavish fear would not so much haunt you. Did you keep more at a distance from sin, and fear to do what God has forbidden, you would not so much fear to do what he hath commanded.

2dly, Though you be not so prepared for this ordinance as you desire, yet if you sincerely make conscience of preparation-work, and do your utmost to get yourself ready, you ought to go forward in obedience to God's command, *Do this in remembrance of me.* I know there are not a few exercised Christians brought to great straits betwixt a sense of their unfitness, and the obligation of God's command, so that they know not what they do; their fears and discouragements are so great, they are like to be overwhelmed with them. But let such mind the word of the Lord to the children of Israel, when they were in great perplexity at the Red-sea, and their hearts sinking for fear, Exod. xiv. 15. "And the Lord said unto Moses, speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." Forward, might they say (and the deep sea before us), as good go backward to the Egyptians, or stand still and let them come up and put us to the sword, as go forward into the sea, and be drowned; surely, the deep sea will have no mercy on us more than the Egyptians. But, for all this, *speak to the children of Israel* (saith the Lord) *that they go forward.* Let them obey my commandment, and trust me with their lives. Here is encouragement to the doubting believer, that in all sincerity makes preparation for this ordinance, though he hath many doubts about his right to it, and great fears about the event of the duty: the Lord bids us speak to such a man, that he go forward: let him obey God's commandment, trust God for his through-bearing and success.

Object. II. "But (saith another) none should come to this table, but they who are in a state of grace; and I apprehend I have no grace, I cannot lay claim to any of the marks of grace before-mentioned, and, particularly, I want faith in Jesus Christ; and, how shall I go to the Lord's table?"

Ans. There may be true grace and true faith in a soul, sincere and acceptable before God, though yet the degrees of it may be so small, and the operation of it so weak, that it can hardly be discerned by us. Now, though you cannot lay claim to the foregoing marks, yet see if you can at least answer to the following questions:—

1st, Do you not see yourself undone and lost for ever without Christ, and that none but Christ can save you, and you never resolve to look to any other?

2dly, Are you not grieved for the sins that have undone you, and would as willingly be free of them, as ever a sick man would be free of his sickness, or a prisoner of his chains?

3dly, Do ye not conscientiously practice whatever you are convinced to be your duty, and dare not omit it when you know it? Do ye not sincerely aim at prayer, searching the scriptures, mourning, meditations, and other duties?

4thly, As you dare not omit these duties, can you say also, that you dare not rest in them, nor rely on them, because you see your prayers for pardon have need of pardon, and your tears for sin have need themselves of being washed in the blood of Christ?

5thly, Do you unfeignedly desire Christ, and hunger and thirst for him and for his righteousness, as that which only can be sufficient to cover the nakedness of your souls? Are you willing to accept of him on any terms, willing that he should sanctify as well as save you, bring you to obedience as well as to glory? Doth your judgment value Christ above all, and doth your will choose him before all things? If you doubt whether you love him, yet tell me whether you would love him if you could? If you doubt whether you have already received him, yet tell me whether you are unfeignedly willing to receive him? Then these are some degrees of grace, some workings of faith, well-pleasing in God's sight; and, do you cherish and improve them in the use of God's appointed means, they will increase.

Object. III. "But (saith one) we are required to draw near to God with a true heart, in full assurance of faith: and how can I be accepted, who have a heart full of fears and doubts?"

Ans. 1. The assurance of faith is indeed to be sought and endeavoured by all in their approaches to God, but yet it is not the attainment of every believer in his approaches to God: for there are some who have come to him with much fear, and yet have gone away with much comfort, Mark v. 32. the woman that had the bloody issue came fearing and trembling, and fell down before Christ; and yet Christ said to her, ver. 34. *Daughter, go in peace;* she came to Christ in fear, and yet went away in peace.

2. The best course we can take, under a burden of fears and perplexities, is to go with them to Jesus Christ for relief. David, when he was overwhelmed therewith, gets to the "Rock that was higher than he," Psal. lxi. 2. and on this rock he lays all his burdens, and founds all his hopes. O believer, your rock Christ is higher than you, higher than all your enemies, higher than all your fears and temptations; he is sufficiently able to overmatch them all. Get yourselves to this strong rock, and shelter your souls in the clefts thereof.

Object. IV. "But (saith another) I have little hope of meeting with Christ at his table; and what should such a a hopeless creature do there?"

Ans. *1st,* It is indeed the duty of all believers to come to this ordinance with raised hopes and expectations of meeting with Christ; for ordinarily "his mercy is upon us according as we hope in him," Psal. xxxiii. 22. Yet,

2dly, A believer may sometimes meet with Christ, when he has least hopes to find him. For Mary, when she met with Christ, John xx. 15. and supposed he had been the gardener, and had enquired of him as such for Christ, she had little hope; for, before he answered her, she turned herself from him, and thought it wholly needless to stand talking with him about finding Christ; and this appears by her turning herself to him, as we are told she did, when he spake the word that gave her comfort. Christ called her

by her name, Mary, and made himself known to her, just when she had turned from him as hopeless of finding him. It is good, then, O discouraged communicant, to be in use of means, searching and trying yourself, and making preparation for this ordinance, however small your hopes may be of success: for a poor soul may sometimes find Christ, when he hath least hopes of doing so. "Or ever I was aware (saith the spouse) my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadab," Cant. vi. 12.

DIRECT. IX.—*Set time apart for deep humiliation and mourning for your sins, before you approach to the Lord's table.*

HAVING found out your sins by self-examination, as before directed, you ought to be deeply humbled for them, and ingenuously confess them before the Lord in secret; and, that you may speed the better in this work, join fasting with your humiliation, for we are commanded to turn to the Lord (Joel ii. 12.) *with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.*

Fasting, so far as the state of the body and health will allow, is one of God's appointed means for removing that drowsiness and heaviness, that dulness and deadness of spirit, which we are otherwise liable to; and also for bringing the body more in subjection to the soul, and fitting both for the better performance of holy duties, as meditation, prayer, reading, hearing, examining, judging and reforming ourselves. It tends to promote spiritual mindedness, kindle zeal, quicken prayer, and to wean the heart from the world; and the soul being hereby for a time taken off from the thoughts, cares, and pleasures of this life, is the more disposed to be wholly intent and taken up in the work and special duties of the day. Fasting likewise carries in it somewhat of a holy revenge upon the flesh for its former excesses, which in a sincere penitent is acceptable to God, though it cannot make satisfaction to divine justice for the least sin. It doth also imply a deep sense of our guiltiness and ill-deservings before God, and is a plain acknowledgment of our unworthiness of the least mercy, even of the common necessaries of life, and far less of the heavenly manna that God provides for his children in the sacrament. Now, it is the humbled and self-condemning sinner that God is pleased to lift up and comfort. But it is not enough that the head "be bowed down as a bulrush for a day," that the outward man be humbled, or the body chastened; this is not the fast which God hath chosen: the soul must be afflicted before the Lord, and the man inwardly troubled and cast down for offending God.

O communicant, believe it, and be firmly persuaded of it, that repentance and humiliation for sin is a most important and necessary work for thee before the sacrament. Antinomians do vilipend this doctrine of repentance, and say, it is no part of the gospel; that it is a legal duty, and not necessary to the obtaining of pardon. But, to show you a little of the excellency and necessity of this duty, consider that our Saviour, the great prophet of the church, doth teach it as one of the first and chief lessons of the gospel. When he sent John Baptist, as the harbinger of the gospel, the first text he preached on was *repentance*, and his doctrine was, Matt. iii. 2. "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." When Christ, the author of the gospel, appeared himself, the first sermon he preached was a sermon of repentance also, Matt. iv. 17. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Yea, our Saviour tells us, that it was for this very end and purpose he came down from heaven, and was made man, that he might preach repentance unto the world, Luke v. 32. "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." And accordingly, the first and chief thing that Christ commanded his apostles to preach was repentance, Mark 6. 12. Luke xxiv. 47. And, in obedience to these orders, the first thing that Peter preached to the Jews was repentance, Acts ii. 38. Nay, further, our Saviour tells us, that repentance is a chief part of his purchase for sinners, and one of the chiefest gifts which he bestows upon them. He not only came from heaven to preach repentance, but also to shed his blood to purchase repentance to us; and therefore he instructs his disciples, Luke xxiv. 47, "to preach repentance to the world in his name," *i. e.* as his purchase; and his apostles assure us, that he arose and ascended for this very end, that he might bestow the gift of repentance on his people, Acts v. 31. Now certainly, if repentance had not been so excellent a work, and such a necessary gospel-duty, Christ and his apostles had not insisted so much upon it; our Saviour had not begun his public ministry with it; nor had he told us so peremptorily, and so often, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Tertullian says of himself, that he was born to nothing else but to repentance: a saying well worthy of our most serious observation. Likewise it was the saying of a godly minister "That if he were to die in the pulpit, he would wish to die preaching repentance; and, if out of the pulpit, he would wish to die practising repentance." This is a duty always in season, and never more seasonable than when we go to seal a covenant with God, or go to receive the seal of God's Spirit in the sacrament. We know hard wax will not receive the impression of the seal, wherefore we must first melt or soften the wax before we apply the seal; so the heart must be first softened and melted by repentance and humiliation for sin, before any impression be made thereon by the heavenly seal of God's Spirit in the sacrament.

What Bathshebah saith, Prov. xxxi. 6, 7. is very applicable here, "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine to those that be of heavy hearts (or bitter in soul.) Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more." So the wine in the sacrament is not for the secure and impenitent, but for those who by repentance and humiliation for sin are in poverty of spirit, bitterness of soul, and heaviness of heart for grieving and offending God. The Lord is graciously pleased to appoint this wine for them, to refresh and comfort their hearts against the sense of their poverty and misery. "Blessed are they that mourn (at this occasion) for they shall be comforted; their sorrow shall be turned into joy."

But, if you come with impenitent, insensible and hard hearts to the Lord's table, you will kindle the Lord's wrath against you for crucifying his beloved Son. As king Ahasuerus's wrath was kindled against Haman for his bloody plot against his beloved Esther and her people, even while he was at the banquet of wine, and presently gave sentence against him: so may the King of heaven's wrath be kindled against thee, while at this spiritual banquet, and pass sentence on thee presently, and say, "Let Satan enter in with the sop, and seal him up under his hardness and impenitency, and carry him on to all ungodliness till he be ripe for hell.

What Christ said of the Pharisees' proselyte, Matth. xxiii.

15. "He was made two-fold more the child of hell than themselves," may well be said of impenitent receivers; by their communicating in this case, they may make themselves two-fold more the children of hell and the devil than they were before: for thereby they fall more under the power of satan; they increase their hardness, strengthen their lusts; and to all their former sins they add the guilt of profaning God's ordinance, crucifying the son of God afresh, and trampling his precious blood under foot.

Impenitent partaking is a crime so offensive to a holy God, that it will bring all your other sins fresh into God's remembrance, and excite him to visit you for them, according to that word, Hos. viii. 13. "They sacrifice flesh for the sacrifices of mine offerings, and eat it; but the Lord accepteth them not: that is sad enough, but worse follows:" "Now will he remember their iniquity, and visit their sins." Now will he do it, even while they are offering their sacrifice. O impenitent sinners, God remembers your sins at all times, but especially when you come to the sacrament in a hardened case; then will he remember how you have formerly abused his mercies, wounded his son, grieved his Spirit, mispent your time, neglected his worship, dealt hypocritically with him, been unjust to your neighbours, hated his people, &c. So that he will, at the very time you are receiving, come and visit your sins, smite you with his wrath, and give satan power over you. O then, were it not far better for you, before you come to the Lord's table, to be remembering your sins, and humbling yourselves for them before the Lord; than to have God remembering them in wrath against you, when you are at the table?

Now, for your help in this matter set time apart before the sacrament, read over our Larger Catechism upon the ten commandments; and, as you read, carefully observe and mark the duties you have omitted, and the sins you have committed against every one of the commands; and from this you may form a black catalogue of your sins, which you ought to spread, as Hezekiah did Sennacherib's letter, *before the Lord*, and likewise before the face of your own consciences. Had we but our eyes enlightened by God's Spirit, to take a view of ourselves and our manifold spots, in the glass of God's holy and extensive law then would we go humbly to God with ropes about our necks, sorrow in our hearts, tears in our eyes, and confessions in our mouths, cast ourselves down at the footstool of his mercy, and make full and particular acknowledgments of our guiltiness before him.

And, to give some instances: when we view the first commandment, let us be humbled for our sins against it, and confess them: "Ah! have I not been guilty of much heart atheism? Have I not doubted of the being or providence of God? Have I not much ignorance, and many wrong thoughts and misapprehensions of God? Have I not been forgetful of God my maker and preserver? Have I not put the creature, the world, self, and other things, in his room? Have I not ascribed my mercies to others, to fortune, to my own wisdom and industry, rather than to God? Alas, for my self-love, self-seeking, unbelief, distrust, hatred of God, grieving his Spirit, dislike of his image in his ordinances, his children, &c.

2dly, How have I sinned against the second command, by devising or approving other ways of worship than God hath appointed, by not prizing pure ordinances, by making representations of God in my mind, and entertaining wrong conceptions of him?

3dly, Against the third command, by abusing God's name, his scriptures, his ordinances; by irreverent approaches to God, hypocrisy, careless hearing and communicating; by perjury, swearing rashly, breach of oaths and vows; by having a hand in the perjury or false-swearing of others; by wresting the word, misapplying providences, unthankfulness for mercies, insensibleness and incorrigibleness under judgments and afflictions.

4thly, Against the fourth command, by forgetfulness of the Sabbath before it came, not preparing for it, not labouring to prevent what might distract me in the duties of the Sabbath: by profaning the Sabbath when it came, by idleness, needless visits, unsuitable thoughts, words and actions; by worldly cares and business on the Sabbath; by needless recreations, seeking my own pleasures, not performing, or careless performing of the duties of the Sabbath, both in public and private. Alas, I have been so far from calling the Sabbath a delight, that oftimes my heart hath said, what a weariness is it? Ah, the strict observation of the Sabbath hath been tedious to me, I have shifted it over, and said, when shall the Sabbath be gone? &c.

5thly, Against the fifth command, by not behaving myself answerably to my natural, ecclesiastical, and political parents; not loving them, praying for them, and covering their infirmities: by not behaving suitably towards my inferiors, and not admonishing and encouraging them in well-doing, not correcting children, or doing it unduly, provoking them to wrath: and also carrying unsuitably towards my equals, envying their gifts, prosperity, or grieving at their advancement.

6thly, Against the sixth command, by sinful anger, hatred, malice, desire of revenge, immoderate use of meat and drink; by quarrelling, fighting, striking, wounding, and doing several things that tend to take away the lives of others; sowing strife and discord among friends, &c. by not being duly concerned for the preservation of the lives of others, whether of their souls or bodies.

7thly, Against the seventh command, by unchaste thoughts, words and actions; by unclean imaginations; obscene speeches, wanton gestures, immodest apparel; not watching over my senses, heart, words, actions; by going into bad company, occasions of uncleanness; by drunkenness, gluttony, and other temptations thereunto.

8thly, Against the eighth command, by stealing, defrauding, oppression, extortion, unfaithfulness in bargains and contracts, idleness, prodigality, inordinate prizing of worldly goods.

9thly, Against the ninth command, by slandering, backbiting, reviling, lying in jest or earnest, concealing the truth I should have spoken, speaking the truth unseasonably, and to a wrong end, suborning false witnessess, pleading for an evil cause, rash censuring, aggravating smaller faults, countenancing evil reports, extenuating gross sins.

10thly, Against the tenth command, by discontent with my own condition, envying and grieving at my neighbour's good and welfare, impatience under affliction. Alas, for my innumerable breaches of God's holy commandments!

In the *next* place, take a view of the particular aggravations of your sins, and be deeply humbled for them, and lay them out before God in their blackest and bloodiest colours: "Ah, I have sinned against more light and knowledge than others, against many checks of conscience, warnings, admonitions and reproofs. I have sinned against more mercies and experiences of God's kindness than others. I

have had many gracious offers of peace and pardon; nay, God has given me sweet intimations of his love and good-will to my soul; he hath sometimes smiled on me in duty; given me enlargements, breakings and meltings of heart in prayer, hearing and communicating; but I have been most unthankful to him: alas for my ingratitude for mercies! I have sinned against more resolutions, vows, covenants and engagements, to the contrary, than others have done. Ah, I have sinned with deliberation, and fallen into the same sins over again. I have sinned against my confessions, my lamentations, and prayers. I have sinned against God's rods and chastisements upon myself, and against terrifying instances of God's judgments upon others. I have sinned against the patience and long suffering of God, that hath waited upon me for many years. Alas, I have sinned against reason, conscience, interest, and a thousand other obligations. I have dishonoured God, hardened the wicked, and opened their mouths against religion. I have gratified satan, and brought up an ill report on the ways of God by my sins, more than many others.

Moreover, how grievously have I sinned against the gospel, by slighting, not sufficiently esteeming, admiring and being thankful for, the infinite love of God displayed in man's redemption. By not loving and rejoicing in Jesus Christ and him crucified: by resting on my duties, and not improving Christ, and relying on him in all his offices, not accounting all things loss and dung for him: by not dying daily to sin, nor sorrowing for it; but often making light of that which nothing but the blood of Christ could expiate. Ah, I have not sought the things of Christ as my own, I have not preferred Jersulaem to my chief joy. My heart hath not (like Eli's) trembled for the ark of God, nor hath my soul (like Lot's) been vexed from day to day with the unlawful deeds of those among whom I live. I have not mourned for the afflictions of God's people, for the signs of God's anger, or for the sins of the times. Alas for the infirmities, imperfections, and iniquities of my holy things! Oh, the heart-hardness, formality, earthly-mindedness, deadness, indisposition, wanderings, weariness, unpreparedness, and want of relish that hath attended my attendance on holy ordinances, and particularly this of the Lord's supper! I have rested in the mere out-side of duties. I have had little appetite after this refreshing ordinance of the Lord's supper. I have not approached to it with such solemn preparation, examination, humiliation, renewing of covenant, as I ought to have done. I have walked unanswerably after the communion, and have not minded my resolutions and engagements as becomes a worthy communicant."

Having thus accused yourselves, and confessed your sins before God, as far as you can remember; proceed also to judge and condemn yourselves from them, saying, "O what a wretched rebel against God have I been; yea, even a den of filthiness, a sty of uncleaness, and a sink of misery! I have been a heaven-daring, God-provoking, Christ-crucifying, spirit-quenching, law-breaking, gospel-despising, and soul-murdering sinner! Lord, can thy arms of mercy open to receive such a monster of wickedness as I have been? Surely I deserve rather to be trampled under the feet of thy justice, than to be embraced in the arms of thy mercy; for, alas, I have trampled under my feet all thy glorious attributes. I have abused thy mercy and patience, and contemned thy wisdom and power. I have despised thy goodness, that hath been unto me like the dropping dew. I have incensed the infinite power of my dread Sovereign against me, who by a word can unhinge the world, and tear up its foundations as easily as he laid them. I have exasperated the justice of that mighty One who by his breath can crumble me to dust, and consume me to powder. Lord, I have sinned against the clearest light and dearest olve: nay, I have repeated and reiterated my heinous sins; I have gone from committing sin to confessing sin, and from confessing sin to committing sin again. Ah! I have lived as carelessly and irreligiously, as if there had been no God to punish, nor devil to torment; no sweetness in heaven, nor bitterness in hell. O what indignities and affronts hast thou borne with from me, a poor, undeserving, ill-deserving, yea, hell-deserving wretch! never were the wages more due to the labourer, than damnation is due to me. If every sin brings down a curse, and deserves hell, how many thousand hells, how many millions of curses, do I deserve? O how miserable should I be for ever, if thou, Lord, should deal with me according to my deservings! I have forfeited all interest in thy favour, and all claim to thy mercy: I deserve not to live in thy world, or to breathe in thy air; but to have my name blotted out from under heaven, yea, to have all the curses of thy book, and all the vials of thy wrath poured out on me, even a deluge of fire and brimstone rained upon me without intermission. I deserve to be hung up in chains of everlasting darkness, to be a monument of justice, and a derision of devils for evermore. I cast down my soul, Lord, at thy feet; though thou should take it up and fling it into hell, I behoved to say, *Thou art righteous:* for the hottest place in hell is too good for me.

"Oh, shall such a wretch as I, think of approaching to thy table? What may I expect there but frowns from the Master of the feast? While the son of righteousness ariseth with healing in his wings to those that fear thy name, thy wrath may burn against me as fire, and devour me as stubble. The day of feasting and rejoicing, sacrifice and atonement, to thy sincere servants, may be a day of wrath and trouble, darkness and gloominess unto me. While they are saying, *Come let us go into the house of the Lord, our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Zion, within thy courts, O God:* I may justly be saying, the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand? And when thy children, Lord, shall go with confidence and present themselves before thee, arrayed in the righteousness of thy Son, lifting up their heads with joy, knowing the time of their redemption draws nigh: I may be hiding myself in the dens and rocks of the mountains, saying, *Fall on me, and hide me from the face of him that sits on the throne.* I may see them taken in and set down at the table above with the King, and myself eternally thrust out: and, while they are feasting and rejoicing at thy table, I may justly be lying under the wrath of the Lamb.

"Oh, Lord, I have made light of the gospel feast, and preferred the things of the world before it; so that thou mayest justly say to me, that I shall never taste of thy supper; or, if I go to it, that it shall not be for the better, but for the worse; I shall meet with a frown instead of a smile, a curse instead of a welcome, a breach instead of a blessing. Lord, thou mayest instead of bread give me a stone, and for the cup of the new testament, give me a cup of wrath and trembling. Thou mayest justly turn my hard heart into a stone, instead of turning my stony heart into a heart of flesh."

When thou hast in this manner aggravated thy crimes,

and condemned thyself, yet do not despair; but as the poor condemned criminal may cry for mercy, so let a poor, humbled, self-condemned sinner, cry to a merciful God for pity. Say, "Lord, I am ashamed and confounded at my former madness and folly: I have nothing to plead for myself, except, with the poor publican standing afar off, to smite upon my breast, and lift up mine eyes to heaven, and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner." All my refuge, all my hope, is in the free mercy of God, through Jesus Christ. Lord, make me a monument of free grace to all the ages of eternity. But, alas, I am ashamed to speak of mercy and grace, who have already abused so much thereof, yea, trampled on the blood that should save me. But, Lord, what can I do, or whither shall I go? Should I despair with Cain, or make away myself with Judas? Oh, no: this, Lord, were to affront thy mercy yet more, and utterly to reject the gospel-remedy which thou valuest so highly. This thing I will not do; but, seeing I have heard so glorious a report of the mercy of the king of Israel, I will even venture to his throne of grace, where free mercy reigns to pardon abounding sins, and where Jesus Christ sits to save the chief of sinners. Lord Jesus reach from heaven thy merciful hand, to save me a poor sinner, who, like Peter am ready to sink in the sea of my sins and miseries; that so the blessing of a heavy laden sinner, that is ready to perish, may come on thy head for ever. *Lord, save me, or else I perish;* wash away the guilt of my many heinous sins, with the merit of that blood which ran down from thy wounds on the cross, that I am to see represented in the sacrament, or I am undone. Lord I am told of the efficacy of this blood, that it hath a mighty current, and the highest mountains of guilt cannot stop it course: Oh, let the blessed experiment be tried on me, as it hath been on thousands before me. I am also told, that thou hast sought after many sinners while running from thee; nay, followed them to the very gates of hell with a pardon in thy hand; and, when satan has been ready to tumble them in, thou hast caught them and brought them back again. And, wilt thou now refuse me, who am seeking after thee? Lord thou heardst and helped, nay, died for thine enimies, before they cried to thee for help: and, wilt thou now reject me, who am come to lay down my arms, and cry to thee for mercy? Hast thou not said, that he that confesseth and forsaketh his sins, shall find mercy? Thy word was never yet known to fail? Lord, be it to me according to thy word."

And, having betaken thyself to Christ thy Surety's merit, humbly plead it with God for thy pardon and acceptance; say, "Lord, I have indeed broken all thy commands; but, hath not my Surety fulfilled them all? I have, alas, affronted thy justice; but, hath not my Surety satisfied it? I have deserved thy wrath, but he hath endured it. The chastisement of my peace was upon him: O let the merit of his righteousness be upon me. Lord, remember not what I have done against thee: but remember what he hath done and suffered for me. Oh, when I consider thy greatness and my own unworthiness, thy purity and my uncleanness, thy glory and my vileness, I am confounded and discouraged to draw near to thy table; but when I consider thy bounty and goodness, my Saviour's merit, and thy mercy and readiness to forgive, I am encouraged to come. And, O that I could come with a broken and a contrite heart, which is a pleasant sacrifice to God!"

Object. "But, (saith some poor discouraged soul) I would fain set about the work of humiliation, in order to prepare me for the sacrament; but, O my hard heart will not break; alas, it is so hardened and bound up, that I cannot get one tear for sin."

Ans. Remember that it is Christ, who hath purchased, who hath promised, and who freely bestoweth repentance on poor sinners; therefore go to him and seek it: and, that it may be wrought in you, plead for the blessed Spirit, which he hath also promised, to be sent to take off the scales of blindness from your eyes which satan hath put on, that so you may see sin in its blackness and deformity. Cry with Job, *What I know not, teach thou me. O make me to know my transgression and my sin.* God hath set before you several looking-glasses to represent the evil of sin to you; O make use of them. You have the glass of God's holy nature, the glass of his holy law, the glass of the damned's torments, and the glass of Christ's sufferings; look frequently into these. View the infinite purity and spotlessness of God's nature; consider his holy law in its spiritual meaning and large extent; meditate on the eternal shrieks and howlings of damned souls: and, in a special manner, behold Christ's bloody agonies for sin. A right look of him whom ye have pierced, will cause you mourn, Zech xii. 10.

Come then, O hard hearted sinner, and behold how thy sins pierced Christ's head with thorns, his hands and feet with nails, his side with a spear, and his heart with sorrows: behold how they pressed him down in the garden, till he sweat blood: behold how they bound a heavy cross on his back, till he fainted with the load: behold how they nailed him to the cursed tree, and made God frown upon him, so that he was forced to cry out, *my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* O, canst thou look on Golgotha, or Gethsemane, with dry eyes, or an unconcerned heart? Canst thou see Christ's eyes weep, and his heart melted like wax within him, and yet thy heart continue hard, and thine eyes dry? Come, hearken to his dying groans, and look to his bleeding wounds: think you hear him saying to you, *Behold what your sins have done! Is there any sorrow like my sorrow?* O, wilt thou not say to my hard heart, "What is this that thou hast done? Is not this the Son of God and the King of glory, that thou hast murdered by thy sins; and wilt thou not be grieved for them? Shall the hard rocks rent, the dead earth shake, the temple's vail rend, the sun vail its bright face, the heavens put on a mourning habit, and the whole creation look sad, when Christ is suffering for thy sins, and thou the guilty criminal, that shouldst have eternally howled in hell's flames, stand only unconcerned?" *Be astonished, O heavens, at this!* and let thy hard heart blush and be ashamed for it. Ah! shall the history of Joseph in the pit move your heart more than that of Christ upon the cross? Shall the news of the tragical death or sufferings of one of your friends or countrymen among the Turks, move your heart sooner than the death and sufferings of the innocent Son of God? O, then, go to God and complain of thy hard heart; take it and lay it before God's promise, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. and plead that he would take it away, according to his word, "Lord, thou curedst all manner of plagues and diseases which were brought to thee while thou wast on earth: and hast not thou the same bowels of mercy now in heaven? Surely thy goodness is still the same, thy hands are not shortened that they cannot save: nay, there are holes now in thy hands, to let blessings drop through them the more freely on us. Thou art my only physician, and to thee I will look

for the cure: Lord, nothing will do it but the plaister of thy blood."

Mourning is absolutely necessary for thee, O communicant, if thou wouldst have the wine of consolation in the sacrament. When did Jacob find God in Bethel, but when he wept and made supplication to God? Hos. xii. 4. When did Mary meet with Christ, but when she sought him weeping and sorrowing? John xx. 11. If you cast out a flood of tears in Christ's way, he will not be able for his compassionate heart to pass over it, but will turn in and lodge with you.

Object. "Alas! I cannot win to tears for sin. Are tears absolutely necessary?"

Ans. They are very desirable where they are; the penitent's tears are the joy of angels, and the delight of God, he keeps a bottle for them: but yet all constitutions are not alike moist; a tender heart may be matched with a dry brain that cannot easily command tears; and some perhaps may lay more stress on tears than on the frame of the heart that produces them, not minding that God looks more to the inward frame than to the outward expressions. But the truth is, if thou be one that canst get tears for other things, for worldly losses and crosses, and yet can find none for sin, it is a sign thy heart is not right. How many, alas, can weep abundantly for the loss of a child, yea, for a horse or cow, and yet have not one tear for the loss of their soul, or of Christ's favour or presence!

DIRECT. X.—*Flee to Jesus Christ by faith, and embrace him as he is offered to you in the gospel, before you come to his table.*

NONE have a right to Christ's table, but those who come first to him in the way of faith; for it is a feast designed only for believers.

What hath been said above, concerning the multitude and heinousness of your sins, for which you ought to be humbled and mourn, may serve to show your great need of Christ to deliver you from them. Think not that your repentance, confessions, or tears for sin, can any way satisfy the justice of God for it, or merit acceptance or pardon for you: this were to put these things in Christ's room, that are only means to lead you to him; and to take up with a righteousness of your own, instead of his, that allenarly can atone the justice of God for sinners. O then, see that ye look beyond all to Christ alone for atonement, righteousness, pardon and salvation, and count all things but dung and loss in respect of him.

Now, since the gospel offers Christ to all that hear it, and the call and command to receive and embrace Christ as a Saviour is given to all and every one, even to the vilest of sinners; you have a full warrant to lay hold on him for pardon, and flee to him for mercy: and you heinously sin against God and your own soul, if you neglect to do it. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation*, and slight so great a Saviour.

I shall therefore make use of some motives to press poor perishing sinners to flee from sin and wrath to Jesus Christ the only Saviour, and to receive and rest upon him for life and salvation; and then come to the sacrament, to get their right and title to Christ, and all his purchase, sealed and confirmed.

I. Take a view of the misery of a natural and Christless condition: and O that God would open your eyes to let you see it, and convince you, that, while thou art in this state, thou art a rebel to thy God, a prodigal to thy father, a slave to thy lusts, and an alien to the common-wealth of Israel! if thou comest not to Christ with thy burdens; the whole burden of unpardoned sin lies upon thy own back; and this is a burden that will sink thee lower than the grave; nay, it will press thee to the lowest hell, and keep thee eternally sinking there. Consider also, how vile and lothsome thou and all thy actions, whether natural, civil, or religious, are in the sight of a holy God: while thou art out of Christ, thy soul is naked, and swarms with the vermin of filthy lusts; and thou hast neither a garment to cover thee, nor a fountain to wash thee: the leprosy of sin spreads over all, so that, from the *crown of the head to the sole of the foot, there is nothing but bruises and putrifying sores;* so that there is no mire so unclean, no vomit so lothsome, no carrion so offensive, no pestilence so nauseous, as thou art, in thy Christless state, in the eyes of a holy God who cannot look upon iniquity but with abhorrence. Again, consider, thou art a slave to Satan the worst of tyrants; he rules and works in your hearts, as a workman doth in his shop, Eph. ii. 2. He uses your powers, faculties, senses and members, according to his pleasure: he says, *go, and you go: do this and you do it.* Your bondage is worse than the Israelites under Pharaoh; for they groaned under theirs, but, alas! you are sensible of yours, neither will you believe it. The devil knows, that if you perceived your slavery, you would seek to make your escape from him; therefore, to make sure work, he deals with you as the Philistines did with Sampson; puts out your eyes, that you may not see your chains, nor look to Christ for liberty: O that God would open them, and cause you groan under your fetters, and look to Christ for relief!

Moreover, while thou art in thy Christless state, God's wrath is still burning against thee, the flaming sword of justice is always over thy neck, Psal. vii. xi. "God is angry with the wicked every day," every day of the week, and every hour of the day: when thou goest out and comest in, risest up or liest down, God is still angry with thee; yea, *he hath bent his bow, and made ready his arrows*, which are steeled with wrath, and headed with vengeance: nay, his bow is drawn, and his arrows are at the flight; and, O Christless soul, thou art the very butt thereof; and if he let them fly, they will pierce thee to the very soul, and who will heal that wound? What a dangerous state is this?

And, further, all the curses of the law are levelled against thee, and a just God is engaged by his oath to ruin thee, if thou abidest in this state, Heb. iii. 18. "To whom sware he, that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?" Should not the thoughts of this make thee tremble? Were it but the oath of a man, or company of men, to procure thy death, as of those forty men that bound themselves with an oath, they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul, it would bereave thee of thy night's rest and quiet till they were made friends with thee: and, will the oath of the great God have no effect upon thee, nor move thee to flee to Christ for protection and reconciliation? Who can help thee or deal for thee, if Christ be neglected? With what face canst thou look to him, or cry for mercy from him, when he comes to judge thee at the last day? If thou remain Christless now, thou wilt be speechless, helpless and hopeless then. O think, what pale faces, quivering lips, fainting hearts, and trembling consciences, will be among Christless sinners then! How will their heads hang down and knees knock together, and cry, *Alas for*

the day! they can look no where for comfort; for the judge frowns on them, the saints deride them, their own friends upraid them, the angels mock them, the devil scoffs at them, the heavens thunder against them, the earth flames about them, and hell groans for them, and down they will go roaring and howling for ever.

O Christless soul, how canst thou think to lie in that dark dungeon for ever, where there is nothing but weeping and gnashing of teeth to be heard, and utter darkness to be seen, but never a blink of the light of God's favour to all eternity? How wilt thou live in that pit where there is no water? Not a drop of comfort or refreshment to the thirsty scorched prisoners: no, not so much as one drop to cool their tongue; the torments there are both endless and easeless. O poor Christless soul, thou art, as it were, apprehended by justice for thy debt, and brought the length of this prison door, and there are hundreds of diseases and devils waiting for a warrant to open the door to let you in; and, wilt thou not employ a surety nor seek for a ransom, when justice is waiting a while to see if thou wilt do it, and Christ is earnestly offering himself to be thy cautioner, and his blood to ransom thee from this pit? And to be sure no other thing will do it. See Zech. ix. 11.

II. As it is God's command that you should receive and believe on his son Jesus Christ; so he declares that it is a work above all others most pleasing to him, John vi. 29. It is emphatically called his *commandment*, 1 John iii. 23. being a command he values more than all other commands in the Bible: and so, upon the other hand, there is no sin so provoking to God, as unbelief and rejecting of Christ; yea, he is more offended with it, than with the breaking of all his other commands, See Heb. x. 28, 29. Put all your other sins in one scale, and unbelief in another, and you will find that unbelief weighs down all the rest; for it is a slighting of the whole work of redemption, which is the master-piece of all God's works, being that which his heart is most set upon, and he hath been at most pains about, 1 John iv. 9. O be persuaded then to do the work that is most acceptable to God, and obey his great command of *believing upon the name of his Son.* The whole creation obeys his commands; he commands the sun to run its daily course, and it obeys him; he commands the sea to ebb and flow twice a day, and it obeys to a minute? he commands the angels and all the host of heaven, and they punctually obey him: and will you only be disobedient to him, and that to his beloved command, when yet he hath done more for you than for the whole creation.

III. Consider what an unspeakable mercy and happiness it is to you, to enjoy the free offers of Jesus Christ, and to have God commanding you to receive him. How would the fallen angels value such a mercy, if they had it! They would not be loth to leave their dungeon and accept of a Saviour, as you are: but their state is eternally hopeless and desperate, there is no remedy for their misery. O do not put yourselves in the same case with them, by slighting the offered remedy. How would damned souls prize such an offer! The least news and remotest hopes of it, would make them leap in their chains, and sing in the flames. O how glad would they be to lift up their flaming hands to grip to the cords of love and mercy, if they could be let down to them in that dark dungeon! Why then should ye wilfully put yourselves into the same hopeless condition with them by your unbelief? Nay, your neglecting so many offers will sink you far deeper in that scalding lake of fire and brimstone, and increase your flames to more vehemency than those of others who have not been so privileged. O how will devils, Turks, Jews, and Pagans, upbraid you there, for your inexcusable folly in slighting your mercy, and destroying your souls? Be wise then in time, prize your privilege, and *consider the things that belong to your peace, before they be hid from your eyes.*

IV. Consider what an excellent and suitable help Christ is for fallen sinners; he is well furnished and qualified for your case; he hath gold for your poverty, eye-salve for your blindness, balm for your wounds, physic for your diseases, bread for your hunger, white raiment for your nakedness, a fountain for your pollution, and a ransom for your debt and bondage. In a word, he hath a broad plaister for your broad sore, a deep fountain for your deep guilt; he is the chief of Saviours for the chief of sinners. Behold how one deep calls to another, the depth of thy misery for the depth of his mercy. Are your sins and miseries very extensive, then view the large dimensions of his mercy; who can fathom the height, the depth, the breadth, or the length of it? As for its height, it is high as heaven, and surmounts the highest mountains of guilt: it is so deep, that it can bury the greatest of your sins; it is as broad as the east is distant from the west; and, for its length, it is from everlasting to everlasting: so that it fully answers all your wants and miseries. In Christ there is all you need or can desire; there is both food and physic, clothing, strength and cordials. O sinner, here is blood to justify thee, and water to cleanse thee; here is the water of life, O believer, that will restore thy soul again, renew thy youth as the eagles, cure all thy diseases, and heal all thy pains. In a word, you have in Christ all that can make you good, all that can make you great, and all that can make you happy.

V. Consider how near you are to Christ and mercy. The remedy is prepared, and salvation is brought to your very door: So that you need not say, *Who will ascend to heaven, and bring me down the water of life?* For it is brought to earth to thy hand: you need not say, *Who will roll me away the stone from the well-mouth?* For Christ hath done it for thee; and as it is now a fountain opened and running by your door, O why will ye be so mad as perish for thirst beside this fountain? Or starve for hunger beside a full feast? Or die of your wounds beside a physician? And all for want of heart to accept the offer? O, it would be sad to be so near Christ, and yet eternally miss him; to perish like the thief on the cross with a Saviour at your side; to be within a step of him, and yet never touch him; yea, to sink into hell betwixt the outstretched arms of his mercy, and with the sweet calls sounding in your ears. What a heart-stinging consideration will this be to you in that place of torment for ever? O then, stir up yourselves to take hold of Christ, when he is so near and in your offer: strive earnestly, while there is an ark prepared, and a window opened in the side of it, and the hand of mercy put forth to pull in shelterless doves that can find no rest elsewhere: I say, strive to come near by the wings of faith, make your nest (at least) beside the hole's mouth: be not found hovering without, lest the flood wash you from the sides of the ark, and ye perish miserably. If you be so foolish, you will wish eternally that you had never heard of Christ, or that you had been born among the wild Indians or Mahometans, that never heard a sermon, or witnessed a communion.

VI. Consider how importunate Christ is in his offers,

and how much he presseth you to receive him. "Wisdom crieth in the streets," Prov. i. 20. Christ makes loud and open proclamation of himself, and oft repeats his calls, Isa. li. 1. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat, yea come," &c. Behold, how earnest he is with sinners, that he bids them come to him three times in one verse, *Come, come, come.* What alluring methods hath he taken to gain your hearts! How tenderly and affectionately doth he call and court backward souls! Isa. li. 4. "Hearken unto me, my people, give ear unto me, O my nation." What melting expressions are these? *My people! My nation!*

But, if calls do not prevail, he comes himself to seek and to save that which was lost. He came personally in the days of his flesh, and now he comes by his Spirit in his word and ordinances. The three wise men came from the east a long journey to seek Christ; but now Christ hath come from heaven to earth, a long journey; yea, come to every one of your congregations to seek you: and, are you not willing to be found of him?

Nay, he is content to follow you when you run away from him, and pursue you with his gracious offers. As the rock followed the Israelites in the wilderness with its running streams of water, so Christ, our spiritual rock, follows you now with the streams of his mercy and blood, to wash and save you. O sinner, if you will not hear the words of his mouth, hearken to the call of his wounds, which are opened as so many mouths to plead with you. He hath suffered his blessed side to be opened, that ye might look into his bleeding heart, and see it panting with love, and also hear the sounding of his bowels towards you. Will not this prevail? Then behold him by faith with a heavy cross on his back, weighed down with your sins, and the curses of a broken law, following you, and calling after you. Hear him knocking with his nailed hands, at the door of your hearts, saying, Open to me, poor perishing sinner; give me harbour in thy heart, behold what I have suffered from heaven, earth, and hell, for thee; look what justice hath done; look what the devil, the Romans, the Jews, and my own disciples, have done. View my head, my side, my hands and my feet, my wounded body and my bruised soul. Oh, canst thou find in thy heart to keep Christ at the door, when thus wounded, bleeding, mangled for thee? Wilt thou let him stand all the day long, when he hath put on his dyed garments, and red apparel, to court thy backward heart, and when he is saying, O sinner, if thou wilt not believe, *reach hither thy hand, and feel the print of the nails; yea, thrust it into my pierced side, and feel my warm bleeding heart and see if I love you not?* Wilt thou deny him access, who has done so much for thee?

Will not this prevail? Then behold him displaying his glorious beauty and excellency before thine eyes in a preached gospel, to win thy heart. Will not ministers' commendations of him move thee! Then hear how he commends himself; "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys; I am the true vine; I am the good Shepherd," &c. And, will you not believe his own report, who cannot lie? Surely he is in good earnest with you when he takes this course.

Will not this do? Then hearken how mournfully he complains when he wants success, and passionately regrets your folly in rejecting him. He sighs when he mentions it, Psal. lxxxi. 13. "O that my people had hearkened unto me!" He bitterly laments it, Matth. xxiii. 37. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, and ye would not!" He doubles the name, to show his tender affection; as David when he regrets his son Absalom, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son! &c. How often would I have gathered you under my wings?" How many an affectionate sermon, call, and invitation have I given you, but all to no purpose? Shall I go through a sea of wrath and blood to save you, and will ye not accept of me when I have done it? Shall I shed my blood in vain? Shall I bear the wrath of God, the scorn of men, the terror of death, and curse of the law, to no effect. Will you still prefer your sins before me, and hear satan's knocks sooner than mine.

Hear that compassionate complaint, John v. 40. "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." As if he had said, "Why run ye so fast from your Saviour? Why come ye not to me, who am come from heaven to seek and to save you? It is not an enemy, but a friend, you run from: the worse turn I would do you is to save your lives: ye will go, without much pressing, to the devil, to get death and eternal damnation: but you will not come to me to get life and eternal salvation. O what an inexpressible madness are you guilty of!"

Behold how he wept for self-destroying Jerusalem, rejecting his offers, Luke xix. 41. When he sat down to consider their case, his bowels yearned with pity, his tongue broke forth in lamentation, and his eyes gushed out with tears; so that his weeping even interrupted his voice, and made him utter short and abrupt expressions, "if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day," &c. Where he seems to pause at every other word, and drop first a word, and then a tear. What a moving sight was this, to see the Son of God in such a pang of grief, and flood of tears, for lost sinners? Had he been enquired at, as he did Mary, John xx. 15. "Blest Lord what seekest thou? Why weepest thou? His answer readily would have been, I seek not myself; I weep not for myself; for I shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, though sinners be not gathered: but I weep to see sinners so mad as to reject their Saviour and salvation rather than part with their lusts, that have damnation following them at the heels; it is my grief to see them content rather to cast themselves headlong into the devil's arms, than throw themselves into my arms of mercy, or embrace me in the arms of their faith. O! did Christ weep for you, poor sinners; and, will ye not weep for yourselves? Did his heart melt with pity for you; and will not your's melt with desires towards him?

Can he do more to win your hearts than this? Yea, if this do not, he is pleased to expostulate the matter with you, and lay your danger before you; "Turn ye, turn ye (saith he) for why will ye die?" Yea, he condescends to reason the matter with you in a familiar way: "Come (says he let us reason together," Isai. i. 18. "O my people what have I done unto thee?" Mic. vi. 3. "What iniquity have ye found in me?" What want or unsuitableness have ye seen in me! *Have I been a barren wilderness to you? Are not my ways equal?* Thus he seeks to draw you with the cords of a man, and with the bonds of love, Hos. xi. 4. And if there arise objections in your heart against coming to Christ, and receiving him for your Saviour, see how carefully he lays out himself in his word to answer them all; for he well foresaw every one of them: produce your cause (saith the Lord) bring forth your strong reasons, I am ready to hear and answer all your scruples.

O! saith some poor humbled soul, *I have no right to come to Christ, for I am a great sinner.* O! saith Christ, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Object. "But I am the chief of sinners, my sins are red as crimson." O saith Christ, "I can make them white as wool:" Nay, it was my errand into the world, to save such as thou art, 1 Tim. i. 15.

Object. "But I am sick and wounded: what hath Christ to do with me?" O! saith Christ, it is my proper employment to be taken up with you; for the "whole need not a physician, but they that are sick," Mat. xi. Am not I the good Samaritan, who am come to pour oil into thy sores, "and tenderly bind up thy wounds?" Psal. cxlvii. 3.

Object. "But I have no ground to hope, for I am a lost wretch." O! saith Christ, I came for this very errand, "to seek and to save that which is lost," Luke xix. 10. and many a lost sheep have I sought and found.

Object. "But I am past cure, for I am quite dead and rotten in the grave of sin." O! saith Christ, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live," John xi. 25. And again he saith, Eph. v. 14. Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

Object. "But I am a slave to sin and satan, and a prisoner to justice." O! saith Christ, I came to "proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound," Isa. lxi. 1. Yea, "I have the key of David that opens and none can shut." I have the blood of the covenant, that brings prisoners out of the pit. Turn ye to the strong hold ye prisoners of hope, Zech. ix. 11, 12.

Object. "But I have heavy burdens that weigh me down." O! saith Christ, come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Object. "But my hand is withered, I cannot receive Chirst or any thing from him. Then do as the man who had the withered hand, make a mint upon Christ's call, and he will enable thee to stretch out thy hand.

Object. "But I am lame, and cannot walk in Christ's ways." O? saith Christ, I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statues, Ezek. xxxvi. 6. "Then shall the lame man leap as an hart," Isa. xxxv. 6.

Object. "But what if Christ withdraw his spirit and grace from me again?" No, saith Christ, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee, Heb. xiii.

Object. "But may not I, notwithstanding, leave him, and make apostacy?" No, saith Christ, the covenant runs otherwise, Jer. iii. 19. "Thou shalt call me, my father, and shalt not turn away from me." Christ is the surety for thy perseverance.

Object. "But I will be overcome by strong tempations." No, saith Christ, my grace shall be sufficient for thee.

Object. "But (saith some poor sensible sinner) alas! my case is not yet touched, for it is singular: my sins are heinous and peculiar, they are against light, love, conscience, vows, and a thousand obligations: there is none that knows what a sinner I have been, but God and my own conscience: will Christ ever accept of such a wretch as me.

Ans. Art thou worse than a devilish Manasseh, or a persecuting Paul, whom Christ pitied and saved? art thou worse than Mary Magdalene, who was a most notorious vile wretch? Yet seven devils, and an army of lusts, could not keep Christ out of her heart. Nay, though thy heart were as foul and black as hell, and thy life did swarm with the most abominable sins; yet, Christ is both able and willing to save thee, if thou come to him. Are you worse than those in that black catalogue? 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Read and see what a black roll is there; and yet the apostle saith to the believing Corinthians, ver. 11. "Such were some of you, yet ye are washed," &c. The blood of Christ is a powerful fountain, and is able to wash away the greatest sins that ever were committed, be they ever so black or bloody: God gave full proof of this, by the first sin we read of that was cleansed by this blood after it was shed, even the murder of the Son of God, Acts ii. 36, 38. This was the most prodigious wickedness that ever the sun saw; (yea, the sun fainted at the sight, as afraid to look on it) for suppose a man were able to pull heaven and earth to pieces, destroy the angels, and murder all mankind, he would not contract so monstrous a guilt as those did in crucifying the Son of God, whose person was infinitely superior to the whole creation: yet thousands, that were actors in this black tragedy, were washed by this blood, to give us a convincing experiment of its infinite value and virtue, and that no sin or guilt whatsoever was too strong for it: "The blood of Christ (saith John, 1 John i. 7.) cleanseth us from all sin."

Object. "But though Christ's blood be sufficient, yet I have no right to it."

Ans. Be what you will, you have a full and sufficient warrant from the gospel call to flee to it. See what Christ injoins his apostles to do, Mark xvi. 15. "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every crea ure," *q. d.* "Make offer of my blood to all without distinction, even to the worst of sinners, every creature, be they never so wicked, yea, though they have sinned themselves unto the likeness of beasts and devils; yet, if they be creatures of Adam's race, offer my blood, my mercy, and my merits to them: invite and press them to come unto me, *and him that cometh I will in no wise cast out.* O sinner! accept of the gospel-offer; and, whatever you have been, you shall find there is mercy enough in God's bowels to pity you, merit enough in Christ's blood to purchase a pardon for you, and prevalency enough in his intercession, to procure and apply it to you.

Object. "But I have often slighted the gospel-offer, an trampled on this precious blood: with what confidence can I lay claim to it?"

Ans. Since Christ doth not exclude you, you ought not to exclude yourself; but should reckon that you have the greater need to hasten to this blood, the more heinous that your sins be? Yea, you have a peculiar ground to plead upon for pardon on that account. See how David pleads it, Psal. xxv. 11. *Pardon mine iniquity*, why? *for it is great.* This would be a strange argument with men, *pardon my crime, for it is great;* but it is a strong argument with God. *Lord, it is great*, and so I have the more need of pardon: *it is great*, and so thou wilt have the greater honour in pardoning me, even as a physician hath in curing a desperate disease. The sinning against Christ's blood, or slighting it, is indeed a very heinous sin; but the more it is so, you have the more need to hasten to this blood, as the only fountain that can wash away the guilt of trampling it, and this, indeed, can do it effectually: nay, though you had actually shed this blood, as the Jews did, yet, if you be humbled for it, you are welcome to come to it for mercy. Observe that commission which Christ gave to his apostles, Luke xxiv. 46, 47. where he orders them to *preach repentance and remission in his name to all nations, and begin*

(saith he) *at Jerusalem.* O, might they say, why at *Jerusalem?* To be sure it is not our part to begin there, where they mocked, and pierced, and crucified thee the Lord of glory. Nay, says he, begin there, for these miserable wretches have most need of my blood to wash them. If any thing could alienate Christ's heart from sinners, the consideration of their crucifying of him, and using him so despitefully, might have done it: yet, says he, go make offer of my blood and mercy to these my murderers; accordingly, it was done by Peter, Acts ii. and many of them got this blood applied to them.

Object. "But as my sins are grievous in their nature, so they are vast in their number: they are even like the sand by the sea-shore, both weighty and without number."

Ans. Remember the merits of Christ's blood is infinite, but the number of thy sins is not so; nay, though they were ten thousand times more than they are, they could not stop the current of this everflowing and overflowing fountain. Though the sands be many and large, yet the sea can overflow them all; so, though thy sins be very numerous and extensive, yet the sea of Christ's blood can cover them all, and hide them from the sight of God, so as they shall never again appear, or rise up against you in judgment.

Object. "But my sins are not only grievous in their nature, and vast in their number; but they are of very long continuance: I am an old rotten sinner, long have I been in the grave of sin: surely Christ will never accept of me."

Ans. Your sins may be old, yet they are not so old as Christ's mercies, which are from everlasting. It is not the first old distemper that Christ hath cured; he raised Lazarus with a word, that had been four days in the grave; he stopt a bloody issue with the hem of his garment, that had run twelve years; he loosed a poor woman, that satan had bound eighteen years; he cured an impotent man, that had an infirmity thirty-eight years: and, can he not as easily cure all your soul distempers? He received those that came in at the eleventh hour, yea, saved some at the last hour, particularly the thief on the cross, whom the devil thought he was sure of, having drawn him the length of the mouth of hell, just ready to cast him in; yet, even then, upon his looking to Christ, did the arms of mercy catch hold of him.

What more canst thou object, O sinner? Hath not Christ provided answers to all thou canst say, either against thyself or him? Hath he not given unanswerable demonstration of his ability, fullness, fitness, and willingness to be thy Saviour? Hath he not given full proof of his earnest desire to save thee, by the many methods he takes to prevail with sinners to accept of him? Will not all the pains he hath hitherto taken, prevail with thy obstinate heart? What more would you have Christ to do with unwilling sinners? There is yet one step further he makes, and that is a very low one: he even, as it were, turns a humble supplicant to thee, and upon his bare knees beseeches thee to be reconciled to him. Read 2 Cor. v. 20. "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." O wonderful condescension! Behold divine mercy kneeling down to a sinner, in the humblest posture, with wringed hands and watery cheeks, importuning the sinner to receive his Saviour, accept of pardon, save his soul, and be reconciled to God in Christ. Be astonished, O heavens! Shall the Sovereign Creator turn supplicant to the vile traitor, and follow him with his remission? or the loving father to the prodigal child, and follow him with intreaties! And, O sinner! Will thy stubborn heart be able to refuse peace, or slight the blessed peace-maker, Jesus Christ, after all pains? If all his arguments preval nothing, yet one would think that the humble intreaties of the great God would certainly do it. How can you resist these?

Object. "I have no strength to come to Christ, I cannot believe of myself, I have a dead bound up heart, and I cannot help it."

Ans. 1. Canst thou say in good earnest, that thou art willing and desirous to embrace a Saviour, if thou wast able! Alas! it is here that it sticks; whatever you pretend, you are not truly willing. It is our unwillingness that ruins us: it is not so much for want of power (though indeed we want it) as want of will, that sinners want Christ: were you once willing, strength would not be wanting. O to get the will conquered, and made to surrender to Christ! Then the day were one: O for one pull more from the *Omnipotent Grace*, to make you "a willing people in the day of his power!"

2. Labour for a deep sense of thy own impotency; take your dead heart and lay it before God, and lie groaning in Christ's way, and plead for pity. It is true, God is not bound, in strict justice, to hear an unbeliever's prayer; but, if you be earnest with him, you may expect he will do it out of his great goodness and mercy. "He hears the ravens when they cry:" O, then, cry to him to your utmost ability, in a deep sense of want; be as earnest seeking faith as your daily bread; cry as fervently for life of your souls, as ye would do for the life of your bodies, if ready to be executed: If ye would do so, God would not deny you. More particularly, plead these things:

(1.) Take your bible, and kneel down, and cast up that gracious free promise, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. Read it, and plead it; put thy finger to it, and put the maker of it to his word; lay thy dead heart before it, and look up and cry, "Lord, make good this word to me, is it not a free promise?" There is no condition required of me for getting it fulfilled, but to enquire at thee for doing it, verse 37. Now, Lord, I am come to enquire and request thee to do it.

(2.) Humbly plead thy own impotency, and the insufficiency of all others to help thee in this state. This was the impotent man's plea with Christ at the pool of Bethesda, John v. 6, 7. It had good success with him, and so may it have with you. Say, Lord, I have been many years with this dead plagued heart beside the open fountain of thy blood, that has saved many in my condition: I am impotent, and unable to move to it of myself, and have none to put me in: I have tried others, but I find it altogether in vain: ordinances cannot do it, sacraments cannot do it, the loudest knocks or call will not do it: thou, Lord, must put to thy helping hand, or it cannot be done, for it is a work peculiar to thy almighty arm. I have been looking to all points for help, but, Lord, there is none in heaven or earth but thee alone: every one of the creatures, means, and ordinances say, it is not in me: every one of the saints and angels say, as the king of Israel did to that poor starving woman, 2 Kings, vi. 27. "If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee?" So if thou, Lord, help me not, I must perish.

(3.) In a deep sense of your own impotency, flee to God's power and plead it. Do you feel the Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir of your own corruptions swelling within you?

Say with Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 12, "We have no might against this great company, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee." If you could win this length, then were there good ground of hope; for, when we see that we are wholly helpless and shiftless in ourselves, then God's help is nearest: "When I am weak (saith the apostle, 2 Cor. xii. 10.) then am I strong." Renounce, then, all help in the creature, and look to the Creator: Say, Lord, though it be impossible with man, yet thou hast told me, Mark x. 17. "That with thee all things are possible:" though I may despair of all help in myself and others, yet thou hast forbid me to despair of help in thee, therefore I flee to thee alone. "Lord, give what thou commandest, and then command what thou wilt."

(4.) Plead thy extreme need of Christ, and of faith to give thee an interest in him. The world cannot tell thee, O sinner, how great thy need is: there is not a starving man that needs meat, a wounded man that needs a physician, a shipwrecked man that needs a plank, a dying man with the dive rattling in his throat that needs breath, so much as thou needest Christ. What wilt thou do on a death-bed, or at a tribunal, without an interest in him? And, what will become of thee to all eternity? Go to him, then, and seek faith in Christ, as a malefactor going to die would do his life: fall down at his feet and cry, give me faith and strength to carry me to Christ's blood, or else I die. I may live without friends, wealth, honours, and pleasures; but I cannot live without faith. I am lost, undone, a dead man, and I perish for ever without it. Lord, deny me what thou wilt, but deny me not faith. It had been better for me never to have been born, than to live without Christ, and an interest in him: if I win not to the fountain of Christ's blood, I will sink eternally in that scalding lake of fire and brimstone: if I go to Christ's table without faith, I will shed his blood, and eat and drink my own damnation.

(5.) Plead with God, how easy it is for him to help thee; cry with the Psalmist, Psal. lxxx. 1. "O thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth:" it will cost thee no more pains to work faith in me, and do all that I desire, than doth the *Sun to shine forth*: yea, thou canst more easily put forth thy power and grace, than the sun can dart out its beams. It is no trouble or loss to the sun to shine forth; so neither will it be to thee to show thy power and mercy; a look or touch from thee would do it; a little thing will save a drowning man; Lord, suffer me not to perish, when it is so easy for thee to prevent it. Were it any loss or trouble for God to help us, we might well doubt of it; but, since it is none, we may cry with hope, Lord, grant such an hungry beggar an alms out of the ocean of thy bounty; for thou wilt never miss it. As the sun, the more it shines, displays its glory the more; so thou wilt gain glory by putting forth thy power to help such a helpless creature as I am.

Object. "But I have often looked and cried to him for help, but alas, I am such a grievous sinner, he doth not answer me, unless it be with a frown."

Ans. 1. It may be there is some idol or sin still harboured, that thou art not willing to part with. This may be the Achan in the camp, that caused the Lord to hide his face: search for it, and cast out the accursed thing: "Let not thine eye pity it, neither do thou spare it." If thou canst not find it, go humbly to God and cry, "Show me, Lord, wherefore thou contendest with me."

2. It may be thou art not fervent enough; God keeps the door bolted, that you may be provoked to knock the harder, Mat. vii. 7 "Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you." In which one verse, Christ gives you three calls to fervency and importunity in prayer, each stronger than another: *ask*, *seek*, *knock*. The woman of Canaan readily took up the meaning of Christ's refusing to answer her; she turns the more fervent and importunate, and so gets all her will.

3. Resolve, whatever discouragement you meet with, you will never quit the throne of grace, but you will always lay yourself in Christ's way, and never look to another for help; yea that you will die waiting on him. Remember the Psalmist's experience, Psal. xl. 1. "I waited patiently for the Lord, and at length he inclined his ear, and heard my cry." There was never any yet that waited on him, had cause to be ashamed. You may meet with many discouragements and temptations, and be put to very sad thoughts; but you must be resolute in looking to Christ for help, come what will: and, in imitation of the *four lepers at the siege of Samaria*, reason with yourself, if I live at a distance from Christ, I'll infallibly perish, there is no hope for me: if Christ pity me not when I am waiting on him, I shall but perish; but yet there is hope, he will have pity at length: therefore, if I perish, I'll perish at Christ's footstool, looking up to him, where never one yet perished, and I hope he will not let me be the first.

4. Make use of arguments in pleading with him.

(1.) Plead the freeness of his mercy. It needs no motive, and expects no worth; but, "whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely." It runs freely, so that mountains cannot stop the current of it, more than rocks can stop the ebbing and flowing of the sea. Indeed, Lord, if sin and unworthiness could stop mercy, I might despair, for I am as unworthy a creature as ever the sun shined upon; but, blessed be God, grace is free.

(2.) Plead Christ's commission, Isa. lxi. 1. He was sent "to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound." Lord, here is a poor prisoner, a frozen, locked, bound-up heart: here is employment for thee: loose me, knock off my fetters, and "bring my soul out of prison." Thou hast all fullness dwelling in thee, and thou hast it given thee to bestow on such miserable objects as I am; Lord, here is a naked back for thee to cover, and an empty stomach for thee to fill, a wounded soul for thee to cure. "Lord, thou camest to seek and to save that which was lost;" and, wilt thou not be found of a lost sinner that is seeking thee.

(3.) Plead the communicativeness of his mercy to others. He had compassion upon mens bodies while he was on earth, even the bodies of wicked men, such as the unthankful lepers; he let none of them go without healing, that came to him. Say, Lord, didst thou show so much compassion to diseased bodies, and wilt thou not have some pity on my dying soul, that is far more precious than carcases of clay? Plead his compassion that he hath showed to the worst of sinners, such as Manasseh, Mary Magdalene, Paul, and those who murdered him.—Plead his compassion towards the finally obstinate and impenitent, such as Jerusalem, over which he wept, Luke xix. Lord, did thy heart melt with pity to such, and wilt thou not pity a humbled sinner, that confesseth his sin, and would fain be reconciled to God? Is not mercy the work thou delightest in? Mic. vii. 18.

Lastly, Labour for a sense of the misery of a Christless state, of your great need of Christ, and of the happiness of being *found in him:* And, in a sense thereof, look to Christ, and make a mint to take hold of him. Stir up yourself to it, and rest your soul on him as you can, and God will help you, and communicate strength. He will not fail to notice and encourage an honest mint, Jer. xxx. 21. "Who is this that engageth his heart to approach to me?" He will pity and help such. Try, O poor soul, if you can get a grip of Christ, especially upon a sacrament occasion, when you are nearer him than at other times; if you cannot apply Christ to yourself, and say, he is mine; yet apply yourself to Christ, and say, *I would fain be thine*, yea I am resolved to be thine. Go forth to Christ with all the faith you can win at; say, with the poor man, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." You must not sit still and do nothing, but use all means in your power; for it is in the use of those that God works faith: Hoise up the sails, and wait for the gales.

DIRECT. XI.—*Come and join yourselves unto the Lord in a perpetual and personal covenant, before you go to his table.*

UNLESS you be within the covenant of grace, you have no right to the seal of the covenant; now, if ye would be found within the covenant, you must, by faith, take hold of the covenant, and heartily go on with the gracious terms and contrivance of it. And this is what we commonly call personal covenanting with God. And the more express and distinct we are in this matter, we will have the more comfort.

As for the nature, necessity, and manner of personal covenanting, I refer the reader to my Sacramental Catechism, from p. 118. to 136. *(first Edit.)* where this subject is largely handled.

Personal covenanting is the communicant's best token, and without it you cannot warrantably come to the Lord's table. You will mock God, and deceive your own souls, if you take the great seal of heaven, and append it to a blank, or a sheet of clean paper: and this you do, when you communicate without previous covenanting with God. O beware of appending heaven's seal to a blank, lest the King of heaven be wroth, and fill up the blank with a curse.

O communicants, come then, take hold of the covenant of grace, and give a hearty and fiducial consent to its gracious offers and terms. You are miserable while under a covenant of works; be convinced of it, and speedily betake yourselves to the new covenant, and the gracious method of salvation through Jesus Christ and his righteousness. Cordially accept of Jesus Christ in all his offices, and in him make choice of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as your God and portion: and give up yourselves, soul and body, and all you have, to be the Lord's, to be for him and not for another. And, in Christ's strength, engage to live for God, serve him, and walk with him in newness of life. Do all this in the most solemn manner, with sincerity, humility, and self-denial; and, if this you be helped to do, God will accept of you at his table, and deal with you as his covenanted people.

Object. "But, saith one, I know it is my duty to come and transact with God in this manner, and renew covenant with him, conform to my baptismal vows; and sometimes I think I am willing to do it, but I much suspect my sincerity in this matter: and it is highly dangerous to deal falsely with God, in pretending to covenant with him, when the heart is not right with God?"

Ans. You have just cause to suspect your own hearts, and therefore should be at all pains to search and try yourselves; and, for your help, I shall give some characters of those who aim sincerely to transact and renew covenant with God.

1. They are such who are thoroughly convinced of their misery under the first covenant, as being wholly unable to fulfil its condition, or pay its penalty: and therefore see they cannot abide in this case, without being undone to all eternity.

2. They are heartily grieved for their natural estrangement, and long living at a distance from God; and are made to say, Oh, how long have I dwelt in Mesech, far from the fountain of my happiness!

3. They are troubled for their long slighting of Christ's gracious calls and offers of mercy in the gospel, and for the backwardness of their hearts to leave sin and satan, and come and enter into covenant with God. Oh, how long have I preferred satan's drudgery and service, to God's friendship and favour; lived in league with my soul's enemy, and at war with my best friend!

4. They have something of a soul affecting view of the new covenant, and the new way and method of salvation contained therein. They see there is no righteousness of man or angel that can justify them, none but the righteousness of Christ alone, nothing but an infinite satisfaction can do their turn; and it is their cry, *None but Christ.*

5. They are fully resolved on a rupture and breach with all the enemies of God, and to break all leagues and covenants with sin, satan, and the world; and that they will never be slaves to them as formerly: they heartily agree with the Psalmist, Psal. cxix. 115, "Depart from me, ye evil doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God."

6. They are sensible of, and humbled for, the former treachery and false-dealing of their hearts with God. Are there not many who have formerly entered into covenant with God, have sworn allegiance to him as their Sovereign, and that not only at baptism, but have renewed this deed at the Lord's supper? But may not the Lord take up the same complaint against them, as against Israel? Psal. lxxviii. 36, 37. "They lied to him with their tongues; for their hearts were not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant." Well, if you be deeply affected on this account, the Lord will not reject you.

7. They sincerely accept of Christ as their surety and cautioner before God; they esteem him altogether lovely, and infinitely precious. They renounce their own *righteousness* in justification, and their own *strength* in sanctification, and look to Christ for both, saying, as those, Isa. xlv. 24. "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." I have not sufficiency of myself, either to make or keep covenant with God, but my confidence is entirely in Christ, my all sufficient surety.

8. They are content to give themselves to the Lord, and all they are and have. Faith hath two hands; by the one it receives Jesus Christ, and by the other it gives the soul to him. Now, if your faith want either of these, it is lame.

9. They feel in-dwelling sin as a grievous clog; they desire heart-holiness more than any earthly thing, and resolve, through grace, upon more care and watchfulness against sin than formerly.

Now, try your sincerity in covenanting with God by these marks, and if you can lay claim to one or more of them, then you are not hypocrites, nor of the number of those who give God the hand without the heart: who pretend to make a covenant with God, and yet keep a secret league with the devil, the world, and the flesh, who profess a great outward respect to God and his ways, and yet keep a secret antipathy to godliness, as, alas, many do, who come to the Lord's table.

And, if you would manage this weighty transaction aright, you must be very deliberate in it: take many a view of the nature and frame of the covenant of grace, and consider what God offers and promises therein, and what he doth require of us; and endeavour to get your hearts wrought up to a cheerful compliance therewith. Your souls are at the stake, and a mistake here ruins you eternally; but, if once it be well done, it is done for ever. This bargain is not for a short term, but for life, nay, for eternity; and therefore you should count the cost of it, and consider it duly; and be resolved, whatever trouble or persecution shall arise, or whatever temptation you may meet with to leave Christ, to say to them, like Ruth to Naomi, when she was stedfastly resolved to go with her, Ruth i. 16. *Intreat me not to leave Christ; for where he goes, I will follow him, though it were into banishment: where he lodges, I will lodge, though it were in a prison: for neither death nor life shall part Christ and me.*

And, again, beware of delays of making or entering into covenant with God. It is a work for eternity, and therefore requires present dispatch. The time of youth is a rare season for this work, and ought carefully to be improven, and no time lost. And here I shall address myself to the young.

O young people, and you that never communicated before, set about this work of personal covenanting, before you approach to the Lord's table. Do not delay or put off to another year, or till old age or sickness come on: for, what do you know but God may be provoked to harden your hearts so in old age (though ye should live till that time) that ye shall have no liking to religion and the ways of God? Must it not be highly displeasing to God, to reserve for him the refuse and dregs of your strength and time? Will you give your Creator and Redeemer only so much of your time and strength as the devil and the world have left? O, what is this, but to offer the blind and the lame of the flock in sacrifice to God, Malachi i. 7. which is an abomination!

O *young folk*, can you dispose of yourselves better in the days of your youth, than give up yourselves to the Lord? When you are ready to chuse callings and settlements in the world, can ye take a wiser course, than first chuse a settlement in Christ's family, which would make all other conditions and circumstances of life the more comfortable to you? Now, the way to be made a member of this family, is by the covenanting with God: without this, you have no right to the childrens' bread, nor the seals of the covenant. It is not enough that you were baptized, and are Christians by your parents' dedication, unless you be Christians by your own free choice and consent. Remember, you are now to enter into the state of adult church membership, and to be admitted to share of the childrens' privileges sealed to you in baptism; and, therefore, now ye must act as rational men and women, and make a choice for yourselves: you ought personally and explicitly to renew your baptismal covenant, and ratifying your parents' deed, now when you are of age; otherwise your baptism and parents' dedication will not profit you. I call you to engage to no more here, than what you are already obliged to by your baptism; for it is just the same covenant you are to enter into now, that ye have already consented to by your baptism: only, by your personal resignation, voluntary consent, and taking the second seal of the covenant, you are to bind yourselves the faster to it; the which if you neglect to do, your baptism will be so far from profiting you, that it will be a witness against you, and cry for vengeance on you, and you will be in no better condition than the heathens that never were baptized.

O young communicants, take heed to your first communicating; for very much doth depend upon it. You are now as it were to lay the foundation-stone of your salvation-work, and this ought to be done with much spiritual skill and knowledge, if you would have a sure building. O then dig deep, and found your house, your salvation, your hopes of heaven, upon the rock Christ, by personal covenanting, and express closing with him upon the terms of grace: for if you do it not, but approach to the Lord's table in ignorance, unbelief, or hardness of heart, you may provoke God to smite you with judicial blindness and obduration, and give you up to such heart-hardness and formality in duty, as may cleave to you all your lives long, and so you are ruined for ever. The time of your first communicating, is a most critical juncture for your souls: for, according to the state, frame, and disposition of peoples souls, at their first communicating, so it very often fares with them in some measure at all the rest of the communions they partake of. Many have found this, some to their sweet, others to their sad experience. Some, by their careless approach at first, and neglecting expressly to covenant with God, have drawn down the plagues of heart-hardness and formality upon themselves, and provoked God to leave them to wander in the dark all their days, without any solid assurance, or comfortable view of their interest in Christ and the covenant of grace. But others, by means of their sincere preparation and covenanting with God at this time, have got a seal of their conversion, and a view of their interest in Christ, which hath proven very useful and comfortable to them all the rest of their lives, and especially in the time of distress, and when on a death-bed. Then they have remembered, how that at such a time and place they joined themselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, and then and there God spake with them, intimated their pardon, and owned them as his covenanted children. As their souls were helped to say to the Lord, *Thou art my God:* So God said to them, *I am your salvation.* And hereby many have been strengthened, when ready to faint under doubts and discouragements. Therefore, O young communicants, as ye regard the well being of your precious and immortal souls for ever, look well to yourselves at this time; if matters be right with you now, they will never be altogether wrong afterwards. Labour to get some distinct uptakings of the covenant of grace, and of the nature, ends, and uses of this solemn ordinance, which is the compend and seal of it, before your first partaking; pray fervently for knowledge and spiritual illumination; apply to Jesus Christ, your great Prophet, for this, and see to improve the means and helps

which he is pleased to afford you for it. Retire for meditation and reading of the bible; read and meditate much of the sufferings of Christ; read our Confession of Faith; Vincent's Catechism, Guthrie's Trial of a saving interest in Christ, Doolittle, and other good books on the sacrament, that ye may attain to some right impressions of the covenant, and the Lord's supper; and particularly, of the obligations you already lie under by the first seal of baptism; and then, under a humble sense of guilt, and with a hopeful view of the gospel offer, go with all seriousness and solemnity, and renew those engagements; enter into covenant with God, and next come to his table, to get the transaction sealed and ratified, by getting the other seal of heaven appended to it.

And now, young people, I put it to your choice, as Joshua did to the Israelites, Jos. xxiv. 15. "Choose you this day whom you will serve." Make choice at this time whom ye will be saved by, and whom ye will obey. Whom will you have for your master, whether Christ or the devil? Both are courting your hearts; which of them will you yield to? Lay your hands on your hearts, and see whether you will grant Christ's or the devil's desire? Whether shall the devil have you, soul and body, to all eternity, or shall Christ have you? Oh, will any be so foolish as halt betwixt two opinions in this case; any so mad as stand in doubt whether to be saved or damned, whether to live with Christ or the devil for ever? Now Michael and his angels, and the Dragon and his angels are fighting about your hearts; the devil is holding, and a dying Saviour is drawing: O, will you not be on Christ's side, and wish Michael may prevail, that the red dragon's head may be broken, that the devil may get a total defeat, and that Christ may get your hearts for ever? Remember, Christ will have none but willing servants, Psal. cx. 3. none but those who freely offer themselves unto the Lord. Amaziah the son of Zichri, is recorded with great honour, 2 Chron. xvii. 16. because "he willingly offered himself unto the Lord." O for many Amaziahs, many such free-will offerings, among young communicants. It would be a most pleasant sight to God and ministers, to saints and angels, whose eyes are upon you. The first-fruits under the law were to be offered to the Lord. "The kindness of youth is much remembred by him," Jer. ii. Young folks praying, repenting, and covenanting, are most melodious music in his ears. O, give Christ the first and best of your days, for he well deserves this. Make earnest of covenanting-work in secret, that the communion-day may be a day of your espousal to the Lord Jesus, and the marriage-knot may be cast so sure at this table, that death nor hell may never be able to loose it.

Need I use any motives to press you to make this bargain, which is so advantageous for your souls? God invites you to treat with him, nay, he summons you to do it, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. "Yield yourselves to the Lord," strike hands with God, submit to his mercy, accept of the terms of grace. O, that God himself would sound an alarm in your ears, and shew you the misery of an unconverted state!

1. While you are in this state, you have no interest in Christ, no share in his blood or purchase; you have neither art nor part in the God of Israel, Eph. ii. 12.

2. You are under a covenant of works, and the power, terror, threatening, and curses of a broken law. The sentence of death is pronounced against you, and you may look for the execution of it every moment.

3. While you are out of the covenant, you have no right to any mercy, and all the mercies you receive are cursed to you, and you know not how soon God may strip you of all you have.

4. Consider what a sad stroke death gives to an uncovenanted soul. It deprives him of all mercies, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, at one blow; and sets him agoing for ever. And whither can you flee in the day of visitation, when nothing but grim horror and despair do stare you in the face? When the body is on the brink of the grave, and the soul is on the brink of hell, how will you have confidence to cry to an uncovenanted God, to whom you have been strangers all your days? Must it not be terrible for an uncovenanted soul to think, I am going to appear before that God I do not know, have no interest in, nor acquaintance with. Can I look for friendship from him now, since I never sought after it before? But, on the contrary, how pleasant then will it be for a covenanted soul to look death in the face, who can say, *I know whom I have believed*, and I know whither I am going: *The place I know, the way I know*, and the God of that land I know? Why should I be backward to go to my covenanted friend, with whom I have oft conversed, been long acquainted, and in whose presence I have placed my happiness?

5. Consider how lamentable your case will be for evermore, if you slight the present opportunity: the treaty will not always last with you, nay, the day is not far off when it shall end, and God will treat with you no longer. The door will be eternally shut, and God will become inaccessible, inexorable, irreconcileable, for evermore: Christ, the blessed Mediator, will become thy implacable Judge; and, how will you look him in the face, when on the throne, whom you so basely slighted at a communion-table? What wilt thou do when thou findest thyself shut up under flaming wrath, without hope? The remembrance of lost opportunities will be as oil to thy flames *Time was, when God treated, and would have made a bargain with me, but I would not;* this will be the burthen of thy eternal lamentation. O, how will you be able to bear the wrath of an uncovenanted God! Who can dwell with devouring fire? A small shower of fire and brimstone lighting on our heads now, would be very terrible. But O, it will be infinitely more so, when it shall be poured down in whole streams, and that not for a time, but for ever and ever. Will not ten thousand years suffering do the turn? No, no; it will be eternal. Well, if you be able to dwell with everlasting burnings, you need not treat with God: but O, *it is fearful to fall into the hands of a living God*, one that lives, and will for ever live, to revenge himself upon you!

Hard must your hearts be, if they be not moved by these threatenings; but yet harder must they be, if they be not melted by God's condescending entreaties. Hear him, Isa. lv. 1, 2, 3. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come, &c. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you." Is God so willing to make a covenant with his creature, a slave, a worm; and are you not willing to cast down the weapons of rebellion, and enter into a league with? Is it not a bargain most suitable for you, and all your circumstances and necessities? Is it not most glorious and honourable for you to be betrothed to so great a prince? Hos. ii. 19. Is it not rich and advantageous for you, to be infeft in so great an inheritance, and to have a sealed right to such blessed privileges as a free pardon, gracious

access, fatherly love, covenant-provision, covenant protection, and covenant-comforts?

Object. "Alas, I have made a personal covenant before, but have broke it."

Ans. You have cause to be humbled for it before God; and if you be not, it is a bad sign indeed. 2. All sensible and mourning backsliders are invited to return to him, and renew their covenant, Jer. iii. endeavour to make the bargain surer than you did before.

Object. "I am afraid of breaking it over again: and is it not better not to engage?"

Ans. 1. It is good to be jealous of yourselves, and feared for breaking; for, the more you distrust your own strength, the stronger you are.

2. If you covenant honestly, you will get covenant-grace and strength which shall be sufficient for you; you will get the dominion of sin broke, and power to wrestle against it: and, above all, you will get Christ engaged for you as your surety; and, to be sure, though you be weak, he is able enough.

DIRECT. XII.—*Labour for a thorough cleansing of both heart and life from sin, and turn unto the Lord in the ways of new obedience, before you come to the Lord's table.*

ALL that would attend a holy God, and expect communion with him in this holy ordinance, must see to have pure hearts and clean hands, Psal. xxvi. 3, 4. Jam. iv. 8. What was David's pious resolution, Psal. xxvi. 6. ought to be yours at this occasion, "I will wash my hands in innocency, and so will I compass thine altar, O Lord." He alludes to the ceremony of the priests washing at the brazen laver, before they ministered at the altar; to let us see, that though this ceremony belonged only to the priests, yet the morality belongs to all; and there is a washing which concerns all before they meddle with holy services, and especially such as the sacrament of the Lord's supper. There is a double washing required of all communicants: 1. A washing of yourselves in Christ's blood by the actings of faith. 2. A washing of yourselves by the exercise of true repentance and reformation, which is an effect of the former; by the one, the guilt of sin is taken away, and by the other, the filth of sin is removed.

Now, this cleansing must be both external and internal, more than the outside of the cup and platter must be washed, for God looks principally to the heart. Observe those parts of the sacrifice, that in a special manner behoved to be washed under the law, Lev. i. 9. "But the inwards and his legs shall he wash in water." Now, why should the inwards and legs of the sacrifice be washed above all the rest? Because the intrails contained the excrements of the beast, and the legs and the feet did tread in the mire and puddle, and so those parts were more defiled than any other part of the body. And all this to teach us, that when we draw near to God in solemn worship, we should especially wash there, where most filth is likely to be contracted.

1*st*, Our *inwards*, our hearts and consciences, must be washed: O what filth and excrements, even a dunghill of filthy lusts, lie there! Jer iv. 14. "O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, how long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee?" O communicants, you must look well to the inwards at this time, and see to get all inward and secret lusts washed out by repentance, and strong resolutions in Christ's strength against them.

2*dly*, Our *legs* and *feet* must be washed also. The steps of our daily conversation are defiled by walking and treading in foul ways: Oh, how much pollution do even believers gather by the steps of their daily walk! And hence it is, that he who is already washed, needs daily, and upon every new occasion, to have his feet washed, John. xiii. 10. We should then be in earnest, before we come to the Lord's table, to have all the defilement of our outward actions, washed away by true repentance, and reformation of life. Alas, that we should come to this holy table with such inwards, and with such feet, as many times we have! "Lord, purge us with hyssop, and we shall be whiter than the snow." Our own washing will not do it, if Christ put not to his hand; yet we must be sincerely using the means, and waiting for the help of his Spirit.

If you would be suitably prepared for this solemn ordinance, and have a gracious meeting with Christ at his table, you must not only search out your sins, be deeply humbled for them, make confession of them before the Lord, and by faith lay hold on Christ for pardon, as before directed; but you must also be washen and cleansed from sin, forsake sin in your life, and cast it out of your heart: for if you come to Christ's table with any of his enemies and traitors lodged in your bosoms, with any of your old lusts unmortified, and sins not put away, he will look upon you as his murderers, and smite you with his judgments; yea, you may expect that the wrath of God will come upon you whilst the bread is in your mouths, as it did upon Israel for the same reason, Psal. lxxviii. 30, 31. "They were not estranged from their lusts; but whilst the meat was yet in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel." Perhaps, O sinner, thou mayest not feel this wrath at the time, but it may be inflicted insensibly on thy soul; and every sacrament thou receivest in this condition, thou dost heap and treasure up wrath against the day of wrath; and every time thou bringest a new faggot to the heap, which will make a terrible fire at last, when it is thoroughly kindled against thy soul.

O, then, you who design to approach to the Lord's table, be persuaded to put a bill of divorce into the hands of all your lusts and idols; *Cast away all your former trangressions*, and begin a new life: resolutely turn your backs on sin, satan, and hell; and come take on with a new master, and engage in God's strength to be good servants and faithful soldiers of Jesus Christ for the time to come. If you do this, God promiseth you mercy and pardon, and that your former sins shall not so much as be mentioned to you, Isa. lv. 7. Ezek. xviii. 21, 22. But, if you do not, severe wrath is threatened, Psal. lxviii. 21.

The sacrament doth work and produce effects, according to the state and disposition of the receivers thereof; as the *water of jealously* did to the woman under suspicion of uncleanness, Numb. v. 27, 28. If the woman was clean, then the water did her no hurt, nay, it did her good, made her conceive and become fruitful: but, if she was defiled and unclean, it did her great mischief; "Her belly did swell, her thigh did rot, and she became a curse." It is so in receiving the sacrament: if a man be in a gracious state, and made clean by faith, repentance, and reformation, then the sacrament brings a blessing, it makes a man spiritually healthful and fruitful: but if he be defiled and impenitent, it doth him great mischief; like the water of jealousy, it doth poison and rot his soul, and he proves a more rotten

and wretched sinner than before. O then, let none venture to harbour sin, and deal falsely with God, when he comes to drink this water of jealousy.

The Pharisees quarrelled with Christ, Matt. xv. 2. "Why do thy diciples trangress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread." But on better grounds may we quarrel many communicants: why do ye transgress the commandment of the Lord? for ye wash neither hands nor heart, when ye eat bread at the Lord's table; nay, ye presume to dip your filthy hands into the dish with a holy Jesus: do you think he will bear with such an affront from vile worms, when it is more easy for him to crush you, than for you to trample a worm under your feet? Remember, he is a *God of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity.*

Would you have God to draw near to you in this holy ordinance, then cleanse your hands and purify your hearts. *Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before his eyes, cease to do evil, and learn to do well.* And, if ye would be accepted by God, your turning from sin must have these properties:

1*st*, It must be a cordial turning with all the heart and soul. You must not forsake sin with reluctancy, and by constraint (as Phaltiel left Michael), but willingly and readily.

2*dly*, You must turn from your sins presently, and without delay. Do not adventure to lie down and sleep with them another night, lest your waking next day be in hell, or under a sentence of final hardness or impenitency: you are not sure the day of grace will last, or the door of mercy stand open till to-morrow.

3*dly*, You must turn from sin finally and everlastingly; your quarrel with sin must be irreconcileable; for, if now ye declare war against your sins, as the traitors and murderers of your Lord and Master, ye must draw the sword against them, and throw away the scabbard, and vow never to be satisfied till you revenge Christ's death upon them, and get them utterly destroyed. O, never entertain a favourable thought of, nor give a kindly look to the bloody knife that killed your dearest friend. Do not, like many, who only part with their sins about the time of a communion, or when conscience is awakened; but when that is over, they return with the dog to the vomit. Many say to their sins, as Abraham to his servants, *Stay at the foot of the mount till I go up and worship, and I will return to you again.* You ought to say so, indeed, to your necessary wordly affairs at this time; but, for your sins, you should pass an act of eternal banishment upon them, and say with Ephraim, what have I to do any more with idols.

4*thly*, You must turn from sin universally. You must not, like Herod, part with many and reserve some, but readily give up with all; with inward heart sins, as well as outward and gross sins; with sins of omission, as well as of commission, with secret sins, as well as open sins. And particulaly, turn from your predominant sins, whatever they be; and from those sins that are common in the age and place wherein you live: reserve no sin, nor darling lust, but hew thy beloved Agag in pieces before the Lord; leave no grip of thy heart to the devil, lest he pull thee to hell by it.

Turn from all tongue sins, rotten discourse and corrupt communication. You would reckon it a sad disease to have your excrements come out at your mouth; and yet, alas! this is the disease of many. O swearer, turn from your swearing: what mean ye to study the language of hell, unless you would have the world believe that you design to travel thither! For those who are to go to a strange country to live, desire to learn something of the language of the country ere they go. What profit or pleasure have you in this sin! Why will you dare heaven and defy God's law, without any temptation? What would you say, if men should baffle or abuse your name, or your father's name, as you do the Lord's name!

Object. "O, (say some) it is only the devil's name that we baffle."

Ans. There is nothing pleases the devil more than to have his name so frequently used; for thus you make him a god, whom you worship and pray to, by bidding the devil take this or that.

Object. "I do not ban or swear but when I am in passion and provoked to it."

Ans. 1. This is an aggravation of your sin, first to be in passion, and then to swear: do you think that one sin will excuse another? 2. Is it just to flee in the face of your Creator, because you are affronted by your fellow-creature? Will you stab your father because your enemy strikes you? If a man wrong you, will you put forth your anger on God, who never wronged you.

Object. "I swear but little oaths, by faith, conscience," &c.

Ans. 1. The devil would have you think these but little sins now: but stay till a death-bed or a judgment-seat, and you will find him alter his note. 2. Do you think it a light matter to make a common baffle of faith, the precious instrument of your justification; or of conscience, that is the deputy of the great God; or of your precious soul, that cost the blood of Christ to redeem it? 3. These are but creatures, and to swear by them is plain idolatry: for it is a giving worship, and ascribing divine attributes to the creature.

O *cursers* and *swearers*, be persuaded to forsake these sins, and turn to God in Christ for mercy. What will God say to you at the great day, if you do not? You wished for damnation in your ordinary discourse; you are now holden at your word, and damned shall you be. You swore in your ordinary discourse, therefore *God will swear in his wrath, you shall not enter into his rest:* you could not speak without cursing, therefore you shall be banished out of God's presence with a curse: their tongues, that were so liberal of oaths and blasphemies, shall fry in endless and easeless flames, without one drop of water to cool them.

Again, O *liar*, forsake your lying, and come to Christ. Though this sin be common, yet consider it is most abominable in the sight of God: the devil is the patron of this sin, and the father of liars; it was with a lie he ruined all mankind. Ye shall be as gods, said he to our first parents. There is never a lie thou makest, but the devil is at thine ear, and whispers it to thee. Remember what God did to Ananias and Sapphira for lying, Acts v. he struck them dead with a lie in their mouth; and it will be a wonder of his patience, if he do not so to thee. Do you know, O liar, whose children you are? Not God's children, for they are children that will not lie; and therefore you must be satan's children, for he is a liar from the beginning, and the father of liars. Knowest thou, O liar, whither thou art going? Even to thy father. Should not children be with their father? You cannot look upward, and say, *Our father which art in heaven:* but thou mayest

look downward and say, *Our father which art in hell;* and there it is (if thou repent not) that thy tougue shall be tormented in flames for ever. Tremble at this, O liar, and be assured it is no lie that I tell you: "turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?"

Moreover, O *drunkard*, turn from your drunkenness, and come to Christ. While you live in this sin, you lye under many woes and curses, Isa. v. 11, 12. Isa. xxviii. 2. 1 Cor. vi. 10. God's curses are not light, therefore make not light of them: for, if ye do, O drunkard, remember what is abiding you hereafter, even a cup of red vengeance, filled up with the dregs of God's wrath, which shall be poured down your throat for ever; and yet you shall eternally cry out, *I thirst*, *I thirst;* and for all the drink you have had on earth, you cannot get there a drop of cold water to cool your tongue.

In the next place, O *covetous man*, cheater and defrauder, turn from your covetousness, your injustice, and unrighteous gain, and come to Christ. If you do not, you shall pay dear for all your unjust gain in another world; God is the avenger of all such as you defraud," 1 Thess. iv. 6. You think yourself very cunning, when you can cheat your neighbour of a little money; but, know you not, that the devil, in the meantime, is more cunning in cheating you of your precious soul, which is infinitely more valuable?

O *Sabbath-breaker*, secure and prayerless sinner, turn from your sins unto God and holiness; flee to Christ for shelter from them, and the wrath due to them; righteousness and redemption are only to be found in him. Would you not count him mad, who being condemned to a cruel death for base crimes, and might escape it if he would accept of a pardon ready provided for him, and leave off such vile acts for the future, would yet obstinately refuse to do it? And, are not you yet madder, that slight your Saviour, and hug your lusts, when your danger is a thousand times greater! What madness is it to dishonour God, and damn your soul, to gratify the devil, or please a vile carcase, that shortly will be so lothsome, that men cannot endure it above ground?

O sinner, I beseech you, in the name of the great and glorious Jehovah, and in the name of our glorious Redeemer, be reconciled to God, accept of a pardon through Christ's blood, and engage to quit these sins that would destroy you. Will you please God, and show kindness to your poor soul by doing it? However much you have abused God's patience, trampled his love, slighted his calls, despised his threatenings, and undervalued his promises; yet he is still standing and beseeching you to be reconciled to him. O will not all this goodness melt your heart, and cause you, with Ephraim, Jer. xxxi. 18. to bemoan yourself, and cry, 'Turn thou me, O Lord, and I shall be turned?" Without this turning, see that you venture not to this sacred ordinance; let none with the running ulcers of sin upon them offer to sit down at this holy table, for God's pure eyes cannot look upon them. And if you would turn aright, see that ye turn believingly to God in Christ: for there is no access to the King of heaven, without bringing the Prince of peace, the King's Son, in your arms; no atonement without Christ, no acceptance but in the Beloved.

Lastly, If you would turn to God aright, ye must not only turn from sin, but also turn to the ways of holiness and new obedience. It is not enough to cease to do evil, but you must also learn to do well. Some do part with their sins of commission, but continue still in sins of omission; they leave their gross out-breakings, but still neglect commanded duties. But the tree is not only adjudged to the fire that bears evil fruit, but also the tree that bears no fruit: so that the neglect of duty will damn us as surely as the commission of sin. Communicants that God will smile upon, are such as not only forsake all known sin, but do sincerely endeavour through grace, to yield obedience to the whole revealed will of God, and in Christ's strength do set about the performance of every commanded duty.

But as for those communicants that do not study new obedience, and do not make conscience of performing every known duty, God will say to such as he saith to the wicked, Psal. l. 16, 17. "What hast thou to do, that thou shouldst take my covenant (or the seal of my covenant) in thy mouth, seeing thou castest my words behind thee?" They can expect no communion or fellowship with him at his table.

But, on the other hand, he makes very gracious and comfortable promises to those that study obedience, Jer. vii. 24. "Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people." As the prophet Isaiah speaks to the Jews of the good things of the land of Canaan, so may we say to you concerning the good things of the sacrament, Isa. i. 16. "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land." As the land of Canaan produced very precious fruits, so doth the Lord's supper; and these far more excellent than those. It is here that the marrow and fatness of God's house is distributed to his children. Well, if you be willing and obedient, ye shall eat of the good things of the sacrament.

But see that your obedience spring from right principles, from love and gratitude to God, from a true hatred to sin, and high esteem of holiness. It was an excellent saying of one, *Were there neither heaven nor hell, yet sin should be my hell, and holiness my heaven.* The spiritually enlightened soul doth see an unspeakable deformity in sin, which causeth him to abhor it: he sees such a charming beauty in holiness, that he cannot but love and desire it.

DIRECT. XIII.—*Meditate much upon the death and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ, before you approach to his table.*

WOULD you have your hearts put in a suitable communion-frame, then read and think much of the suffering, of Christ; and, in a special manner, take a close view of them on the Saturday's night before the communion. Think on them till your hearts melt, and affections warm; yea, resolve you will not give over till then; and beg God's blessing on your meditations for this end.

Think and wonder at the greatness of the humiliation of the Son of God. Admire the low stoop and condescension of the Son of God, and the King of glory, that he should be content for us to become a creature, and such a mean creature as man; that he, who was equal with God, should become less than God, John xiv. 28. yea, less than angels, Heb. ii. 7. yea, to be depressed below the ordinary condition of man, Psal. xxii. 6. "I am a worm," &c. Think how he denuded himself of all his riches and glory; that though he was the heir of all things, yet, for our sakes, he became so poor, that he had not a cradle of his own to lie in when born, a house to lay his head in while he lived, nor a grave to be buried in when he died. He left his throne

of state, to lodge in the virgin's womb: he is born, not in his mother's house, but in a common inn, and the basest place of the inn, a stable, the inn being probably taken up by persons of richer quality: he is cradled in a manger, having no better place allowed him on earth, though the highest heavens were too mean for him.

Think how he was carried to a wilderness to fast and watch, and live forty days among the wild beasts, haunted and tempted by the devil, and sadly buffeted by his own slaves; and all this for us.

View him going about on foot, hungry, thirsty, and weary, yet always doing good: and the more good he did to souls and bodies, the more was he hunted and persecuted, reproached and blasphemed; and all this for our sakes.

View him entering into the garden of Gethsemane, beginning to fear, turn heavy, and cry out, *My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death.* What made him heavy, but the dead weight of our sins, and the curses of the law annexed to them? Behold him complaining to his poor disciples, that could make no help to him; neither they nor the angels in heaven durst touch his load, nor taste his cup: he could have helped them, but they could not help him. Yea, he got not so much as sympathy from them; they fell asleep when he was at the worst, and left him to tread out the wine-press alone, and all for our sakes.

View him in his fearful agony and bloody sweat, falling sometimes on his knees, and sometimes on his face, praying once, praying again, and praying the third time, that the cup might pass from him, till he is overwhelmed and covered with his own blood. Behold the great drops of blood bursting through and standing above his garments, and falling and lying upon the ground round about him; being at this time prest betwixt the millstone of God's justice and our sins. Behold him sweating without heat, and bleeding without a wound; the fire and the wound were inward, even in his soul. How freely did the fountain of his precious blood open and run to wash us? Every vein and pore pours out a stream, not waiting for the tormentors, and all for our sakes.

Behold him betrayed and sold *for thirty pieces of silver*, taken and bound with cords like a thief; yea, bound fast, as Judas bade, and so fast (as some say) that the blood did burst out of his tender hands. Can your hearts or eyes hold, to see those hands, that made heaven and earth, wrung together and bruised with hard cords: to see him bound that came to set the prisoners free, and loose us who were Satan's bond-slaves! Blest Jesus, had not the cords of thy own love tied thee faster than the cords of thy enemies, though they had been the strongest cabels or iron chains, they could not have held thee: but thou wast a willing prisoner for our sakes.

Behold him struck upon the face, spit upon, buffeted, blindfolded, mocked, and cruelly affronted by rude soldiers, a whole night: though he could have breathed them into hell, yet he meekly holds his peace, and patiently suffers all for our sakes.

Behold his lovely countenance all disfigured by their plucking the hair from his cheeks with pincers, Isa. l. 6. The sweetest face that ever the sun saw was all besmeared with "blood and spitting, yet he hid not his face from shame."

Behold him led up and down from place to place, with a ridiculous garb put upon him, and yet never resists: he is abused and disgraced; a *Barabbas*, a murderer, the vilest malefactor in all Jerusalem, is preferred before him; and yet he complains not. View him as he was used by his own family, his chosen disciples; one of them betrays him, another of them denies him, and all the rest forsake him, and leave him alone among his bloody enemies' hands.

Behold him, that *clothes the lilies of the field*, stripped naked: behold him scourged back and side; yea scourged above measure (Pilate thinking thereby to save his life), till all the pavement of Pilate's judgment-hall about him is bedewed with his precious blood: *Yet he willingly gave his back to the smiters*, that we might be freed from the everlasting lashes of God's wrath in hell.

Behold him with a platted crown of thorns upon his head, with the sharp points turned inward, and driven into his head, till they pierced his head and skull in an hundred places; and so he is content to be as the ram caught in the thickets, to be sacrificed in our room. Behold a new shower of blood running down his neck and whole body: Oh! it was my sins that platted the thorns, and they were the reeds that drave them in.

Behold him, after all these sufferings, put to bear his heavy cross, upon his sore and bleeding shoulders: with what patience and humility did he bear the law cursed tree that was weighed down with our sins, and the law's curses fastened to it? Yea, he bears without complaint till his strength is faint, he is breathless, and ready to faint under the burthen, till another must help. It was not the cross that made him faint; he had a greater burden to bear than ten thousand worlds, even the infinite wrath of God due to our sins.

Behold him stretched out naked, and laid upon the ground, that they might take the measure of his body and the holes for the nails; yea, they make them longer than they need, that they might both crucify and rack him at once. Behold the four large nails driven in through the most sinewy and sensible parts of his body, and the cross lift up with the Lord of glory nailed to it: and, when it fell into the hole digged for the foot of it, how did the fall rend and tear his whole body? His own weight was his torture; and the longer he lived, his wounds grew the wider. His hands and feet are fixed, he cannot turn any way for ease: the blood streamed down for several hours, till he expired amidst these tortures.

Behold him hanging on a cross *betwixt heaven and earth*, as if he had been unworthy of a place in either of them: *Betwixt two thieves*, as if he had been the greatest malefactor of the three. His sufferings were universal, and did extend over all the parts and powers of his soul and body; no part free but his tongue, which was at liberty to pray for his enemies. He suffered in all his *senses*; his *sight* was tormented with the scornful gestures of those that passed by, *wagging their heads*; his *hearing* with *taunts* and *mocks*; his *smell* with the nauseous savour of *dead men's skulls*; his *taste* with *gall* and *vinegar*; his feeling with the nails and thorns that pierced his head, hands, and feet.

Behold him on the cross, suffering till his strength is dried up like a potsherd; his tongue cleaves to his jaws, till he cries out, I thirst. And no wonder he thirsted; for, besides all the loss of his blood, he was scourged with the fire of God's wrath. Yea, *the arrows of the Almighty were within him, the poison whereof did drink up his spirit.*

Behold him at the worst, crying out for relief, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* But yet no relief appears, there is none to answer: yea, his own sun, his own

heaven, his own Father, his own Godhead, hid their faces and consolations from him. He is left alone in midst of devils and enemies insulting over him; he falls a sacrifice to incensed justice, for our heinous guilt and provocations.

Behold the Son of righteousness under a fearful eclipse For a candle to be put out is no great matter, but for the sun to be darkened is marvellous and strange.

In the next place, take a view of his willingness to suffer all these things for us. He quickens Judas to do his work, and he goes out to meet his persecutors, and boldly tells them, that he was the man they sought: he will not suffer Peter or the angels to do any thing for his rescue, because of his desire to drink the cup which the Father had given him, John xviii. 11. And, God knows, a full and bitter cup it was, being all mingled with guilt, wrath, and curses, heaped up and running over; a cup, which if men or angels had tasted, they had all staggered and fallen back headlong into hell: yet, how cheerfully did he drink it for us? he was not like the legal sacrifices, dragged to the altar; no, he went willingly to it, and tyed himself with the cords of love to the horns of it.

O, what affections should the consideration of these things stir up in the souls of communicants! Are ye going up to mount Calvary, to see Christ crucified; and, will not ye think on his sufferings, and be affected with them, ere ye go?

You may here, as in a looking-glass, behold what you deserved at the hands of a just God, if Christ had not interposed for you. You may see the wondrous love of Christ that passeth knowledge, which ought to kindle a flame of love in your hearts. You may see the cursed nature and demerit of sin, that exposed Christ to so much sorrow and suffering. Can you look on him whom you have thus pierced, and not mourn bitterly for sin that did it, and hate it as the most ugly thing in the world? Would not your heart rise against the man, yea, against the knife that killed your father, brother, husband, or friend; and, will not your hearts rise against sin, that has killed him that is instead of all relations, and should be far dearer to us than a thousand fathers or brothers? Can we look on Christ's sufferings, and not make solemn vows against sin, and part with lying, swearing, sabbath-breaking, &c. that crucified him? When the king of Moab was pressed hard by Israel, he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him up for a burnt-sacrifice upon the walls, 2 Kings iii. 27. whereupon they raised the siege, and went home. Well, the great God hath taken his only Son, sacrificed him to justice, that we might thereby be persuaded to leave of fighting against heaven.

O, let this strange act, which is both an act of justice and goodness, so overawe your hearts with fear, and overcome them with love, that you may leave off to offend God any more.

DIRECT. XIV.—*Be frequent and fervent in prayer, before you approach to the Lord's Table.*

THEY that forget God in their closets and families, are not fit to come and remember him at his table; therefore let no prayerless soul venture thither. You ought to double your prayers and messages to heaven that week, and especially that night before you approach to this ordinance; if ever you prayed and wrestled with God, now should be the time of it. As the heathen ship-master said to Jonah, so say I to thee, O communicant, Jonah i. 6. Arise O sleeper, and call upon thy God, if so be that God will think upon thee, that thou perish not." O sleep not now, when you are in hazard of eating and drinking eternal damnation; but be praying when others are sleeping. This course will surely redound to thy advantage, and be the means of procuring special blessings to thy soul. When was it that God gave commission to open Paul's eyes, and fill him with the Holy Ghost, but then, when he was earnest in prayer to God, Acts ix. 11, 17. "Behold he prayeth. The Lord hath sent me (said Ananias) that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost" So if you were earnest in prayer before the sacrament, God would notice you as he did Paul, and give charge to this ordinance to be the means of enlightening thy soul, and filling thee with the Holy Ghost. It was at the sacrament of baptism that Christ's prayers opened heaven, and brought down the Holy Ghost upon him: so at the sacrament of the Lord's supper the fervent prayers of a believing communicant will open heaven, and bring down the gracious influences of the holy Spirit upon him. Your work at this time is very great, and much need have you to look to God in Christ, and plead with him for his special assistance: you have very great encouragement to do it; for God never calls any to do his work, but he helps them in it. It is said, 1 Chron. xv. 26. That "God helped the Levites that bare the ark." One would think that the work of bearing the ark, needed no more help from God than the general concourse of his providence; and yet God helped them with special assistance. And if he helped the Levites to bear the ark, because it was his work; will he not help us to receive the sacrament, which he hath instituted for displaying his glory, if we sincerely seek his help? You have many errands at this time to the throne of grace, for you have many things to pray for.

1. You ought in general to pray for preparation for this solemn feast: "for the preparation of the heart in man is from the Lord," Prov. xvi. 1. Lay out the case of your heart and soul before the Lord, and say, "Lord, thou callest me to a very solemn ordinance: and, who is sufficient for those things have? I have neither a meet sacrifice to offer, nor a meet temple to receive thee in. I know not how to pray, or to prepare myself; how to receive Christ, or behave myself at his table. Behold the bridegroom cometh, but I am not ready; I want the wedding-garment: oh, what shall I do for clothing to my naked soul? My beloved hath spoke, saying, rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. I have heard his voice; but oh, I am not stirring for it: my heart saith, "yet a little sleep, yet a little slumber." Lord, awake my heart, stir up my graces, and prepare me for a meeting with my Saviour. Lord, thou art the giver of grace as well as of glory, thou must give the frame as well as the feast; for without thee we have nothing, we can do nothing; thou preparest a table for me in this wilderness; but, shall the time of receiving come before thou comest into my soul to stir up thy graces in me? What commerce can a dead heart have with a living God? Lord, thou knowest my sins, and the unpreparedness of my heart; and, if thou wilt mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand? My very preparations and best performances carry in them matter of indictment against my soul. But, Lord, though my sins be many and great, yet doth not the blood of Christ cry louder for pardon than my sins do for punishment? O that the cry of that blood may wholly

drown the cry of my sins at this time, and answer for the defects of my preparation. Oh, let not my soul, whose only hope is to be saved by Christ's blood, be sent away from his table with the guilt, instead of the comfort of that blood upon me.

2. And, more particularly, you ought to pray for saving knowledge: say, "Lord, I am naturally alienated and estranged from thee, through the ignorance that is in me; O give me understanding, that I may know thee, and the mystery of saving grace. Hast thou not said, that the covenant thou wilt make with thy people is this, "They shall all know thee from the least even to the greatest." O give me right uptakings of thy covenant, which is well ordered in all things, and sure! Give grace to know the nature, necessity, use, and ends of this ordinance, which is the compend and seal of it, that so I may receive it with understanding, and rightly discern the Lord's body."

3. Pray for holy reverence and humility of spirit. "Lord, affect my heart with awful reverence of the greatness and holiness of thy majesty, to whom I am to make so near an approach, and with whom I am to renew covenant. Oh, how durst I, who am sinful dust and ashes, presume to come so near thee, unless thou hadst invited and commanded me? O for deep self-abasement and humility of soul when I go to receive the unspeakable gift of God! O what a wonderful gift is Jesus Christ to such an unworthy and ill-deserving creature as I am! Lord, give me grace whereby I may serve thee acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.

4. Pray for godly sorrow and contrition for sin. "Lord, take away my heart of stone, and give me a heart of flesh, that I may lothe myself in my own sight for all iniquities and abominations. May I abhor them as the scourges, thorns, nails, and spear, that afflicted my Lord and Saviour: and may I be weary and heavy laden with the burden of my sins, so that Christ may give me rest. Lord, help me so to accuse myself, that thou mayest acquit me; so to judge and condemn myself, that thou mayest absolve me; and so to excercise a holy revenge upon myself, that thou mayest spare me. The days of mourning for my Redeemer's death are at hand; O that then I may slay my most beloved lusts, and be revenged on them for it, and for their endeavours to rob me of my spiritual birthright, my eternal blessedness! O that I may come to thy table, and receive a bleeding Saviour with a broken heart."

5. Pray for faith, both for the being and the increase of faith. "Lord, faith is thy own gift, as well as Christ; I believe, Lord, help my unbelief. O for faith's eye to look upon Christ, faith's wings to flee to Christ, faith's arms to embrace Christ, faith's mouth to feed on Christ, faith's hand to apply Christ! When I see the bread and wine on the table, O let me see a bleeding crucified Jesus. Let me not only eat the bread of the Lord, but the bread which is the Lord. May this ordinance be a lively resemblance, remembrance, and application of Christ's sufferings to me; and may I be helped so to put my finger into the print of the nails, and my hand into his side, that I may be persuaded of his suffering and dying for me; and may I "not be faithless but believing," and may say with Thomas, "my Lord and my God;" and with Paul, "He loved me, and gave himself for me;" and with the spouse, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." O that I may so touch him, that I may feel strength, peace, and virtue come from him, and be healed of all my plagues and uncleannesses! Let me so by faith feed on his blessed body, and bathe my soul in his precious blood, that I may be filled with peace and joy in believing; yea, "my soul may magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoice in God my Saviour."

6. Pray for love to God and Christ. "Lord, circumcise my heart to love the Lord with all my soul, with all my strength. Lord, *shed abroad thy love in my* cold and frozen heart, and inflame it with fervent affection and desires towards thee, that I may be a disciple whom Jesus loveth, and that leans on his breast. O that "Christ may dwell in my heart by faith, and that, being rooted and grounded in love, I may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth and length, the depth and heighth: and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." O that the remembrance of Christ's love may transport me with love, captivate my will, and engage all my affections to him. Lord, though I cannot say, *I am sick of love* to thee, yet I desire to be sick that I cannot love thee more O for grace that I may be numbered among them that *love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*."

7. Pray for love to all the people of God. "Lord, make all those lovely in mine eyes, to whom Christ is precious: that I may "know I am passed from death to life, because I love the brethren." O for a warm love to all those who are Christ's friends, on whom he hath set his heart, and to whom he hath given his Spirit: that so my heavenly Father may look down upon his children, feasting together in mutual love and delight, in remembrance of that great love which he hath already shown to us, and with joyful expectations of those great things he hath further promised to us. And, Lord, seeing thou hast so loved me, let me be perfectly reconciled to every man, that I may "love my very enemies, and do good to them that hate me." May every spark of anger, malice, and envy, be utterly extinguished in me."

8. Pray for new obedience. "Lord, since thou givest this heavenly feast only to thy disciples, O make me one of them, and let me attain this mark of a disciple, obedience to my master. Lord, I cannot eat the passover and stay in Egypt still, in the service of Satan, and in bondage to my lusts; *O bring my soul out of prison*, and let me eat the passover with my loins girt, and ready to march towards the promised land. O help me to *wash my hands in innocence, that so I may encompass thy altar*. O make me *willing and obedient, that I may eat the good* of this ordinance. And may *the love of Christ restrain me* to a course of sincere universal obedience, that I may *run in the ways of thy commandments*. Seeing Christ offers himself to me, by way of surrender, to receive him as a Saviour, and submit to him as a prince. And, on that solemn feast of dedication, let me come and dedicate myself to thee, set myself apart for thee, that all my days I may live to thy praise."

9. Pray for heart-purity, fixedness and spirtuality, that you may be fit to entertain converse with a holy God. "Lord, help me to lay aside and leave behind me all vain, earthly and unseasonable thoughts and imaginations, that I may attend upon thee without distraction. O let not worldly or wandering thoughts come in, to stir up or disturb the beloved of my soul: let them not come near, or displease him: nor call me away from entertaining and enjoying of him. Lord, bid them begone. Alas! my heart is naturally in great disorder, and wholly indisposed for such solemn and spiritual work; but, O thou who callest me to it, do thou dispose my heart for it."

10. Pray for spiritual hunger and thirst. *Lord, thou art ready to give bread to the hungry, and the water of life to him that is a thirst: but both the appetite and the food, the feeling of want and the relief, are from thee.* O for enlarged affections and desires after this ordinance answerable to my need of it. Lord create and stir up in me earnest longings and a spiritual appetite after this heavenly food; that so with desire I may desire to eat this passover. "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so let me pant after thee, O God. Lord enlarge my heart, and open my mouth wide, that thou mayest fill it."

11. Pray for spiritual thankfulness, and holy joy, in partaking of this feast. "O make me to relish this heavenly food, and receive it with a thankful heart. Let me not sit sad and dejected, as if I liked not the provision, or thought myself not welcome: but take me into the banqueting house, and let my soul be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, that my mouth may praise thee with joyful lips. I am to feed on angels food, O let me be employed in angels work, praise. Let my soul rejoice in Jesus Christ as my portion; and triumph in his mighty acts, in his victories and purchase."

12. Pray for the assistance of God's Spirit in this work. "Lord, cast me not away from thy presence, take not thy holy spirit from me; for without thee I have nothing. I can do nothing. Lord, thou hast promised, and declared thyself more willing to give the Spirit to them that ask it, than parents to give bread to their children. Our love to our children is but hatred, our compassion hardness, in comparison of thine to thy children: O do not then deny me when my need is so great. Thou never saidst to any of the seed of Jacob, seek ye my face in vain. Lord, send thy holy spirit to breathe on my dry bones and decayed graces, and to be the harbinger to provide entertainment for thy son in my soul, that he may find it swept of all sin, and garnished with all the sacramental graces. O for the Spirit of God to adorn my naked soul, and put on me the wedding-garment, viz. the glorious outer garment of the righteousness of thy Son, and the beautiful inner garment of the holiness of thy Spirit, that fine linen of the saints: that all my nakedness may be covered, and my great deformities hid from thine eyes!"

13. Pray for the cure of all thy diseases, at this healing ordinance. "Lord, my plagues are great, my wounds deep and my distempers many: but I have heard of the balsam of the new covenant, my Redeemer's blood, that heals all diseases. "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there not a physician there?" Oh, then let not my pain be perpetual, nor my wounds incurable. Lord, I come to thee to get my dead soul quickened, my strong corruptions subdued, my faint purposes strengthened, and my languishing graces revived. O let the author of spiritual life uphold and preserve life in my soul. Inflame my coldness with the fire of thy love, soften my hardness with the dew of thy grace, enlighten my blindness with a beam of thy light, and anoint my blind eyes with thy eye-salve. Let thy compassion pity my vileness, let thy mercy pardon my sinfulness, let thy wisdom enlighten my darkness, and let thy strength support my weakness. Oh will the head let a member perish? Shall a branch wither for want of juice? Thou art the true vine: O communicate sap and influence to my languishing soul. Lord, art thou not as willing to bestow the fruit of thy blood on us, as to shed it for us? Art thou not a ready physician, willing to be employed by diseased souls? Dost thou not bestow thy cures without money, and without price? Lord, here is work for thee, a Job full of boils, a Lazarus over-run with sores, as poor a patient as ever came to the physician's door; yet if I could but touch the border of thy garment, or get but one word from thee, I should be made whole: Oh, say unto me, *Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.*"

14. Pray for a willing and cheerful heart in performing this and all other duties. "Oh, did my saviour so cheerfully undertake to suffer for me, and shall I be slothful and careless in approaching to him? Did he go so willingly to the cross to die for me, and shall I be so backward to go to the communion-table to remember his death? Lord, make me "run in the ways of thy commandments; and let me pray, hear, and communicate with freedom and enlargement of heart. O draw my heart to thee, and let it be carried on with more unweariedness and cheerfulness in thy service. Send forth the gales of thy Spirit, that may "make my soul like the chariots of Amminadib."

15. Pray for nearness and communion with God in his ordinances, and especially at the communion-table. "Lord, what will a communion-feast avail me without communion with Christ in it. I go not there for bread and wine, but to see Jesus. What are the elements to me without Christ's presence? Nothing but this can satisfy me: Lord, what wilt thou give me, if I go from thy table Christless? Shall I go away empty from a treasure, hungry from a feast, dry from a fountain, cold from the sun, comfortless from the comforter? Lord, stand not at a distance behind the wall: show thyself through the lattice of thy ordinance, and let me see the goings of my God and my King in his sanctuary. Lord, do thou not only stand and knock, but do thou also open the door of my heart; vouchsafe to come in and abide with me, yea, sup with me, and let me sup with thee, that I may be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and drink of the rivers of thy pleasures. And when "the King sitteth at his table, let my spikenard send forth the smell thereof." Descend into my heart by the influences of thy grace, and let me ascend to thee by the breathings of faith, love, and desire. Lord, make this feast a type and earnest of that eternal banquet above; and let me enjoy thy lightsome reviving company in the state of my pilgrimage. O let Christ appear and be known of me in the breaking of bread: O let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for his love is better than wine."

Cry importunately to God at this time; say "I will not let thee go till thou bless me: if thy presence go not with me, carry me not up hence. Wilt thou not relieve an importunate beggar, and hear the cry of a needy supplicant? Lord, open rivers in the wilderness, and streams in the desert. Let Jordan, at this season, overflow all its banks, and let all the dry roots of thy people be watered And, O let me come from thy table with my pardon sealed, my corruptions subdued, my graces quickened, my faith strengthened, my resolutions confirmed, my heart enlarged, and my soul refreshed and encouraged to run the ways of thy commandments, and so inseparably united unto thee, that no tempatation may be able to dissolve the union." O for the spirit of grace and supplication at such a time! for it is the praying and wrestling soul that will be the joyful and praising communicant.

Direct. XV.—*After you have done your utmost for preparing yourselves for the Lord's Table, see that ye lay*

no stress thereupon, but wholly distrust your own preparations.

O COMMUNICANTS, when you have made the greatest preparations possible, by self-examination, repentance, prayer, &c. say, after all, *we are but unprofitable servants.* The greatest stress and difficulty of the Christian life lieth in this, to be diligent in duty, and yet wholly denied to our duties. Learn then this great point in Christianity, to distrust all your preparations, and cast yourselves wholly on Christ for assistance, as if you had done nothing at all; saying, it is only *in the Lord that I have righteousness and strength.* You ought to do as King Asa did, who, though he had raised a prodigious army of five hundred thousand, all mighty men of valour, to fight against the Ethiopians; yet he cried to the Lord, and trusted in him for help, as if he had been left alone without one man to fight for him: for after all his great preparations, it is recorded of him, 2 Chron. xiv 8, 11, "And Asa cried to the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many or with them that have no power. Help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name go out against this multitude." So let every communicant say, "Lord, all my strength and preparations are nought; I have no power for celebrating this feast. Help me, O Lord my God; for I rest on thee, and in thy name I go to this great and weighty ordinance." The soul is never so well prepared, as when it is most sensible of its own weakness, and relies on the Redeemer's strength: "when I am weak (says the apostle) then am I strong." And hence it is said of the ancient worthies, Heb. xi. "Out of weakness, (*i. e.* felt and apprehended) they were made strong. The gaudy flower, that stands and grows on its own stalk, doth quickly wither and decay; when the plain ivy, that hangs and leans on the house, is fresh and green all the year. We ought then to be denied to ourselves, and write after David's copy, who looked to the Lord both for assistance and acceptance in all his duties, Psal. lxxi. 16. "I will go in the strength of the Lord, I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only."

A man may in words disclaim the opinion of merit and worth in his duties and preparations, and yet, in his heart and secret practice, put some trust in them; for there are practical papists as well as practical atheists. Hence God warns us against this inward trust and secret popery, Deut. ix. 4. "Say not, in thine heart, this is for my righteousness." Though with our tongues we do not plead for merit, yet there may be a saying it in the heart; and God doth well understand the language of the heart. Let us therefore look well to our hearts, when we have done our utmost in duty, and by way of preparation for this ordinance, that we be wholly denied to all, and cherish the thoughts of our own nothingness, according to Christ's noble rule, Luke xvii. 10. "When ye have done all, say, we are unprofitable servants." David owns he had nothing to plead when he had done all: for, says he, "of thine own, Lord, have we given thee," 1 Chron. xxix. 14. Of this denied temper was Nehemiah also: for, when he had done all for God and his temple that he could, he makes free grace his only plea with God, Neh. xiii. 22. "I commanded the Levites to cleanse themselves," &c. "Remember me, O my God, concerning this also; and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy." Whatever good things he had done, yet he depends on none of them, but pleads, "spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy." Hence also Paul wholly disclaimed his own righteousness, and that not only while he was a Pharisee, but even when he was a Christian and renewed man; *I account all things loss but for Christ.* O this is a noble attainment, but not easily come at. Mr. Fox used to say, "he was more afraid of his grace, than of his sins," because he found himself in such danger by them to be puffed up, and tempted to self-confidence. Let us then be denied to our own attainments in preparation for this solemn ordinance, if we would be accepted of God: for that man comes to God most worthy, that comes most sensible of his own unworthiness. So much for the first head of the directions, how to prepare for a communion-sabbath before it come. I proceed now to the second head, to give directions how to spend it, when it doth.

CHAPTER II.

CONTAINING DIRECTIONS FOR THE RIGHT SPENDING A COMMUNION-SABBATH WHEN IT IS COME.

Direction I.

SEE that you rise sooner this morning than ordinary, seeing you have extraordinary work in hand. And, while you are rising and putting on your clothes, let your minds be filled with suitable meditations and ejaculations.

Think what a privilege it is, that "your eyes see such days of the Son of man, which many prophets and kings desired to see, and might not." O that I may be thankful, and may not abuse my mercy! This is a great day; O that it may be a good day to my soul, even a day in God's courts, and in God's presence, that will be better and sweeter to me than a thousand.

Again think, this may be the last communion day that ever I may see on earth: this may be the last time that I shall "drink of the fruit of the vine at a communion-table." It may be the last offer that I shall get of the water of life; O that I may improve it well! Perhaps severals who saw the last communion where I am going, and also drank with me of the sacramental cup, have now a cup of the red wine of God's vengeance put into their hands, and are eternally sinking or swimming in the brimless and bottomless ocean of God's wrath; God keep me from unworthy communicating this day, lest that be my lot before the next sacrament. But, on the other hand, it may be there are some who sat with me at the last communion-table, that are now sitting at the higher table, and are drinking it new with Christ in his father's kingdom: what a sweet song are they presently singing! "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." O that I may this day get a foretaste of that celestial feast and heavenly joy, and such a seal of Christ's love as may fill my soul with hope to be a communicant at the upper table, if God shall call me hence before the next communion! "Lord, let me have one good day in all my life-time: show me a token for good before I die."

Direction II.

RETIRE presently, O communicant, for prayer and meditation, in order to excite and quicken grace in thy soul; and, in a special manner, see to get faith enlivened, and love inflamed. And, for this end, 1. Take a new view of Christ's sufferings, and his unparalleled love ma

nifested therein: "behold the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world." If you have a clear discovery of his love and sufferings at the table, be taking frequent views of him before-hand.

Consider how free and undeserved Christ's love was. Behold the Son of God intreated by no man, but hated by all men; yet in his love and pity intreats for man, yea, suffers and dies for him, even then when he was a sinner and an enemy to him. Behold him suffering for sin, that never sinned: yea, behold him made "sin for thee, who had no sin: that thou, who hadst no righteousness, might be made the righteousness of God in him." View his love with wonder, that made him take on the heavy burden of your iniquities, and bear it, till he swate, bled, groaned, and cried under the weight. Behold him struggling, praying, and falling to the ground, till he is all covered with his own blood: fix the eye of faith upon him, till thine eye affect thine heart. Take a view of his tears and bloody sweat, his pierced hands and wounded feet, his scourged back and open side, his streaming heart and yearning bowels to poor sinners: this is he, O sinner! that would rather die than thou shouldst die, who chose thy life before his own, and now pleads his blood before his father.

Behold and wonder at his love, that made him tread the wine-press alone for us, and drink the cup of the red-wine of the wrath of God; a cup whereinto all our vile and deadly sins were grated, a cup that no angel durst taste; yea, the tasting of it made Christ's heart to melt like wax in the midst of his bowels, Psal. xxii. 14. which was a greater matter than if the whole world had melted to nothing: yet he drank it off, with the bitterest dregs of it, and left not so much as one drop of it for us. Behold him taking his most precious heart's blood, to quench hell's flames that were ready to break out on us! Was there ever love like this?

This love is unsearchably great: you may sooner find out the height of heaven, the breadth of the earth, or the depth of the sea, than measure Christ's love; for it passeth knowledge, Eph. iii. "It is an unfathomable ocean, that hath neither bank nor bottom. O whither did his love carry him? Even from heaven to earth, from the throne to the manger, from the manger to the cross, from the cross to the grave; yea, from the glory of heaven to the torments of hell, and all this for poor creatures, that were despicable as worms, defiled as lepers, deformed as monsters, black as Ethiopians, yea as black and ugly as hell could make us. Worse are we than devils, if we are not affected with this love, that made the glorious Son of God leave the heaven of his Father's presence, and wade through hell for dregs of the creation. Did Christ see any thing in us to make him love us? No, he saw much to lothe us, but nothing to love us: yet the time when we were most loathsome was Christ's time of love, Ezek. xvi. We were lying polluted in our blood, and all spread over with running ulcers and putrifying sores, when Christ loved us. Our souls were as unlovely as Lazarus's body, whose sores the dogs licked; or Job's body, when he was full of boils, and sat in the ashes, and scraped himself with a potsherd: yet all this could not cool his affection to us. The instances of Christ's love are inexpressible, both in their nature and number. Wonder at his condescendency, in becoming not only a creature, but such a mean creature as man, for us; yea, not only a man, but in taking on him the form of a servant for us, and being willing not only to lie in a [illegible] but in a cold grave for us. Wonder that the glorious Redeemer of Israel should be content to be born as a beggar, live as a servant, and die as a slave for us. Wonder that he, who is infinitely pure, should be willing, not only to be numbered among sinners, and to bear our sins, but also to be made sin, and likewise a curse for us. Was it not for you and your advantage he did all this? and, will you not admire and love him? He was content to endure the poverty of the world, that you might enjoy the riches of heaven: he lived in the form of a servant, that you might have the adoption of sons: he humbled himself to live with men, that he might exalt you to live with God: he bowed his soul to death, that he might raise you to eternal life: he was shut up forty days with the devil, that you might not be shut up with him for ever: he was hungry, that you might be fed: he was numbered among transgressors, that you might have a room among the blessed. O believer, he wept, that you might rejoice: sorrow oppressed his heart, that everlasting joy might be on your head: he was scourged and wounded, that you by his stripes might be healed of sin's wounds: he was crowned with thorns, that you might be crowned with glory: he was slandered and condemned before men, that you might be justified and acquitted before God: he bore the curse, that you might inherit the blessing: he drank the bitter and poisonous cup of God's wrath, that you might drink the pure river of life: he was deserted of God, that you might not be forsaken by him eternally: he bore the burden of sin and wrath, that you might be freed from that burden: he hung upon our cross, to advance us to sit upon his throne: he cried out in sorrow upon a cross, that we might shout joyfully in singing God's praise for ever: he thirsted on the cross, that we might not thirst eternally, with Dives, for a drop of cold water to cool our tongue: he struggled in a bloody agony, that we might not struggle among devils in hell's furnace for ever: Oh, what shall we say of this love! "Lord Jesus, thy pity was infinite, thy love hath overflown all banks, and thy compassion knew no bounds: thou stoodst before the mouth of hell that I deserved, and stoppedst the flaming furnace of divine vengeance, that was breaking out against me: when I was, like Isaac, bound to the altar, ready to be sacrificed to justice, thou offeredst thyself, like the ram caught in the thicket, to be sacrificed in my room: when my sins had raised a terrible tempest, which threatened to drown me eternally, thou wast content to be thrown overboard, like Jonah, to appease the storm: when the sword of justice was furbished, and ready to be sheathed into my bowels, thou interposedst betwixt me and it, and receivedst the blow into thy heart: when I was shipwrecked and perishing, thou castedst thyself in as a plank of mercy to save my life. Can I think on this, and my heart not burn? Can I speak of it, and not seek, with Joseph, a secret place to weep in?"

View the surpassing nature of Christ's love. No love like to it; yea, Christ's love to us transcends his love to all other things: he loved us more than angels, for he would not put on their nature: he loved us more than heaven; for he left that to come and save us: he loved us more than riches and honour; for he chose poverty, and became of no reputation, to redeem us: he loved us more than the comforts of life? for he parted with these, and became a man of sorrows for our sake: he loved us more than his blood; for he willingly parted with that

for us. he loved us more than his soul or body; for he gave both these to be an offering for our sins: he was more concerned for us than for himself; he rejoiced more in our welfare than in his own; he wept and prayed more for us than for himself; and, in the time of his greatest strait, when heaven, earth, and hell, were all at once rushing upon him, we have his prayer, John xvii. Yet it is all spent for us, except one verse or two for himself. Again, Christ loved us more than his life; and "all that a man hath will he give for his life;" yet Christ willingly parted with that for our sake: but, is there nothing that is better than life? Yes, David tells us of one thing that is better, Psal. lxiii. 3. Thy loving kindness is better than life." The saints and martyrs, that parted with all other things, would by no means part with that, they would rather part with a thousand lives than quit with that; yet Christ, who had infinitely more of it than ever any saint attained to, for our sakes parted with it, and had the light of God's countenance totally eclipsed from him on the cross, so that he cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

II. If you would have the sacramental graces quickened, particularly faith, take a view of Christ in all his sweet offices and relations: "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the [illegible] Isa. xlv. 22. O communicant, endeavour upon [illegible] of a communion-sabbath, to give a believing [illegible] in all his blessed offices and relations; [illegible] engthen and quicken faith, and help thee to act [illegible] more distinctly at a communion-table.

1. Look to Christ, as a bankrupt debtor to his surety, and say, "Lord, I owe many thousand more than I can pay, but thou hast a sufficient ransom to pay all my debt: I flee to thee as my surety: Lord, undertake for me, and satisfy thy Father's justice, that I be not seized on, and dragged to hell's prison for ever."

2. Look to him as an able physician to cure thy wounds: "Say, Lord, here lies a Job full of boils, a Lazarus full of sores at thy gate; here a paralytic hand, here a blind eye, here a hard heart, here a plague, and there a wound, that have scorned all other physicians, and despised all other remedies; let me this day get the balm of Gilead, even the sovereign plaster of thy blood, to my various maladies; one touch of the hem of thy garment, and I shall be whole."

3. Look to him as a ransomer of captives, and say "Lord, it was thy errand to proclaim liberty to the captives: I look to thee this day to knock off my fetters, loose all my bonds, and bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name."

4. Look to him as a mediator and peace-maker, to remove all enmity and quarrels betwixt God and thy soul, and say, "Lord stand betwixt me and the flaming sword, let thy atoning blood this day quench the fire of thy Father's anger, and bring the news of peace to my soul."

5. Look to him as an advocate to plead for thy guilty soul: say, "Lord, my crimes are great, and my cause is bad: but never any cause miscarried that thou took in hand: be thou mine advocate, and let every one of thy wounds this day be as so many open mouths to plead for me; let thy blood speak, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel

6. Look to him as thy refuge-city and hiding-place, and say, "Lord, I flee to thee for my life: for the avenger of blood, the law and justice of God, are at my heels pursuing me; and, if they find me afar off from thee, I am slain without mercy: the clefts of the rock are my only hiding-place: Lord, be a safeguard to me. A heathen could say, when a bird scared by a hawk flew into his bosom: I will not give thee up to thine enemy, seeing thou camest to me for sanctuary: and surely thou wilt not deliver my soul, when I flee to thee for shelter."

7. Look to Christ as the ark, that can only save thee from being drowned by the flood of God's wrath: say, "Lord, there is no ark to save me but thou alone: I am shipwrecked in Adam, and there is no plank but Christ to bring me to shore: I clasp to thee by the hand of faith, Lord save me else I perish.

8. Look to him as a reliever of burdened souls: say, "Lord, here is a heavy laden sinner coming to thee this day for rest: O sin is heavier than a millstone, it is weighed down with the law's curses; and, O how many of these millstones are on my back? Lord, I come this day to roll them upon thee, who art the sure foundation that God has laid in Zion, able to bear me and all I can lay upon it: angels cannot free me of my burden, for the burden of one sin has sunk many thousands of them to the bottomless pit; the saints cannot do it, they have burden enough of their own; nay, the whole creation cannot bear my burden, for it is already groaning under the weight of me and it: but, Lord, thou art the mighty one on whom sinners help is laid, and hast promised rest to such as come to thee. Lord, let all my burdens fall off this day, that I may be at freedom to run the ways of thy commandments."

9. Look to him as a rich and bountiful helper of the needy: say, "Lord pity a needy beggar this day, that is going to the feast-house to wait for a crumb; thou hast supplied many: and I have heard a good report of thy bounty: never came there a poorer wretch to thy door than I: is there not a penny of grace left to help me, nor a crumb to keep in my life? Lord, let me not go from thy treasure house without an alms, there is bread enough in thy house and to spare, let me not go without a crumb.

10. Look to him as a prophet and teacher, that can open thine eyes, and give thee gracious discoveries of his truths and ways: say, "Lord I have heard much of thee by the hearing of the ear, but little have mine eyes seen of thee: I have been long in Christ's school, but little proficiency have I made: Lord, come this day and teach me to profit; let my eyes be opened, that in this ordinance I may see the heinous nature of sin, the severity of divine justice, the greatness of divine love, the beauty of Christ, the preciousness of souls, the excellency of the remedy provided for sinners, &c."

11. Look to him as thy head and husband, with whom you are this day to seal a marriage-covenant: say, "Lord, though I be a most deformed, black and unworthy bride, and have nothing but poverty, debt and danger to recommend me to thee; yet since thou, who art the chief among ten thousands, are content to match with me; O give me a heart to consent willingly to the bargain, and say, my beloved is mine, and I am his. Lord, help me cheerfully to say, Amen to the covenant, and all the articles of it, that I was reviewing and renewing yesternight: O let the marriage knot this day be cast, that sin or satan, death or hell, may never be able to loose again: let him this day kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: O for sweet communion and fellowship with him at his own table: Lord,

show me a token for good, set me as a seal upon thine arm; manifest thyself to me, as thou dost not to the world."

Direction III.

LABOUR, O communicant, to get thy soul put in a right and suitable frame for approaching God's holy table, and entertaining thy Saviour there: now the cry is making, "the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him;" prepare the palace of your hearts for him; cleanse, sweep and wash them; get them adorned and perfumed with the graces of the Spirit. Is Christ gone to prepare a place for you, and will you not prepare a place for him? Set up a throne for Christ, go forth to meet him with acclamation and praise, receive him gladly, set the crown on his head, and swear allegiance to him, and say, as the men of Israel said to Gideon, Judges vii. 22. "Rule thou over us, for thou hast delivered us out of the hand of Midian." O but Christ hath delivered us out of the hand of satan, a far worse oppressor than Midian. Let us welcome him, and compass him about with songs of deliverance. O communicants, deal not with Christ, as his country-men the Jews did, John i. 11. "He came unto his own, but his own received him not:" When he came into the world, there was no room allowed for him any where but in the manger, and thither was he thrust. O deal not so with your Saviour; think not a foul stall good enough for Christ, but make clean your hearts, and give him the best room, yea, the upper room there; O send the key of your hearts this morning to Christ, saying, "Lord, take thy choice where to lie: alas, I may say with the centurion, "I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof." My soul is a ruinous, smoky, and defiled cottage, thou hast not a fit place with me to lay my head; but, O thou that didst not disdain to lie in a manger among beasts, and to be entertained in the house of Simon the leper, come into my soul, repair the house, and prepare an upper room for thy self, that I may eat the passover with thee. Lord, speak the word, and thy servant's heart shall be healed, cleansed, and made holy, soft, and pliable, fit for thy use and service. Lord, none can mend my heart but thou who madest it; I put it into thy hands: Lord, make it as thou wouldst have it.

Quest. What is that frame and disposition of soul that we should come with to the communion-table?

Ans. Take these directions concerning it.

I. *Come to it with a holy awe and reverence of God.* Were you going to a prince's table, you would go to it with some awe and concern; and, will you have none when you go to the table of the great Jehovah, who is your judge, searches the heart, and observes all your actions? He is a God that is very jealous of his honour, and will not be mocked; you ought to come to this table with a holy dread and reverence, adoring the holiness and justice of God manifested in the sufferings of Christ. How vehemently did he hate sin, that he would not pity or spare his dear Son when he cried to him; but seeing he had undertaken to pay our debt, and drink our cup, the least farthing or drop he would not abate him? Though the sinner be spared, yet sin must be punished to the uttermost; our cautioner paid dearly for it. We ought to adore his justice, saying with the men of Bethshemesh, 1 Sam. vi. 20. "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?" There is no standing but at Christ's back, our blessed cautioner, "in whom God is well pleased."

II. *Come with holy fear and jealousy over yourselves,* lest you be found unwelcome guests, and draw down the guilt of unworthy communicating upon yourselves; cry "Lord, keep me from wounding Christ and my own soul this day; let me not betray the Son of God with a kiss;" "deliver me from blood-guiltiness, and from drinking damnation." O what if I want the wedding-garment, "when the king comes in to view the guests"

III. *Come with brokenness of heart for sin, the cause of Christ's sufferings.* Look on your pride, passion, hypocrisy, covetousness, malice, lying, swearing, &c. as Christ's only tormentors: behold how they pressed him down in the garden, till he swate blood; see them binding the cross on Christ's back; see them nailing his hands, piercing his temples, and grieving his heart; see them buffeting and spitting on him; see them making him groan, weep, and roar out his complaint, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It was on us this tragedy should have been acted, on us these vials of wrath should have been poured, "for he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities," Isa. liii. 5. O shall we see Christ's heart-streaming blood, and our eyes not drop tears? Shall we see him stretched out and nailed for us, and our hearts not bleed? Oh, it was my sins that made them nails, they drove them in, they thrust in the spear, yea, they killed the Lord of life; and, shall I not mourn? Did you see a malefactor, that had committed twenty murders, used like Christ, your hearts would be concerned: and, will you not be affected to behold the innocent Lamb of God so abused by your sins? "Look on him ye have pierced and mourn." This passover must be eaten with bitter herbs. Sow in tears, if you would reap in joy. A weeping communicant is a very pleasing sight to both God and man: a broken-hearted weeping sinner will suit well with a bruised and bleeding Saviour.

IV. *Come with burning love and affection to Christ.* This is a feast only for the friends and lovers of Christ, Cant. v. 1. Without love ye have nothing to do here. O believer, is thy heart cold when Christ's love is warm? Will you not recompense love with love? Can you behold Christ on a cross, dying with love in his heart, and smiles in his looks; can you see his bleeding arms open to embrace you, the spear reaching his heart, and his affections streaming out to you in blood, and that when you were enemies to him, and haters of him, and not be ravished with his love? Can you behold his wounds, or put your finger into the print of the nails, and not be sick of love, and cry out with Thomas, "My Lord, and my God?" Can you view him that is the chief among ten thousand, yea, among an hundred thousand, and among all the thousands in heaven and earth, and your hearts not love him? Turn over all things both in heaven and earth, you can find none like him, so excellent in himself, and so well adapted to your conditions and circumstances. Paul was a learned man, and knew many things; a travelled man, and had seen and heard many things: yet when he casts up his counts of all he had ever seen, heard or known, he says, "I count all but dung and loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ," Phil. iii. 8, 9.

V. Come with much hunger and thirst to this full feast. See that your appetites be not glutted with the world, for the *full soul lothes the honey comb:* it is only the thirsty that are welcome, Rev. xxii. 17. "Christ fills the hungry with good things." When the desire opens the heart widest,

then he opens his hand largest to fill it, Psal. lxxxi. 10. O then, cry, "give me Christ, and deny me what thou wilt; a crumb of mercy from thy table, or else I am gone for ever." Endeavour to say, as Isa. xxvi. "The desire of my soul is unto thee, and to the remembrance of thy name. O that I knew where to find him! When wilt thou come unto me?" O for further tokens of his love, and clear evidences of my interest in him! O for the smiles of his face, and the voice of joy and gladness! There are many heavenly dainties here; here are all the fruits of the tree of life, the comforts of the Spirit, the influences of his grace, the bread and waters of life; therefore come with enlarged appetites. The spouse cries, Cant. ii. 4. "stay me with flagons; as if she had said, "my thirst is so great, it is not a drop or a little cup that will quench it, I would have whole flagons." Fear not to wrong your neighbours: for there is a river to every one of you. Observe how earnest Christ was to feast with us, Luke xxii. 15. "With desire (says he) have I desired to eat this supper with you," though he had no need either of you or it: and will not you, whose needs are so great, say, "with desire have I desired to eat this supper with Christ before I die; it may be my last communion, O let me have something to carry my expence through the wilderness; let me have something to comfort and support me, when I go through the valley and shadow of death?"

VI. Come with humility and self-denial, content to be nothing, that Christ may be all; and willing to submit to any thing for a blink of his countenance. Be sensible of your ill-deservings, and acknowledge a crumb will be a great mercy. Be content, with the prodigal and woman of Canaan, to be taken into Christ's family, though it were in the meanest station and employment: let me be the meanest of Christ's servants, though I be never so ill used, or ill respected, I will be thankful, if I be within Christ's doors, have a relation to his family, and can call him Master. Again, come self-deniedly, renouncing all confidence in yourself, your preparations, humiliations, or performances: these may be good graces, and good duties; but they will be ill Christs, and ill Saviours. Freely own that it is not your own righteousness that saves you, not your own strength that quickens you; but only Christ's righteousness, and Christ's strength. Say, "Blessed Jesus, I fly to thee alone; I have no hope in myself, nor in any thing besides thee; all my confidence is in the freeness of thy love, the mercy of thy bowels, the merit of thy death, the worth of thy blood, the sufficiency of thy righteousness, and power of thy intercession."

VII. Come with charity and love to all men, even to your very enemies. Banish all malice and envy, pray for your enemies, forgive them, wish well and do good both to their souls and bodies, according to Christ's example on the cross: but especially, bring with you love and affection to God's people, delight in their fellowship above all others, for they are the excellent ones of the earth.

VIII. Come with honest designs to seal a marriage-covenant with Christ. Consent frankly to Christ to be your Prince and Saviour; do not think of halving it with Christ, but be willing to take him entirely upon his own terms. Be content not only to be saved by him, but to serve him, live for him, fight for him, and cleave to him, all the days of your life; resolving that all the pleasures of sin, temptations of satan, and allurements of the world, nay, the hopes of enjoying ten thousand worlds, shall never prevail with you to part with Christ. Come resigning yourselves, your hearts, and all you have to Christ: say "Lord, though I had ten thousand hearts, and every one of them ten thousand times better than they are, they should be all thine." Come with strong vows and purposes against sin, that murdered your Saviour; resolve never to harbour it, or make peace with it; but that you will fight against it to your last breath, and revenge the death of Christ on it.

IX. Come with thankfulness and praise to God for redeeming love, and providing such a Saviour for you. Let the high praises of God be in your mouths; send up whole vollies of praise to your Redeemer, for undertaking your deliverance. Invite the angels, and all the creation, to assist you in this work. Stir up your souls, and all that is within you, to bless his holy name: your souls (like Mary) "should magnify the Lord, and your spirits rejoice in God your Saviour;" your hearts should ascend, like Manoah's angel, in the smoke of thanksgiving and praise. Say, "Lord, what shall I render to thee for all thou hast done and suffered for me? Lord, what am I, that thou shouldst part with thy glory, yea, with thy blood, and with thy life for such a wretch as me? I am ashamed that I can love and praise thee no more: Oh! my heart is cold, my tongue is slow: let heaven and earth, angels and men, join and extol his free-grace and wondrous love: let all the world ring with his praise."

X. Come with hope and expectation, depending on God's promises and Christ's merits. You ought greedily to look to Christ, expecting something from him, as the poor cripple did from Peter and John, Acts iii. 4, 5. Peter said "Look on us: and he gave heed to them, expecting to receive something from them." We ordinarily receive little, because we expect little; "God's mercy is upon us, according as we hope in him," Psal. xxxiii. ult. O raise your desires and expectations; for you come to a merciful and liberal God, that will not let the expectation of his poor creatures perish, Psal. ix. 18. "The needy shall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever."

Object. "Alas! I am a poor, weak, heartless creature: I have little ground to hope."

Ans. You have God's call and promise to encourage you. Groan under your deadness, and use the means; aim honestly at your duty, and look to God for accomplishing his promise. Do as the Israelites did in the wilderness, Num. xxi. 16, 17, 18. God had called them to the place where he promised them water, which was very much valued in that dry desert: well, did they sit still idly, waiting till the water should spring? No, the nobles put to their staves, and digged in expectation of God's fulfilling his promise, and sung, *Spring up, O well*, &c. Make an honest mint, look up with hope, and cry for the springing of the well. Come, bring all your empty vessels to the fountain, in expectation of a fill: do as the poor widow, 2 Kings iv. "bring not a few:" for I am sure the vessels will fail before the oil fail. Plead with God for the accomplishing of his word: say, "Lord, though we cannot say pour water on us, for we are thirsty, yet we can plead, pour floods on us, for we are dry ground: Lord, make us as hungry as we are empty, and thirsty as we are dry: Lord, if thou deal with us according to our sense of need, we will get little; but, Lord, we plead, thou wilt deal with us according to our real need, and thy royal bounty, and then we will be right enough."

O poor soul! Art thou longing for the springing of the

well, saying, "O that I knew in what part of this valley of Baca the well would spring, what ordinance, what duty, would be the mean: there I would wait and lie, there I would dig and cry: one gush of these living streams would satisfy my longing soul?" *Poor soul, thou shalt not die for want; you have the word of a king for it*, Isa. xli. 17, 18. "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the vallies; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry-land springs of water."

DIRECTION IV.

AFTER you have this morning meditated, dealt with your hearts, wrestled with God, read his word, and performed family worship, with faith and fervency suitable to this solemn occasion: you ought timeously to repair to the church against the solemn worship begin. And let your hearts be breathing forth many heavenly ejaculations by the way; such as that, Psalm xliii. 3, 4. "Send forth thy light and thy truth: let them lead me, and bring me to thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy." O, it were a pleasant frame this morning, to be going with joy to draw water out of the wells of salvation! Let us be very thankful, that the waters of life do flow so pleasantly and plentifully to us, betwixt the banks of gospel ordinances; bless God, that has not made the barren wilderness our dwelling: but let us think, as we go, that as God rained down manna from heaven on his people, so he rained down fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah. This serves to teach us to rejoice so in the mercies which God rains down upon us in the sacrament, as to fear his judgments in case they be abused.

Again, think, "I am now upon my way to mount Calvary: Lord, forbid that Christ's traitors be my attendants: let all my lusts and idols be for ever banished from me: may they never find lodging in my soul any more: Lord, help me to go this day, with such a melted heart and weeping eyes, as the holy Virgin, Mary Magdalene, and the other tender-hearted women of Jerusalaem had, when they went to mount Calvary, to behold Christ crucified. Am not I going up to see the same crucifixion represented before my eyes?"

As it was a part of your secret work this morning, to plead earnestly with God to direct his messengers to speak suitably to your case; so you ought by the way to be sending up ejaculations for this end, and frequently to be crying, *Awake, O north-wind, and come thou south, blow*, &c. The minister's words will be but as wind, and a beating of the air (unless the wind of the Spirit blow), "O Spirit of God, come, influence my heart this day, I dare not go to the table without thy presence:" "Lord, stand not this day behind the wall;" for there cannot be a sadder sight in the world, than a poor hard-hearted communicant, with God's back turned on him. "If thy presence go not with me, carry me not up hence." O Lord, it is time for thee to work; I never stood more in need of thy presence than at this time: it is my errand to meet with thee at thy table: Lord, send me not away with a sore heart. A communion-day, without communion with Christ, will never satisfy my soul."

Plead with God, O young communicant, that this may be the day of your acquaintance with Christ, even the day of your espousals, and a day to be had in everlasting remembrance. And, indeed, if you enter this day into the bond of the covenant, it will be a very memorable day. God will bless the memory of this day, for he will gain a son; Jesus Christ will write this day in his kalender, for he will gain a brother; the Holy Ghost will rejoice for he will gain a temple; angels and saints will be glad, for they will gain a fellow-servant; and you, especially, may rejoice with exceeding great joy, for you will gain an eternal inheritance.

Directions concerning our carriage when the time of receiving the Sacrament doth approach.

I. WHEN the time is come, or near, that you are to go to this holy table; consider that this is the most solemn and august ordinance under heaven, and requires the most profound awe and reverence from you. The place is holy, the table is holy, the bread and cup are holy; and "God is terrible from his holy places." Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? Your danger is great, if you make a rash approach, and seek him not after the due order. The least wrong look or wrong touch at this time is criminal, and may cost you your eternal salvation. It may provoke the Lord to make a fearful and visible breach among you, as he did upon Uzzah and the men of Bethshemesh; for, the nearer to God's altar you come, the fire of his jealously burns the more vehemently. Labour then to go to his table with holy fear and trembling; for, as communion-love is the sweetest, so communion-wrath is the sorest. Heavy judgments, both spiritual, temporal, and eternal, hang over the unworthy communicant's head. If you would prevent these, adventure to this table with holy fear and dread: for if the woman with the bloody issue feared so much to touch the "hem of Christ's garment," Mark v. how much more ought you to fear to touch the symbols of his body and blood, to put your hand into his wounds, and feel the print of the nails? If such a holy man as John the Baptist thought himself unworthy to bear Christ's shoes, how much more are vile sinners, like you unworthy to touch and feed upon his broken body and shed blood? Let your souls then be humbled as the dust when you approach, in a deep sense of your great unworthiness, former guilt, and breach of former vows made at this table; for to such humble souls God has promised to look in mercy, Isa. lxvi. 2.

II. When you are going to the table, labour to stir up your souls, and all your faculties and affections; excite all your graces and desires to attend Christ. O see that your souls be lively and your hearts fixed, when you are about to draw near and seal a marriage-covenant with Christ. You have great need to look to your hearts and frames at this time. A dead heart or an ill frame now, is very unsuitable; it is like the dead fly in the box of ointmen, it will be fair to spoil your communicating. For God's sake look to it.

Object. I. "Oh!" says one, "my heart is in a lifeless and stupid frame, even at a dead stand, and thinks neither of good nor ill: what shall I do with it?"

Ans. 1. Dispatch presently a swift messenger to heaven, an earnest ejaculation and prayer, to call for the help of God's Spirit, as Cant. iv. 16. Intreat him to breathe upon your dry bones with a fresh gale, and take a coal from his own altar to inflame your affections.

2. Call on your hearts to awake to a lively frame. It is a mistake of Christians to think they are only to call upon God, you must also call upon yourselves, and rouse up yourselves, as Psal. lvii. 8. "Awake up my glory," &c. Stir up yourselves and all that is within you, according to Psal. ciii. 1. Speak to your hearts, and expostulate with them: say, "O my drowsy blockish heart, art thou not ashamed to think so coldly of thy bleeding Saviour?" Is his heart so warm, and thine so cold? Doth a dead head become the service of a living God?

Object. II. "Oh!" saith another, "my heart is a roving, wandering heart, I cannot get it stayed one moment upon one subject; it presently gets away, and hunts after vanities. O what shall I do with the levity and excursions of my heart?"

Ans. 1. Labour now to over-awe your heart with the deep apprehension of God's presence and all-seeing eye: God noticeth you more now than ever.

2. Chide and check your heart for its vain excursions: say, "Did I come here to think of any thing but of Christ and heaven? Is this a place for thinking on worldly toys? Is this the way to show forth my Saviour's death, which is my business here? What? cannot I watch with Christ one hour now? How then will I behold and contemplate him for ever."

Object. III. "Though I am come this length in obedience to a dying Saviour's command, I yet fear to go forward, for I doubt my right. I cannot say I am in covenant with God, or that I have faith, and an interest in Christ, or that his body was broken for me."

Ans. O discouraged soul, though you have not the faith of assurance, yet see if you can get the faith of adherence. Though you cannot say that ever you took hold of Christ or the covenant before, yet try if you can get a grip of Christ now; you are much nearer to him now than at other times. Make an endeavour, stir up your souls, and go to Christ with all the faith you can win at, saying, with that poor man, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." If you cannot apply Christ to yourselves, will you apply yourselves to Christ. If you cannot say Christ is your Saviour and hiding-place, will you run like a malefactor to him for refuge, and try if he will now shelter you in his wounds, when they are so wide opened in the sacrament. He noticeth any poor sinner that is engaging his heart to approach unto God.

Again, though you cannot say that Christ is your's, and you are in covenant with him; yet, are you not willing to be his, and give up yourself to him? The covenant indeed is mutual, Cant. ii. 16. "My beloved is mine and I am his." But if you cannot lay claim to one part of it, try if you can grip to another. Is it your language, Though I cannot say he is mine, yet I am resolved to be his, and to give up myself to him? That is well said, poor soul: for you must first consent to be his, before ye know that he is your's: you must be resolute in your covenanting with Christ; when you are driven from one horn of the altar, hold fast by another. Flee now to Christ, saying, "Lord, though I cannot say thou art mine; yet I can say, Lord, I am content and resolved to be thine, wholly thine, only thine, and everlastingly thine." David could not always say, God is mine; but, when he cannot say that, he cries, "I am thine, Lord, save thou me," Psal. cxix. 94. Here one that belongs to thee, and has surrendered himself to thee: "Lord, suffer not one of thine to perish."

Object. IV. "Alas! I cannot say to God, I am thine: I fear he will not accept of me, or own me for his."

Ans. Though you cannot say, *I am thine by God's acceptance;* yet, can you not say, "Lord, I am thine by my own resignation, I do devote and give up myself wholly unto thee, I will not be the devil's, the world's, or lust's; I will not be my own, but I will be thine: I am thine, save thou me." Go to him with that plea the Campani came to the Romans with, after they had refused to help them as neighbours and allies against the Grecians, who were distressing them sore, and that because the Romans and the Grecians were in friendship together at that time: the Campani went and gave up their whole country in vassalage to the Romans, saying, "If you will not help us as our allies, help us as your vassals and subjects, as we are content to be; we are sure you will not let your tributaries perish." And indeed this argument prevailed with them, and so will it with God, if you go to him with an importunate faith, and fasten yoursell upon him. Plead, "Lord, if thou wilt not love me as a friend, yet pity me as thy poor subject: I resolve to be thine, and, if I perish, one must perish that desires to be thine. Lord, whether thou accept of me or not, I give up myself to thy use and service." Art thou come this length, poor soul? Fear not, thou shalt not perish, Christ is as willing to be thine as thou art to be his: come forward, and take the seal of the covenant, and make a new surrender of yourself to Christ, and it may be he will be made "known to you in the breaking of bread"

III. When this holy feast comes to be celebrated, see that your souls be rightly employed, and your graces suitably exercised: study to have your meditations and ejaculations suitable to what you see or hear.

When you are coming to this holy table, and perhaps may be put to stand a little by it, by reason of the throng before you get access: think on what Moses said to the Israelites while standing at the Red-sea, Exod. xiv. 13. "Stand still (saith he) and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you to-day." In like manner you are standing by the Red-sea of the blood of Christ: stand still and wonder at the glorious salvation he is showing to you this day.

Or you may think with yourself, that you hear Christ the captain of your salvation now crying, as did Jehu, 2 Kings ix. 32. "Who is on my side? Who?" Well, if you will now appear or declare for Christ, then you must throw your lusts, like Jezebel, out of the window, to be dashed in pieces.

When you see the communicants set about Christ's table, you may think on that word, Psal. cxxviii. 3. where God promiseth to the righteous man, "That his wife should be as a fruitful vine by the sides of a house, and his children as olive plants round about his table." Behold his promise made out to Christ, God's righteous servant; the church, Christ's spouse, is a fruitful vine, and hath born him many children: would to God these may be Christ's children by adoption, as well as they are the church's by profession! May it be said of them, that this and that man was born of her! O how pleasant a sight is it to see Christ's children set as olive plants round about his table, and to see Christ himself setting them there! Surely, if he set them, he will serve them also, they shall not have ground to go away with any complaint of him: for Christ is no niggard to his children; he is neither hard-hearted nor

hard-handed; if his children seek bread, he will not give them a stone.

When you are allowed to come forward to the Lord's table, think with yourself that you hear Christ or his ministers saying to you, as the angels did to the women at the sepulchre, Matth. xxviii. 5, 6 "We know whom ye seek, ye seek Jesus which was crucified; come, see the place where the Lord lay;" come, see the promise, come, see the elements wherein the Lord lieth.

And, in the mean while, take care to entertain very high and exalted thoughts of Christ, and very low and humble thoughts of yourself. Say, or think, "Lord, I am not worthy to approach so near thee, far less that thou shouldst come under my roof. I am not worthy to eat the crumbs that fall from my own, much less those that fall from thy table. Oh, I am unworthy to be allowed to creep as a dog under the table, far less to sit as one of Christ's invited guests at the table. I deserve not room to stand amongst thy servants, far less to sit down with thy children. I deserve not to have daily bread conferred on me, and shall I be allowed to eat of the bread of life? I am unworthy to lift up my eyes to heaven, and shall I get manna from heaven? I am not worthy to eat the bread of men, and shall I be admitted to eat the bread of angels? Shall I entertain him whom they adore: nay, sit down with him at whose feet they fall? Shall I, who am unworthy to tread thy ground, be allowed to tread thy courts? Shall I, that am unworthy to breathe in thy air, have thy Spirit to breathe into my heart, or have leave to breathe out my desires unto thee?"

O how great is the condescending goodness of our heavenly Father to his prodigal children! These are wonders of mercy, miracles of compassion!

Some directions for Communicants when at the Lord's table.

I WOULD have you at this time to mind that word of Solomon, Prov. xxiii. 1. "When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee." O communicant, consider diligently the sacramental elements, and what is represented and exhibited by them. Consider the sacramental promises, and what blessings are contained in them. Consider the sacramental actions, and the gracious acts which the soul should put forth with them. It should be a busy time, and well improven; for though it be short, yet you have many things to do in it, which may generally be comprehended under these two heads:

1. Remember the suitable subjects which are to be considered and meditated on at the table.

2. Observe and exert the special graces which are to be employed and exercised there.

As to the first of these heads, I shall mention some suitable subjects of your meditation and contemplation at this time; as, 1. Christ's death and passion. 2. The bitterness and variety of his sufferings. 3. Christ's willingness to undergo these sufferings for us. 4. The blessed effects and benefits of his sufferings. 5. Christ's free love, as the impulsive cause of all he did and suffered. 6. The evil of sin, which brought on his sufferings. 7. God's holiness and justice manifested in them. 8. The communion-feast above, represented by this lower table.

I. Remember and meditate upon the death and passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. David hath a psalm, which he calls a psalm of remembrance, Psalm xxxviii. Here the Son of David hath a sacrament, which may well be called a sacrament of remembrance; for the great end of it is to be a memorial of Christ its author and founder: for he said, when he instituted it, *this do, in remembrance of me;* and we find these words used twice over, both at the delivering of the bread and of the wine, 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. As if he had said, whatever you mind, see that you forget not your suffering Redeemer. Some of Christ's works are narrated only by one evangelist, as his turning the water into wine, and some others; some of his works are recorded by two evangelists, as the history of Christ's birth by Matthew and Luke; some things are recorded by three of them, as the institution of the sacrament of the supper: but as for Christ's death and passion, it is recorded by them all four. And this is done no doubt to teach us, that though all Christ's works and actions are seriously to be remembered and thought upon, yet none so especially as his death and sufferings. And, when should this be thought upon, if not at the sacrament, whose institution was purposely for the remembrance thereof? O communicant, will ye not think of this subject when you have Christ crucified evidently set forth before your eyes, in the bread broken and the wine poured out? Oh was his blessed body broken with torments, and his precious blood shed for the remission of my sin: and will I not think upon him? Dear Saviour, thou biddest me remember thee: Oh how should I ever forget thee at any time, and far less now when I sit at thy table! If I forget thee, O Redeemer, let my right hand forget its cunning, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth. O that I could ever go out of myself to remember thee, and never think on thee without an extacy of wonder!

II. Think upon the bitterness of Christ's passion, and the variety of his sufferings, and revolve in thy thoughts the several steps and degrees thereof. And particularly take a view of your Redeemer's agony in the garden of Gethsemane; walk into that garden, and behold him falling to the ground under the weight of your sins, wrestling as in an agony, and sweating great drops of blood, and these bursting through all his garments. O see how he lay, and how he bedewed and stained the flowers of the garden round about him with his blood. Never any in the world was known to sweat in such a manner before, and never any since that time. In a natural way of speaking, the coldness of the night, his lying on the cold ground, and the exceeding greatness of Christ's fear at that time, should have drawn all his blood inward from the outward parts of his body. O but this sweat was preternatural! He sweats without fire, and bleeds without a wound. There was no heat, no fire without him that made him sweat at that time: no, the fire was within him, even the fire of God's wrath kindled in his soul; this made the blood about his heart to boil and burst through his veins, flesh, skin, cloaths, and all together. There was no wound outward as yet given him, no sword, no spear, no weapon as yet had touched him, and yet he bleeds: Oh, the wound was inward in his soul; deep and fearful was the gash which the sword of justice made at this time in his soul: the breach was wide as the sea, and accordingly a whole sea of wrath brake in with violence upon his soul. He falls first upon his knees, and then upon the ground; he lies under the pressure till he is overwhelmed with his Father's wrath and his own blood. Deep called unto deep, till all these dreadful waves and billows passed over him. He cried to his Father, he complained to disciples, he

sought their sympathy and prayers; but no relief had he from that airth; he must tread the wine press alone.

Next, O communicants, follow your Redeemer after he was apprehended, by your meditations, and trace his steps through the streets of Jerusalem: think what he underwent when he was hurried from one tribunal to another. Go into the high priest's palace and to Pilate's judgment-hall, and observe what unparalleled affronts and indignities he suffered there, and none to take his part; he was reproached, despised, and abandoned by all men, as if he had been the worst of men, and unworthy to breathe in the world. He was put in competition with a vile murderer for his life, and yet the murderer is preferred before him. Yea, his own chosen disciples, who had been eye-witnesses of his miracles, and ear-witnesses of his oracles, they turn their backs on him with the rest; one of them betrays him, another denies him, and all the rest forsake him. Behold how unworthy men buffet him, blindfold him, and spit on that beautiful face which angels behold with wonder. Behold how he was scourged, dragged up and down, affronted and mocked a whole night on your account, as if he had been the derision of wicked men and devils. Now the devil thought, if Christ was to be the elect's surety, and was to pluck them out of his claws, he should pay well for them ere he got them; and therefore many a wound and buffet got he: but content is our Redeemer to take all, to get his elect free and safe.

In the next place, behold how the heavy tree of the cross was laid and fastened on the sore and bleeding shoulders of our Saviour, and he obliged to carry it to the place of execution. Follow him in your thoughts, and see him wrestling under the weight, when going up mount Calvary: he carries it, till he can carry it no further, he is spent and founders under the load, yet desires no relief. Ascend mount Calvary, and there see the cross laid down upon the ground, and Christ, the blessed victim, laid down upon the cross, which was a rack as well as a death; see how he is racked and nailed to it by the bloody executioners. And then behold the cursed tree lifted up with the Lord of glory fastened to it, and fixed on the top of mount Calvary, as a sacrifice to justice for an elect world. Behold him ranked among malefactors, and hanging betwixt two thieves. Behold his hands and feet pierced and rent with nails, his glorious head covered with a crown of thorns, and his tender side run through with a spear. See how the thorns pierce his holy head; see how his precious blood trickles down from his many wounds; see how his royal visage turns pale; see how his head bows, and lies a-dying on his bleeding breast. Is not this an affecting sight?

Again, Consider the prodigious outward darkness that was on Christ during his passion on the cross for several hours together, to show the horrible inward darkness that was on his soul while the wrath of God acted against him as being the sacrifice for the world's sins. We read, that while Abraham was offering his sacrifice, Gen. xv. 12, the sun was going down, and an horror of great darkness fell upon him. So fared it with Christ while he offered himself a sacrifice for us. Now, the Lord revealed his wrath from heaven against the unrighteousness of the world, which was at this time laid on Christ. Our Redeemer lay under this darkness, to show that we should have suffered the horror of darkness for ever, even that blackness of darkness, which the apostle Jude speaks of. But, glory to God, the blackness of darkness caused by God's wrath for sin, was now laid on our Surety. Strange! God causeth his sun to shine upon the just and unjust, but on our Redeemer now it must not shine, as if, of all the unjust ones in the world, he were the most unjust, having the whole injustice of the elect laid to his charge. Oh! spotless Lamb of God! Innocent Redeemer of mankind! Most pure and just one, that never offended against the law! And, must thou be dealt with as the most unjust person that ever breathed in the world, because of the injustice of others? Now all the powers of earth and hell were let loose against our Redeemer: all these lions, bulls, dogs, and unicorns, were set upon him to tear him. And, was it not enough that earth and hell were against him, but must heaven set itself against him too, and declare its indignation by that visible sign of the horrible continued darkness. Oh, that was heavier and sharper to our Redeemer than all the rest of his sufferings: under the rest he was silent, but now he cannot hold his peace; and therefore sends forth that formidable loud cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" During the continuance of these three dark hours was Christ drinking the bitter cup; and now he comes to the bottom and bitterest dregs of it. Now were the invenomed arrows of the Almighty piercing him in the most sensible part; and therefore he must cry. O how justly then might he have cried out with Job, and with better ground too than he, Job xix. 21. "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me!" How truly might the husband now have taken up the spouse's lamentation, Lam. i. 12. "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce wrath!" Do but imagine what excessive pain and excessive torment he underwent both in soul and body, when he made this fearful outcry: and canst thou, O communicant, see such a tragedy acted on the bleeding Jesus with dry eyes? This sacrament is, as it were, a visible sermon on our Saviour's passion; in it we behold the whole tragedy that was acted on the cross. Here we view the whole circumstances of the barbarous malice of the Jews and Romans, against the innocent Son of God. And we should endeavour to be as much affected therewith, as if we had seen the same acted with our bodily eyes.

Moreover, Think now upon Chrits's cry upon the cross, when he said, *I thirst, I thirst.* No wonder he cried so, when there was a furnace of wrath kindled in his soul, a fire that dried up his strength and moisture like a potsherd, and made his tongue cleave to his jaws. A strange complaint! *I thirst*: the Creator is thirsting, and there is no creature to give refreshment. Strange! Might not one have cried, "O where were all the wells in Jerusalem at this time? Where all the fountains, rivers, and lakes in the world? Where all the vines of that fruitful land, when my Lord and Saviour could not get a drink? Fy upon you all, that would let glorious King Jesus be burnt up with thirst." O, but they might have answered, "We dare not own nor relieve him at this time: God hath laid an arrest on us, and we dare not break it to serve our master." How strange to hear the fountains and vines say, We will give Pilate and Herod, and all the enemies of Christ drink; but we will give Christ himself none, though he die for thirst! Oh, is there no liquor for precious Christ in all the earth, but bitter gall and vinegar to increase his thirst and

torment: not a cup of cold water for the Lord of glory, not a drop to cool his scorched tongue; but he must die crying out, *I thirst.* But O, if my Saviour had not thirsted on the cross, I had thirsted with Dives in hell; nay, all the elect had lien there in that lake of fire, and cried for ever, *I thirst, I thirst.*

And further, consider the extent and universality of his sufferings. He suffered in both natures. His Godhead indeed could not suffer grief, but it suffered an eclipse, and lay under a vail for thirty-three years, except one hour it broke out and shone on mount Tabor. He suffered in all his offices; for they mocked and ridiculed him as a prophet, despised and insulted him as a priest, abused and slighted him as a king, putting a mock sceptre in his hand, and arraying him with an old purple robe, mock habiliments of majesty. He suffered in all the powers and faculties of his soul, and in all the senses and members of his body: his head, heart, hands, back, sides, and feet, were all mangled and pierced, and no part of him free but his tongue, to pray for his enemies. He suffered in his outward goods; for what he had of this kind were his garments, and these were taken from him. Moreover, he was wounded in his name and reputation; for he suffered as a blasphemer against God, as a traitor against the Roman emperor, and as an enemy to Moses's law, though he was entirely innocent as to all the three. He suffered from all hands; from heaven, from earth, from hell; from Herod, from Pilate, from the High Priest; from the Romans, from the Jews, from the soldiers; from the clergy; from the lawyers; from rulers, from commons; from friends, from foes; from disciples, from strangers; all were against him: but, which was worst of all, God was against him too. For he being substitute in the room of sinners, God acted as an inexorable judge toward him; he smote him with the sword of justice, frowned on him in a terrible manner, and withdrew from him all the sensible feelings of his loving kindness, and restrained the influence of those beams which might any way refresh his troubled soul in the hour of his greatest need. So that there was never any sorrow like our Redeemer's sorrow.

Hence it was that he *offered up his supplications with such strong crying and tears*, Heb. v. 7. Hearken, O communicant, how Christ wept and sobbed in the garden, and how loud he cried on the cross, *Father, Father: mercy, mercy: my God, my God.* But, what a fray think you was there in heaven at this time?—Why? The Son of God weeping! The Creator of the earth crying and sobbing on the earth! Never was there such a commotion in heaven or earth, either before, or ever shall be after. What a stir was there among the angels, when their Lord was weeping, crying, and sobbing? How amazed were they, and intent upon the issue! Strange! might they say, *he that takes up the isles as a little thing*, crying so hideously at this time! He that can bear up heaven and earth with a finger, weeping! What can be the matter! Surely there was more than the tree on Christ's back, more than the thorns in his temples, or the nails in his hands and feet. Oh, there were the curses of God's law on the tree that Christ bore, which were heavier than ten thousand mountains of iron! The poison of God's wrath went in with the thorns and the iron nails, and entered into his very soul.

Christ's martyrs and sufferers have rejoiced in their sufferings, and sung praises under their tortures; and yet Christ, who is the author of their strength and comfort, doth himself complain and weep! Oh but all the martyrs' sufferings were nothing but flea-bitings to Christ's! They had God's presence with them in their trials; but Christ had God angry and withdrawn from him: nay, the Lord did run upon him as a giant, and made him the butt of his envenomed arrows. Hence it was, that our Lord, at the sight of his wrath, began to fear and be sore amazed, Mark xiv. 33. The word in the original language is *ekthambeisthai*, i. e. *to be astonished with terror.* To see millions of men despairing, is not so much as to see Christ beginning to fear. And O it was not a small fear that was on our Redeemer; no, it was a great fear and amazement. Never was any man so afraid of the torments of hell, as Christ (standing in our room) was of his Father's wrath; because never man knew the power of that wrath so well as he. O what anguish was there at Christ's heart, that made it to bleed without any outward violence, and that blood to burst through both flesh, skin and garments at once! The perfect knowledge which Christ had of things aggravated his sufferings: he did not shut his eyes when he drank the cup; no, he perfectly saw how dreggish and bitter it was, and yet he ventured on it. Many men fear not hell, because they do foresee it not; if they did see that pit open for them before they came at it, it might perhaps cause them tremble at their sins, and many wicked men might run mad at the horror of it: but Christ clearly foresaw all he met with, which was far greater and worse than the torments of any damned soul; and this made him to be amazed with fear.

Finally, consider how our Redeemer at last bowed his head, and gave up the ghost! Strange sight! to see the Lord of life death's prisoner! To see the princely head of Jesus falling down upon his breast! To see the Lord of life wanting life; to see these eyes, that were oft lift up to heaven in prayer, now waxed dim and fixed that they cannot move! To see that mouth, that spake as never man spake, now silent and not able to speak a word? An affecting sight! The world never saw the like! To see the fair corpse of glorious Jesus rolled in linen, and laid in a silent grave! To see him lying there dead, that raised Lazarus from the grave, to see him wanting life, that gave life to men and angels; and all for thy sake, O believing communicant!

And then, how moving were the circumstances of his passion! Remember how shamefully the Lord of glory was put to death, how he was stript and hung naked before all Israel, and before the sun. And, where was it? Even at Jerusalem, which he had honoured with his presence, taught with his preachings, astonished with his miracles, and bewailed with his tears. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem (said he) how oft would I have gathered you, but you would not! O if thou hadst known in this thy day!" &c. ——What place in Jerusalem was it? Without the gates of Calvary, among the stinking bones of vile malefactors. When was it? At the passover, a time of great concourse of all the Jews and proselytes: a time when they should receive the figure, they reject the substance; when they should kill and eat the sacramental lamb in faith and thankfulness, they kill the immaculate Lamb of God, our true passover, in cruelty and contempt.——With whom? Even in midst of two thieves, as if he had been the captain of thieves. How great was the disgrace and contempt that was poured on the glorious Redeemer of Israel!

Behold, he who thought it no robbery to be equal with God, is himself made equal with robbers and malefactors! Jeremy laments it, in Israel's case, as a piece of the most reproachful treatment, that princes were hung up by their hands, Lam. v. 12. Oh, thus was the Prince of the kings of the earth treated for our sakes; and, shall we not be deeply affected with it?

III. Another suitable subject of meditation at the Lord's table, is the willingness of our Redeemer to undergo all these sufferings for us. He was no-wise importuned or compelled, but most freely undertook to pay the elect's debt, Psal. xl. 7, 8. "Then, said I, Lo, I come, I delight to do thy will." As if he had said, "Father, I see no other is able to pay the debt of these poor bankrupts. The Levitical priests, for all the beasts they have killed, and all the sacrifices they have offered these many hundreds of years, they have not been able to pay so much as one farthing of the elect's debt to this day; it is all entirely owing still." "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not;" I see these will not do; but I know what will: then said he, "Lo, I come;" I'll be surety, and I will do the work effectually; but I must leave the glory of heaven for a time. Then farewell, Father, for thirty-three years; farewell, all my angels, and all my saints, till I come back again; I must go and relieve these perishing souls, and I will do it to purpose." The Lord saith to us, by that wise man Solomon, "Be not surety for any man:" but, saith Christ, though I give that advice to others, yet I will not take it to myself; I will be surety for many men, yea, for strangers, though my very garments should be taken away for it: my heart bleeds for them; I cannot see them thrown into an eternal prison, when I am able to pay their debt; I will go and pay it for them. Well, when the time came to pay the debt, did he begin to rue the bargain? When he found the debt great, and the payment heavy, did he shun his creditors, as many men do? No; he is as willing to pay the elect's debt, as God to exact it. "With desire," says he "have I desired to eat this passover;" because now the term of payment, which I long looked for, is come. One might have thought, for as frank as he is in undertaking, yet stay till he once taste the bitter cup he is to drink, he'll perhaps change his mind, and begin to shrink from it. No, no, the taste he had got of the cup's brim made him thirst the more earnestly for the very dregs of it, that he might get his poor elect put altogether beyond the danger of it, Luke xii. 50. "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?" It is a terrible black cloud that hangs over my peoples' heads; I long for its breaking upon me their Surety, that I may get them safe, and out of all hazard. And when Peter drew a sword to defend his master, and prevent his suffering: "hold thy hand (saith he to Peter) no swords; the cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? It is a bitter cup indeed. I find it from the large draught I have taken of it just now in the garden; but though it be bitter, yet it is just: I have undertaken it as the elect's Surety; and, Peter, will you hinder a man to pay his debt? What then would become of all my elect's souls, and of your soul among the rest? If this cup be death to me, it would be eternal damnation to you. I have legions of angels ready to rescue me, if I needed them; they are all looking on, and waiting my orders: but keep your posts, ye angels; come none of you to my assistance: let no man draw a sword, and let none of my disciples offer to interpose; for I am resolved to pay their debt, I will lay down my life for my sheep. Let Jonah then be cast into the sea, and ye shall be all safe." Oh, what a willing sacrifice was our Redeemer! He is content to swim in a sea of wrath for us the space of thirty-three years; and never desired deliverance till the sea is perfectly calm, and his elect out of hazard of being swallowed up.

Consider how he quickened the traitor Judas, and bade him make dispatch, when he was going about his bloody work. He sung a hymn when he was going to the garden to be apprehended. He cast himself in the persecutors way, goes forth to meet them, and boldly presents himself to them; and, as if they were too slow in apprehending him, he quickens them to it, by telling them twice over, he was the man they sought. And then remember how willing he was to let malefactors bands be laid on his innocent hands; hands that never did evil, hands that never stole any thing, that never shed blood; nay, hands that healed diseases, cured the lame, fed the hungry and loosed our fetters. But, what need was there for binding so willing a prisoner. He was to make no struggle, no resistance, but was like a lamb led to the slaughter, without opening his mouth. O, but he is willing to be bound for our sakes! Father, says he, bind me and loose them; let me be the ram caught in the thicket, slay me and save them. All their ills, all their debts, all their deserts be upon me; as Paul said to Philemon concerning Onesimus, Phil. 18. "If they have wronged thee, or owe thee ought, put that on my account;" charge it on me, take payment and satisfaction from me.

Again, when he was before the high priest accused, and witnesses against him, he would not say a word in his own defence; though they could prove nothing, yet he desired not to be released. Though he was entirely innocent of crime or fault before the world, yet he knew he was guilty by imputation and voluntary substitution, and therefore he holds his peace. Seeing he was liable before God as a surety, he would not hinder the payment, but willingly submits to the hardest conditions of our relief. Though wicked Pilate was convinced of his innocence, and sought to save his life, yet he sought it not himself: hence we read how Pilate scourged Christ very sore with sharp platted cords, and then brought him forth to the people, to see if their hearts would relent, when they saw him all bleeding, saying, *Behold the man:* surely (thinks Pilate) when they see his furrowed back and bloody shoulders, they will be ready to say, *Poor man, thou art ill enough handled already for any ill thou hast done.* But Oh, he knew no better: justice was not satisfied, and these hell-hounds were not satisfied, they must have his life, his heart's blood, or nothing. And your loving Saviour, O believer, says *Amen* to it, you shall have it, I will die, I will be a sacrifice for sin, I will satisfy my Father's justice to the uttermost, I will have my beloved bride out of danger; I will not leave one farthing of the debt for my people to pay.

Next, observe how willingly he took the heavy cross upon his bleeding shoulders to carry it to the place of execution, though his strength was very much spent already with watching, wrestling, buffeting, scourging and loss of blood. O what a sight do you think was our Lord Jesus going forth out of the gates of Jerusalem with his heavy cross and your sins on his back, and like to fall under the burden as he went! How weak was he in body, and weary in soul, ere he got to the top of mount Calvary? And what saw he before him as he was climb-

ing that mount? Nothing but a cursed death, and a black cloud of God's wrath. Yea, he had a load of wrath already on his back, that was far heavier than the cross he was bearing: oh, it was no wonder that he staggered, foundered, or fell under his burden; so that Simon the Cyrenian was compelled by his enemies to carry the light end of the tree behind him, lest he had died before he came to the top of the mount. But our loving Jesus, though he was spent and weary in his body, yet forward and willing was he in his mind to go and be made a sacrifice for us: and therefore up the mount will he go, though he sees justice, devils and wicked men at the top of it, waiting to fasten on him when he comes; but, seeing there was no other way to deliver his lost sheep, he will go and meet them. Well, O communicant, observe and take notice of your Saviour's steps, as he went up the mount, with the burden you laid upon his back, follow him all the way with an eye of faith: though it was cursedly heavy, yet how patiently doth he bear it. He complains not, he opens not his mouth: he will not bid you or any of the elect lend him a lift: for he knows you are not able to bear the least grain-weight of his burden; it would break your backs, and crush you to hell for ever: he will bear it all alone; only he will have you to notice him with the eye of faith, and to remember him with love and gratitude.

IV. Let the blessed effects and benefits of Christ's sufferings be the subject of your thoughts at this time. Hereby justice is satisfied, and believers are redeemed. The fire of divine anger is quenched, the mouth of hell stopt, the ocean of wrath dried up, the raging sea quelled, the roaring lion vanquished; the old serpent is unstinged, and his venemous head bruised; the law is disarmed of its thunders and curses, and its loud clamours against us silenced; our debts are paid, and discharge obtained; an angry God becomes a reconciled Father, and both grace and glory are purchased. Hereby our putrifying sores are cleansed, our deadly plagues cured, God's beautiful image restored, slaves of satan becomes sons of God, heirs of hell become heirs of heaven, rebels against heaven become favourites of God, and traitors get access to his throne. Hereby the gates of Paradise are opened, the flaming sword removed, glorious mansions prepared, and the crown of life purchased for believers. It was not for nought that our Redeemer groaned and wept, swate and struggled, bled and died. These great deliverances and mercies were deadly hard to bring forth. They put our Redeemer to cry out, to the amazement of angels, and horror of men, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But, now it is finished, his agony is over, the deliverance is wrought, and redemption is purchased: Justice now saith, "It is enough, I am fully satisfied with the Surety's payment, I demand no more;" the sacrifice is of a sweet smelling savour to me, and it perfumes all the elects persons and performances. Nay, so efficacious and acceptable were these sufferings, that the virtue of them reaches back to the beginning of the world, and extends forward to the end of it. God was so well pleased with them, that he accepted of them as a ransom for elect souls four thousand years before he endured them. The Surety's payment was so acceptable, that he took many thousands to heaven before the debt was paid, upon Christ's parole that he shall pay; for all the saints under the Old Testament went to heaven this way: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased;" this God declared from heaven again and again, *q. d.* "Many a time have the elect grieved me; many a provocation have their sins given me; yea, have their duties given me: but I am well pleased with my Son, their Surety hath satisfied me for them all."

V. You ought to meditate on the impulsive cause of Christ's suffering on his part. His free love was the only motive; it was this that caused him to take upon him the heavy burden of our sins, that would have sunk us into the bottomless pit. As often as we come to the Lord's table to partake of these elements, we should do it in remembrance of Christ's unspeakable and incomprehensible love to us: we should never perform this holy duty without admiration and astonishment at the thoughts of our Saviour's infinite love and undeserved compassion toward us, in that he laid down his life to save ours who had rebelled against him. Our Redeemer well knoweth the evil nature and disposition of man, that he is apt to forget his best friends, and to turn unthankful for the greatest benefits ever he received; and therefore he consults our eternal good, by injoining us to solemnize this ordinance in remembrance of that immense love he expressed towards us in his death and sufferings. Beside what I have formerly said of your meditating on and admiring the love of Christ before your coming to his table; I do exhort you, now you are at the table, to fall a wondering at it afresh, for this is most proper work for you at such a time.

"O the love of Christ that passeth knowledge?" Where shall I begin my thoughts on this subject? and when begun how shall I make an end? Thy love, Lord, is ancient; thou lovedst us first, and that when there was no eye to pity: thou tookest not on thee "the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham;" they are bound with chains of darkness whilst thou art drawing us with cords of love. Yea, thou lovedst us when enemies. To have spared our lives had been unexpected, undeserved mercy; for, "who finds his enemy, and lets him go well away?" But, Lord, thou hast found me in mine enmity, and hast pitied me; yea, when my hand was lifted up against thee, thine arms have been open to embrace me. Nay, thou hast opened thy very heart to lodge thy professed enemies who have trode thee under foot. Thy bowels yearned towards them who raked in them with their bloody hands. Thy heart burned with affection towards them that cruelly pierced it. "Herein Chrit hath commended his love to us, that while we were sinners Christ died for us." O astonishing love? that the general should die for the soldier, the physician for the patient, the master for the servant, the shepherd for the sheep, the innocent for the guilty, the just for the unjust, the prince for the rebel, the Lord of glory for the children of disobedience! He that was without all sin, for him that was without all righteousness; yea the Creator for creature, God for man, the righteous Judge for the condemned malefactor! O love without a parallel! For the Judge to put himself in the malefactor's cloathes and room, and suffer death for him! For the blessed Son of God to interpose his own innocent breast to receive these mortal wounds due to us! Behold God all-sufficient exposed to hunger and thirst, grief and weariness, reproach and indignities of all sorts! Behold the world's Saviour wounded, mangled, and killed by ungrateful man whom he came to save! Glorious Saviour, what love was this, that thou shouldst become "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;" that from the womb to the tomb, from the cradle to the cross, thy whole

life should be a continued martyrdom! That thou shouldest be content to be born among beasts, live among murderers, and die among thieves; and all to obtain a place among the blessed for us! O the unfathomable love of Jesus! His name is love, his nature is love, his words were love, and his actions were love. He preached love, he practised love, he lived in love, he was sick of love, nay, he died for love." The apostle might well call it a known unknown love, Eph. iii. 19; we may feel it, but O we cannot fathom it. Jacob shewed great love to Rachel, in his enduring the heat by day, and the frosts by night for her: but our lovely Bridegroom showed far greater love to his spouse in undergoing the cursed, painful and shameful death of the cross for her. It is reported of the pelican, that when her young ones are stung with some poisonous serpent, she beats her breast with her beak, till the warm blood gusheth out, which they suck and recover: we are all stung mortally by the old serpent the devil; but behold the love of our heavenly Pelican, he let out his heart's blood to recover us.

O communicant, remember his love, seeing he requires it at this time, *Do this in remembrance of me.* O remember Christ, for he did not forget you. He minded you at his last supper, he made his testament and put you in it, and left every believer a good legacy. At his death he minded you more than he minded himself. In his last prayer he put up many a petition for you, but few for himself. In the garden, on the cross, and in the grave, his poor lost sheep were still in his mind; he minded you both day and night; many a night's sleep took Christ's sheep from him, thinking on them, and pleading for them. O that was a remarkable night's sleep that Christ wanted, when he swate blood in the garden for you; that was a night never to be forgotten; think on it now. When wanted you a night's sleep for Christ thinking on his love, wondering at his sufferings, and pleading for an interest therein? O seek to make it up now, and say, "O the breadth and length, O the height and depth of the love of Christ! Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? What is he, that thou shouldst magnify him, and set thy heart upon him?" Strange! that thou shouldst set thine heart upon wretches, so as to give the glorious Son of thy love to suffer all the curses of the law, and vials of thy wrath; to make us, who are children of wrath, yea, heirs of the curse, and fire brands of hell, to become children of God, heirs of the blessing, and of eternal life! Surely, while you are thus musing on the love of God, your hearts, like David's, should wax hot within you, and the fire should burn; nay, the flame of love to God should break out in the most lively and active manner; now your *spikenard should send forth the smell thereof;* now the sweet odour of your graces should fill all the house.

VI. The evil of sin, which was the procuring cause of Christ's suffering, should also be the subject of your thoughts at the Lord's table. He had no sin of his own, but our sins were laid upon him; and divine justice finding them there, took vengeance on our surety to the uttermost. Oh Lord, our sins were the principal actors of that woeful tragedy; they were the traitors which by the hands of Judas delivered him up to be crucified: Pilate, the Jews, the Romans, were but the executioners of our sins. Our sins, with clamours more importunate than all the Jewish rabble, cried out, *Crucify him, crucify him.* What foolish inconsistent creatures are we, that bewail the event, but redress not the cause! Alas! we naturally have as great enmity against his image, as they had against his person: they grieved him in his body, we in his spirit: they opened his wounds, we made them bleed a-fresh. Neither had they got the least power to touch him, if it had not been for our sins that made him obnoxious to wrath.—Oh, who was it that armed the Jews and Romans against him? Who put the sword in justice's hands? Who forced these groans and bloody sweats from my Redeemer? Ah, who but I? My sins, my pride, my unbelief, my atheism, my covetousness, my malice, my lying, cheating, swearing, sabbath-breaking, &c. These raised the storm of wrath against my Surety. Blame not Judas, Herod or Pilate, the Jews or Romans, so much as my sins: nay, I am the Judas that betrayed him, the Herod that mocked him, the Pilate that condemned him, the executioner that drove in the nails, the soldier that pierced him.

O my soul, behold thy Saviour now hanging on the cross for thy sins, and yet saying, *Weep not for me* that endure this torture, *but weep for yourself* that causeth it; behold the cruelty of thy sins. Look through the gaping wounds into my heart, pierced first by love, next by sorrows, and then by a spear for you. Be persuaded what an evil and bitter thing sin is to me; see how it rakes unto my side, and tears my very heart: canst thou love or harbour that which used me thus? You say you are my friends; and, will you not take my part against this deadly enemy? Have not all these wounds mouths enough to persuade you to hate sin? Oh will you hug my enemy, tear open my wounds, and crucify me a-fresh? O communicants, let your hearts answer, "No, Lord, I will never requite thy kindness so, I'll never account that light, which made my Saviour's soul heavy unto death; that shall not be sweet to me that was so bitter to him; that shall never be my joy, that made Christ a man of sorrows: O shall not these sins be forsaken of me, that made him be forsaken of God? Shall ever they be suffered to live in me, that would not suffer Christ to live in the world?"

O what stupid creatures are we, if we do not now stand astonished at the heinousness and hideousness of our sins, for which no atonement could be made but by the bitter passion and agonies of the Son of God! Shall we not say, surely there must be more in sin than men commonly reckon? It could be no small matter for which the beloved Son of God endured such horrible and dreadful torments. O heavy dead weight of my sins, that pressed down my strong Redeemer to the ground; yea, pressed him down, who upheld the whole fabric of the creation by the word of his power, Heb. i. 3. and, without the least pain, could have borne millions of worlds more! O bitter and cursed sin, thou shalt be crucified this day, that crucified my innocent Saviour! Couldst thou ever have been guilty of a more horrid deed than murdering of the Lord of glory? I will not rest this day, till I have revenged my Saviour's blood upon thee: say now of sin, as the church said of the daughter of Babylon, that enemy and persecutor of Christ mystically, Psal. cxxxvii. 8, 9. "O daughter of *Babylon*, who art to be destroyed, happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served Christ: happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

VII. Think on the holiness and justice of God manifested against sin, and adore the same at this time. You have other mirrors and bright looking-glasses in scripture for representing the same to you, such as the casting down

the angels from heaven, the drowning the old world, the burning of Sodom, the rejection of the Jews! But none of them so clearly show forth sin's evil, and God's spotless holiness, and inexorable justice against sin, as do the death and sufferings of our Redeemer. Come near, and hearken to the raging billows of God's indignation dashing against the Rock of our salvation, and behold God's implacable hatred against sin. Many a sore storm and hurricane of wrath did he endure, to keep the sea of divine wrath from overflowing you. Our Rock groaned, trembled, and swate blood; he cried, prayed, and intreated: yet divine Justice would not hear, nor abate him one stripe: "awake, O sword of the Lord," cut him off; let him die, saith justice, seeing he stands surety for man's sins. O here is a greater evidence of the inexorableness of justice, and God's implacable wrath against sin, than if he had hurled all the rocks of the creation into the midst of the sea, or the whole world, full of men and angels, into hell. O you that make light of sin, go to the rock in Horeb, go to Gethsemane, go to mount Calvary, go to a communion-table, and see what Christ endured for our sins, hear his heavy groans, and behold the blood standing above his garments. O communicant, tremble at sin, and come under the shadow of this rock, run into the clefts of it; and, though you hear the roarings, and dashings of this terrible sea upon your rock, yet you are safe here, a drop shall not reach you.

Finally, you ought at this time to have some thoughts of the "marriage-supper of the Lamb" above, whereof this table is an emblem and representation. Here in the wilderness we get a foretaste of the good things of the promised land, to sharpen our appetites after the Canaan above, where these first-fruits do grow and are fully ripe. O what a glorious and well-furnished table will that be, where the church of the first-born will be all gathered in one general assembly, and sit down together with Christ! Oh where are the looks and longings we should have after that heavenly feast! Awake, my soul, from this dark, deceitful and vexing world: Oh be not in love with thy disease, thy fetters, and calamities: join not with those that take up their rest on this side Jordan, on this side heaven, and who say, It is good for us to be here; but with these heavenly pilgrims, who say, Arise, let us depart, this is not our rest, for it is polluted. Lament your distance from God: woe is me that I sojourn in Meshech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar; that I remain in this sinful polluting place among a strange people, and am so long kept from my Father's house above. "O that I had wings like a dove! Then would I fly away, and be at rest: lo, then I would wander far off, and remain in the wilderness," that I might be free from sin's snares and temptations, and might have free access to enjoy God. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death, which so often troubles, disturbs, entangles, and hinders me from my duty?"

So much for the subjects we ought to meditate on at the Lord's table, I come, in the next place,

Secondly, To speak of those graces which are to be employed and exercised at the Lord's table; such as, faith, repentance, love, spiritual appetite, and thankfulness. Now is the time, O communicant, that all your graces should be stirred up to the greatest liveliness: and therefore do all you can to excite them to it: chide with them when languishing or dull, and say, "What, can ye not watch with my dearest Saviour one hour?"

I. In the first place: the grace of faith should be most active, for it is most necessary at this time. Faith may say to thee, O communicant, at the table, as Christ said to his disciples, "Without me ye can do nothing." Faith is the eye that sees Christ, the hand that receives him, the mouth that feeds upon him. Let faith's eyes be now opened to see the great sight of Christ crucified on the cross. Do now as Moses, when he saw the bush burning, Exod. iii. 3. "I'll turn aside and see this great sight:" surely you cannot see a greater. Behold the rock of our salvation smitten, to let the water of life come forth to us: come and see him smitten by the rod of Moses, i. e. by the rod of the law, whose minister Moses was; with all the curses and maledictions of the law denounced against us, Gal. iii. 13. Yea, come see him smitten by many hands, by the rod of Moses, by the rod of justice, by the rod of devils, by the rod of the Jews, by the rod of the Romans, by the rod of your sins: come, see him smitten in his head with thorns, in his hands with nails, in his side with a spear, in his heart with sorrows, yea, in his whole soul with the wrath of an angry God. O deep, deep was our rock smitten, before the water of life could come forth to heal us; according to Isa. liii. 5, 8. "He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities:—for the transgression of my people was he stricken, and by his stripes we are healed."

Now let faith look sharply out for Christ at the table. Rest not in the bread and wine, but look beyond these; go a little further, and see if you can espy Christ himself. Let the language of your heart at this time be, "Saw ye him whom my soul loved? Say now to the Lord, as the Greeks to Philip, "Sir, we would see Jesus; Lord, I would now desire to see Jesus Christ: neither the word nor prayers, ministers nor elements, will content me without a sight of Christ. Mind what Isaac told his father on mount Moriah: "father, behold here is the wood and the fire; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" So do thou look up at the table to thy heavenly Father, and say, "Father, behold, here is the minister, here is the word, here is the bread and wine; but, where is the body and blood of my Saviour? Where is the lamb for a sacrifice? Father, where is the lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world?" Alas, all is nothing to me if he be away. Let faith look up and say to Christ, "Make haste, my beloved, be thou like a roe or a young hart on the mountains of spices. Make no tarrying, C my God; O when wilt thou come to me?

When Mary came to the sepulchre, looked in and saw the linen but not the Lord, she presently falls a weeping: Oh, said she, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him:" my Lord is taken away, and I know not where to find him. When our tender hearted Saviour heard such a moving and mournful complaint, he hastened to her, and gave her a gracious meeting. So, when thou seest the linen and the elements, but not the Lord Jesus, then be not satisfied, but dart up thy complaints to heaven. "Lord, I came not to see the linen, I came not for the bread and wine, but I came to see Jesus; Oh Lord, what shall I do? They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where to find him. ' Ah, what is the word to me without Christ, but as a conduit without water? What are the elements to me, but as a cup without wine? Oh Lord, what wilt thou give me, if I go from thy table Christless? O, if there were such sights, such breathings coming from thy heart, thou mightest be confident Christ would hear them, and make haste to meet with thee and bless thee.

Awake faith, O communicant, at this time; behold Christ, apply his benefits. Here a believer may find enough in the wounds and blood of Christ, by which he may resolve all his doubts, scatter his fears, supply all his spiritual wants, and find a remedy against all his soul-distempers, by a believing application thereof to himself. When thou puttest forth the hand of thy body, see that thou also put forth the hand of thy faith, to receive the body and blood of Christ. Do like Joseph of Arimathea; come to Christ crucified, take him down from the cross, and lay him in the new tomb of thy heart. Now give a hearty, full and unfeigned consent to Christ on the gospel terms; receive him as thy Saviour, submit to him as thy prince, and swear allegiance to him as thy undoubted Sovereign. And remember, faith, if true, must have two hands, one to receive Christ, and another to give the soul to Christ; see that both hands be now employed, both to take and give.

And, especially, make use of faith's mouth to suck honey from the rock, derive supplies from Christ to thy soul's necessities. Observe what God directed Moses, Exod. xvii. 6. "Behold I will stand before thee upon the rock in Horeb, and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink." Would you have drink and supplies from Christ for your spiritual refreshment, then smite the rock, act faith on Christ. At the table, it would be a man's wisdom, which was Moses his error, to smite this rock oftner than once, Numb. xx. 11. "With his rod he smote the rock twice, and the waters came out abundantly." So do you smite the rock twice, again and again; put forth many acts of faith at this time.

II. The grace of repentance and godly sorrow for sin, should be exercised at this time. O communicant, canst thou now look on him whom thou hast pierced by thy sins, and not mourn and be in bitterness for them? Canst thou see the son of God hanging naked and bleeding on a tree, upon the tob of Mount Calvary, as a sacrifice for thy sins, and not be greived for the cause? O take a fixed look of him now, and let your eye affect your heart. Behold these hands that swayed the sceptre of heaven, now nailed to the tree of reproach: behold these feet that trampled on all the powers of hell, and made his enemies his footstool, now nailed to the footsool of the cross. O did the earth tremble and shake, the rocks rend, the graves open, and heavens turn dark at this sight; and, will not our rocky hearts rend, and our dead souls be affected with this sight? Surely the hardest heart among us may now melt, and the dryest eyes now drop a tear. O, shall the Son of God so sweat and bleed for us, and we not weep for ourselves? Shall we see our sins pierce his head with thorns, his hands with nails, and his side with a spear, and yet look on this with unpierced hearts? Oh, our sins did envenom these thorns, these nails, and that spear. We, and none but we, were the evil beast that devoured this Joseph; we the bloody executioners that tormented the glorious Redeemer; and shall not our hearts bleed therefore?

O communicant, so behold Christ in the sacrament, as the Virgin Mary his mother beheld him on the cross: woman, says Christ, "behold thy son." And how did she behold him; Simeon tells her, Luke ii. 35. "That a sword shall pierce through her soul." Now was the time that the sword did pierce through her soul, when she beheld him pierced on the cross: that sight was like a sword through her heart: so, when you see Christ pierced in the sacrament, it should be like a sword or dagger in your hearts. Observe what David said, when he saw the people slaughtered by the angel's sword, 2 Sam. xxiv. 7. "Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but as for these sheep, what have they done!" So say you at this time, "Lord, I have sinned, I have done wickedly; but as for this innocent spotless Lamb, what hath he done?" It is I that have sinned, but it is thou, O Lord Jesus, that hast suffered. It was my cursed lusts, my unbelief, my pride, my malice, my covetousness, &c. These were the Judases that betrayed thee, these the Jews that put thee to death; I have eaten the sour grapes, but thy teeth were set on edge. O what a sweet temper were it to behold Christ with a weeping eye and a melting heart! Oh, shall we not so much as shed tears for these sins, for which we see Christ shedding his blood?

It was laid to the charge of these unkind husbands, Mal. ii. 13. that by their unkindnesses they caused their wives, when they should have been cheerful in God's service, to "cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and with crying out; insomuch that he regarded not the offering any more, nor received it with goodwill at their hands." But, how happy were it for us, if we could be so affected with our unkindness to Christ our husband, that we could cover the Lord's table with our tears, with weeping and crying out? Then surely, in this case, the Lord would regard our service the more, and receive our communicating with good will at our hands. Ah, rocky hearts! harder than the nether-millstone, that cannot dissolve into tears at the sight of so sad a spectacle as the sight of Christ hanging crucified on the cross for our sins. Oh, shall we see Christ's precious blood spilt on the earth, running on the ground, and the ground drinking it up, and our hearts not rend therefore? O let us call for tears, for mourning hearts, and say, "O that mine head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep for a slain Lord!" Smite, Lord; thou canst bring water out of the rocks, and turn the flint into a standing pool. O that my flinty heart may be touched by the spirit of God, that the waters may gush out abundantly! Oh, when will my heart melt, if not now? Surely, now, "Deep calleth unto deep;" *deep sufferings* in Christ for *deep sorrow* in me. David's kindness made even a Saul lift up his voice and weep; and will not Christ's kindness, which is infinitely greater, make me drop some silent tears? Was my Saviour's body broken to let his blood out; and shall not my heart be broken to let it in? May I now receive a bleeding Saviour with a broken heart!

III. Love is a grace most necessary at this feast, Christ's infinite love should now have a return of love from you; surely now, when you are musing on Christ's love, your heart, like David's, should burn. O believer, Christ died of love to you! and, will you not be so much as sick of love to him? It would be a sweet and comfortable sickness to you to be sick of love to him, who died of love to you. You are now come to the fountain of love, you are now at Christ's pierced side, O look in and see his bleeding heart; see how it beats and pants with love, and see how love flows out in streams of blood, to cleanse you from your sins. And, will not this lovely sight melt your affections, and warm your cold heart to love him? O behold princely Jesus, the world's Saviour, our lovely Bridegroom, mounted on a bloody cross upon the top of mount Calvary, for all nations to see him and flock to him: O what an enga-

ging sight is this! Since that mount was first created, it never produced such a tree, or such precious fruit as the Lord of glory hanging on the tree of the cross planted there. This tree of life made mount Calvary a lovely paradise that day, notwithstanding of all the malefactors' bones which lay scattered upon it.

Now, communicants, can you look upon such a sight, and not have your hearts inflamed with love? Surely a crucified Jesus lift upon the cross, with his arms stretched out to embrace lost sinners, is the most drawing and attractive sight in the world; for he saith himself, John xii. 32. "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me," i. e. all sorts of men, both Jew and Gentile. A crucified Jesus is a loadstone of strange virtue, and hath drawn some thousands of iron hearts to him at one sermon. Now he is lift on high, upon the pole of the cross, and of the sacrament, that you may look to him. Yea, his face and eyes are towards you; O look communicants; and his voice is, "Behold me. behold me: Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth." Poor sinners of Scotland, of Britain, one of the far off islands and outmost end of the earth; I have turned my back on the Jews, for they will not be drawn to me; and my face towards you, that you may see me and may flock to me.

O will not your hearts be moved and drawn by this lovely sight of a crucified Redeemer, dying with love in his heart, and smiles in his looks towards you? He was most lovely when he was on the cross; and now he is most lovely when he is on the throne. O behold King Jesus with the crown of thorns, wherewith his enemies crowned him, in the day he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief for you; doth not that sight affect your hearts with grief, and make you sad? Then come, behold king Solomon with the crown of glory, wherewith his father crowned him, when he finished his work, and sat down on the right hand of his majesty on high. Now he is clothed with light, and shines brighter than the sun: Oh will not your hearts love him, whom all the angels and saints in heaven do adore, and are ravished with his beauty! His high honour and exaltation above doth not in the least alter his affections, or make him forget his people; no, he loves all believers as dearly as ever. How oft doth he call them in the song, "My sister, my spouse!" The nearest affinity in the world is spouse, and the nearest consanguinity is sister, to show that Christ's affection is like that of the nearest relations; and, shall not Christ's great love be answered with love again? O never give Christ cause to complain of you, as Paul of the Corinthians, "The more I love you, the less I am beloved," 2 Cor. xii. 15.

O then awake and excite your love now to Christ, and say, "Lord thou art infinitely lovely, though my heart loves thee not as it ought to do: lovely and amiable art thou in all the steps of thy humiliation: lovely in thy birth, lovely in thy life, lovely in thy death: lovely with the crown of thorns on thy head, and lovely with the cross on thy back; lovely in the garden, and lovely on mount Calvary; lovely with the nails in thy hands, and lovely when the spear was thrust in thy side. And lovely art thou now with the crown of glory on thy head; nay, thou art altogether lovely." O for more love to my lovely Saviour! The apostle, when ravished with the love of Christ, cries out, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be Anathema Maranatha. O what a cold unnatural heart must that be, that hath no love to this lovely One! O communicant, love him now, when you have seen such an engaging sight of his love: love him dearly, love him entirely, love him above all, love him more than all. And if you love him, then keep his commandments, delight to please him, love his ordinances, love his Spirit, love his commands, love his people, and love his very cross for his sake.

IV. At this time you ought to awake and excite your spiritual appetite after Christ and the benefits of his death. You are come to a full feast, an inexhaustible treasure, and the Master of it allows you to partake thereof to the full? There is nothing wanting, then, but a lively feeling of wants, and spiritual hunger; had you this, all would be well; for Christ fills the hungry with good things. If there be any poor drooping communicants at the table, who are discouraged under a sense of their poverty and emptiness, I may say to them, as Jacob to his drooping sons in a time of great scarcity of food, Gen. xlii. 12. "Why do ye look upon one another?" Ye are poor melancholy creatures, all involved in the same calamity and distress; ye may well look to one another, but one of you cannot help another. Well, I have good news to tell you, as Jacob told his sons: "Behold I have heard there is corn in Egypt," there is bread enough in your father's house, sufficiency of grace in Christ Jesus for all your wants. O drooping communicant, take heart, and hasten to your brother Joseph; your elder brother Christ is Lord of the country, and hath the command of all the store-houses in the land; he will fill your sacks as much as one can carry. Are thy wants many! He has infinite wealth. Hast thou no money to buy, no worth to purchase! Good news! He sells "without money and without price: whosoever will, may come and drink of the water of life freely." Poor soul, camest thou hither for bread? Thy gracious Saviour will not give thee a stone. He took notice of thy serious preparation for the feast; and, do you think he will frustrate thine expectation at it? Can you give any instances, that ever he sent any hungry soul empty away? No; this would be contrary to his faithful promise. I may say to thee, as the disciples said to the blind man, "Be of good cheer, he calleth for thee;" and, if he call for thee, he will not send thee empty away. Come away then, hungry soul, to a full Redeemer, and get all your wants supplied, your desires satisfied. What would you have? "What is thy petition, and what is thy request?" Would you have riches, honours, profits, pleasures? You have them all here. Would you have all your five senses satisfied at once? Come, partake of the feast your Redeemer hath provided for you. Would you have your sense of seeing satisfied? Then, saith he, look unto me, behold me, your dying yet ever-living Saviour. Would you have your sense of hearing satisfied? Then, saith he, "Incline your ear and hearken to me;" hear the sweet charming voice of your Saviour on the cross, saying, "It is finished." Would you have your sense of tasting satisfied? Then, saith he, "O taste and see that God is good." Would you have the sense of touching satisfied? O then, says he, "Reach hither thy finger, and feel the print of the nails; reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side." Would you have the sense of smelling satisfied? Then come to him, "Whose garments smell of myrrh, aloes and cassia; and whose name is like ointment poured forth." O what a matchless person is this, that can so richly supply all your needs? I tell you again, if you go away without supply, it will be for want of a lively

sense of your needs, and of panting desires after Christ and his fulness.

Awake, holy desires and thirstings of soul, and say, Lord. "Let not the needy be forgotten, nor the expectation of the poor perish for ever." Let not a thirsty soul perish at the wells of salvation. O happy were I, if at this time I could get a sealed pardon of my sins! "O blessed is he whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sin is covered!" Lord, whatever thou deny me in the world, do not deny me this choice blessing. O for a token for good at this time of Christ's own hand! May I receive a plentiful effusion of the graces of his Spirit into my heart. O that my lusts and corruptions may be mortified and subdued! May I be enabled to do all my duties better than I have done. May I be more watchful over my heart, my tongue, and all my ways, than ever I have been: O that my soul may depart much bettered, much revived, comforted and strengthened, from this holy ordinance!

V. Awake your thankfulness to God at this time for redeeming love; join with the Psalmist, and say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift: what shall I render unto the Lord for all his gifts and benefits unto me? Let me speak of the glorious honour of his Majesty, and declare his wondrous works." You should now be in Mary's frame, to sing and say, as in Luke i. 46. "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit doth rejoice in God my Saviour:" and in Zechariah's frame, to say with him, Luke i. 68. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people." The ancients called the Lord's supper still the Eucharist, *i. e.* the thanksgiving, because the great design of it is to keep up the thankful remembrance of God's redeeming love; and believers in partaking of it should, with their whole souls, give thanks unto God for his unspeakable gift, and sing glory to God in the highest. And, for our example herein, our Redeemer both began this institution with the giving of thanks, and singing hymns of praise. The Jews at their passover did sing the cxiii. Psalm, with the five following psalms, which they called the great Hallelujah. A Christian should in every thing and at all times give thanks; but at the sacrament the great Hallelujah must be sung. If ever the heart be tuned for the work of praise, it should be now; for greater matter for it you cannot have on this side of heaven, than at this occasion. The great exhortation the ancients gave at the communion-table was, *Sursum corda*, up with your hearts, communicants; elevate them to God in thankfulness and praise. Invite the angels and the whole creation to help you to bless God for Jesus Christ the mercy of mercies.

Some further Meditations on the Sacramental Elements, Actions and Words.

BESIDES what I have said, the sacramental elements, actions and words, may afford suitable subject of meditation to communicants while they sit at the Lord's table, and may be improven for the quickening and upstirring of the sacramental graces above mentioned. And here I shall give some few instances for the assistance and direction of weaker Christians.

When you see the elements of bread and wine set upon the table, think on Christ's goodness and condescension in appointing these outward signs to confirm your faith, and excite your affections: they are not costly things, Christ would not be burdensome to his people with any of his ordinances. Think how fitly they represent the body and blood of our Redeemer. Bread, ere it be fit to nourish us, must be first sown and die in the earth; then it must be threshen, grinded in the mill, baken in the oven, broken and eaten: so Christ, that he might be a fit Saviour to us, was content to die, and be bruised for our sins, and scorched in the oven of his Father's wrath. Bread is the most necessary thing in the world; it strengthens man's heart; it is the staff that upholds his life: so Christ is the mercy of mercies, the most useful and necessary blessing to our starving souls. Wine, ere it be fit for our use, must be squeezed out of the grape, and this must be trodden and bruised in the wine press: so Christ was crushed in the wine-press of his Father's wrath, till the blest juice of his body, his precious blood, did gush out in abundance for the redemption of our souls. No liquour so fit as wine for cheering the fainting spirits, Psal. civ. 15. so there is nothing can refresh the drooping soul so much as the blood of Christ.

Though bread and wine be common things of themselves, yet they are highly valuable in respect of their significancy and ends. A little wax, though in itself of small value, yet when affixed to a charter, it serves to confirm our right and title to a great inheritance: so these elements, when consecrated and given to us by Christ's ambassadors, are to us a seal of God's covenant and confirm our title to all Christ's purchase.

When we see the minister take the bread, think how God did chuse and take Christ from among men to be our Mediator, and a sacrifice for our sins.

When the minister sets apart, blesses, and consecrates the bread, think how God set apart and sent his Son, sanctified and furnished with all gifts and graces needful to his mediatory office.

When you see the consecrated bread and wine exposed to open view, think how God in his infinite mercy "hath set forth Jesus Christ as a propitiation through faith in his blood," Rom. iii. 25. Behold how "evidently Christ crucified is set forth before your eyes." Behold the lamb opening the seals, the seal of God's covenant, the seal of God's treasures, the seal of the fountain of life, and the seal of heaven's gates; all which were shut before, till Christ came to open them. Suppose now you hear that voice, Rev. vi. "Come and see." Open the eyes of faith, and see a great sight. What is to be seen here? You may, O communicant, see here the heinous nature of sin, the severity of divine justice, the misery of the damned, the deservings of unbelievers: you may see the devil conquered, justice satisfied, a flame of love kindled in Christ's heart that many waters could not quench: you may see the clefts of the rock opened, and a sanctuary found out: you may see the preciousness of souls, the price of pardon, and the worth of heaven. Christ's body and blood, which were given for them, do shew that they are things of no small value.

When you see the elements, you have cause to bless God, and rejoice at the sight of this precious sign and seal of God's covenanat of grace and salvation. We should rejoice to see the rainbow in the cloud, a sign of God's covenant, and promise to secure the world against a destroying deluge: much more should we joy to see the sign of God's confirming his covenant with believers, securing them against

the overflowing of God's wrath. If it still rained, and never a rainbow appeared, we might have reason to fear: so, if we never saw this ordinance and seal of God's covenant, we might suspect danger: but, O believer, you see God is faithful and willing to keep covenant; there is the rainbow appearing; a pleasant sight to a guilty sinner.

When you see the minister lay his hand on the bread, lift up your soul and pray, "That God may lay his hand on your diseased soul, that all your distempers may depart from you: Lord, lay hold on my soul, as the angel did upon Lot; save me from the flames of wrath, cause me to escape out of Sodom into the mount of God, and clefts of the rock, that I perish not."

When you see the bread broken, think on the breaking and tormenting of Christ's body, and the bruising of his soul for our sins. He suffered a double death, one in his soul, and another in his body; he suffered from men and devils: but all that was nothing to what he suffered from his Father; for, when men were wounding his body, the the Father's hand bruised his soul, made a thousand wounds therein, and poured in a whole ocean of wrath upon him: he brake him with breach upon breach, and overwhelmed him with one wave of vengeance upon the back of another, till all his billows went over him. This was a sad time to our Saviour: yet all these floods could not drown his love to us, nor make him quit the grip he had taken of us, but, come of him what will, his poor people must not perish; his love to them flamed highest when his sufferings were greatest.

You should, at this time, desire to be in the same frame, as if you had been at Golgotha standing at the foot of the cross, and had seen the blood trickling down, and heard all the dying groans of the Lamb of God. O shall we see the blessed Son of God, the brightness of his Father's glory, with his eyes dim, his cheeks wan, his face pale, his head bowing, his heart fainting, his side bleeding, his wounds open to shelter us, and his love streaming forth in blood to us; I say shall we see all this, and our affections not raised, our love not kindled, and our hearts not concerned! O what a monstrous thing will it be, to see our affections and graces at the lowest ebb, when there is a high stream-tide of the love and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ flowing towards us!

Take a view of Jesus, on the cross breathing forth love to us, when he was breathing forth his last: let us look streightly and stedfastly to him as he did to us. Many write, that he was crucified with his face toward the west: the Jews did it out of despite, as reckoning him unworthy to look on the temple and holy city that stood on the east of mount Calvary; but he had a gracious meaning and design to us thereby, and now was that word remarkably fulfilled, Psal. lxvi. 7. "His eyes behold the nations:" for now his eyes looked to us Gentiles, when he was upon the cross; and O it was an eye of love and pity he cast then upon us: and shall not this encourage us to lift up an eye of faith to him upon the cross for healing and salvation? Especially seeing he calls us to do it, Isa. xlv. 22. "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." And it is to be observed, that Christ in this call hath a special eye to us in Scotland, who were then Gentiles, and are likewise among the ends of the earth. O shall we, in this land and corner of the world, have such a loving invitation to look to a crucified Saviour for mercy, and will we neglect it? Behold his arms stretched out to embrace you, and will you not desire to flee into them? Behold him bowing his head on the cross, to take a view of your wounds, and whisper comfort into your ears: behold him opening a window in his side to take you into his heart, and pouring out blood thence to redeem you, and water to cleanse you, a fountain both for your justification and sanctification.

Again, when you see the bread broken, look to Christ's wounds as an open city of refuge for thy soul that is pursued by justice to take sanctuary in: his wounds are laid open, that you may see into his bleeding heart, and see his yearning bowels of mercy, and hear them sounding towards you, an object of pity and spectacle of misery. Poor shelterless soul, quit all other shelters, and flee to the clefts of the rock here opened, saying, "This is my rest, and here I will stay,"

Pray at this time, "Lord, may my hard heart be broken and melted, that I may in some measure be conformed to my broken Saviour:" or, "Lord, break the united forces of my sins, and scatter them by thy mighty arm."

When you see the minister offering the bread to the communicants, and hear him saying, "Take ye, eat ye," &c. think how freely God offers his Son, and Christ offers himself to be ours: think how you see him at the head of the table, making offer of himself to you, saying, "Take me, and the whole purchase of my blood; take my sealed testament, and all the legacies in it; take a sealed pardon of all your sins, and a sealed right to eternal life."

When you receive the bread into your hand, see that you stretch forth the hand of faith to receive and embrace Christ crucified, as your bleeding High-priest, to make atonement for you; say with your heart, "Content, Lord, even so I take thee, and seal a covenant with thee, I clasp about thee as mine; I believe, Lord, help my unbelief." If Christ be not received by faith in this ordinance, there is nothing done but what is ill. O will you come to this table and receive the bread of the Lord and not receive the bread, the Lord? O it will be sad, it will be bitter at death, or judgment; when you come to die, you will cry, "Lord, receive my soul:" well, may not Christ answer you, "I will just receive your soul as you received my body in the sacrament, when you was intreated, and that was not at all?" O then consider what Christ has done for you, and the absolute necessity you stand in of him, and receive him into your souls. O will you not accept of a bruised Lord, a bruised friend, when he is knocking, with the cross on his back, the nails in his hands, and spear in his side! Can you find in your hearts to hold him at the door, in this posture? Will you not open your hearts to him, who opened his side to you?

When you are making use of this bread, praise and magnify God for providing this heavenly manna, to keep your soul from perishing: bless him for this feast, and feed on it that you may live: apply Christ and his benefits for the nourishing your souls, and strengthening your graces: bless him for this noble contrivance and undertaking. Rejoice in Christ, that hath found out a way, by his death, to reconcile an angry God to you, and procure you access to his table, that you may feast with him. With what joy and thankfulness did the Israelites go forth to gather manna; that bread which God sent them from heaven: out, O, here is a better manna come from heaven; will ye not be thankful for it, and run with desire to get it? The Israelites' manna could not give life to the dead; but here is manna

that can restore and preserve life both; yea, give everlasting life to both soul and body. The Israelites' manna fell not on the Sabbath, and they might not go to gather it that day: but, blessed be God, this manna falls every day, and double on the Sabbath, and welcome are ye to gather it this day; for Christ now rains it in greater plenty, and calls you to be more diligent on it than on other days. His table is well furnished with manna this day: O feed and refresh your souls well before you leave it, and strive to preserve the relish of it when you are gone. Cry now with these, John vi. 34. "Lord, evermore give us this bread." This bread both satisfies the soul, and creates an appetite; O for a perpetual hunger for it! It is the same bread the glorified saints do feed on for evermore: in heaven they never loathe this manna, nor weary of it, as the Israelites did of theirs. It is but a small crumb, O communicants, you get of it here, to that eternal feast provided above.

Again, bread, in scripture, is called, the staff of bread. O this is the true staff of bread; here bread, if eaten, by faith, that will prove a staff to support you, a staff to defend you, a staff to beat your enemies, and put all your lusts to flight: this is a staff that will enable you to run in God's way, "and fight the armies of the aliens."—That is a strange dream that one of the Midianitish host had, when Gideon was coming upon them, Judges vii. 13. "Behold, a cake of barley bread came tumbling into the host of Midian, and smote a tent," &c. Strange! a piece of bread overturned a tent. Lo, that dream is interpreted in this sacrament: here a piece of bread, O communicant, if eaten by faith, that will tumble into the host of Satan, and thy lusts, these Midianites, which have long vexed you with their wiles, strike down their tents, and put them all to flight. Surely, a view here, by faith, of Christ's body pierced and nailed by sin, will turn a believer's heart against sin, as the most hateful thing in the world: let sin flatter as it will, he will never forget what it hath done to his dear Saviour. This is both quickening and killing bread; for, as it is life to your souls, so it is poison to your lusts.

When you see the wine poured out, think how freely and willingly Christ suffered for you. He poured out his blood as freely as the wine is poured out to you; yea, it is said, Isa. liii. 12. "He poured out his soul unto death," as freely as we pour water out of a vessel. He had freely emptied his veins in the garden, and on the cross; every pore became an eye to weep blood for your sakes: he is wounded over all, that his blood may run the more plentifully and freely; and, when he hath no more blood to pour out, he next pours out his soul for you: and, would you have any more from your loving Saviour? O did he pour out his soul unto death, and will you not pour out your souls into his bosom!

Again, when you see it, by faith, behold the wells of salvation now opened, the stone rolled away, and the fountain of the water of life running freely, and following poor sinners. O run not away from it, but turn to it; drink, and live for evermore. O shall the fountain of life be opened, and the mouths of your souls fast shut! Can you see Christ's blood running, and not desire to be bathed with it? Hast thou blind eyes or lame feet, weak hands or feeble knees, a cold or hard heart, a feared or doubting soul? Here a cure for all thy diseases. Thou art now at the side of the pool, just at the healing waters, one step will bring you to them: look to Christ for strength, stir up your souls, step in, drink, bathe, and be made whole for ever.

When you drink the cup, remember the precious blood of Christ; eye it by faith, plead it with God, and apply it to your souls: thirstly drink it by the mouth of faith: say, "I am an unrighteous creature, but here is justifying blood; my heart is polluted, but here is sanctifying blood; my soul is wounded, but here is healing blood; my lusts are strong and lively, but here is mortifying blood; my heart is very dead, but here is quickening blood; it is very hard, but here is softening blood: O, shall not a drop of this blood light on my hard heart? O let me not miss a cure, when the balm of Gilead is among my hands! This blood healed thousands, and shall my plagues continue? Lord, may that innocent blood, that dropt from thy hands and thy side, wash away all the spots and stains of my guilty soul."

As you find the wine warm on your cold stomach, so let the love and blood of Christ warm your cold heart and affections with vehement love and desire to him. Shall Christ's heart be hot as fire to you, and will your's be cold as ice to him? Can you feel his warm and bleeding heart, and not cry out with Thomas, "My Lord, and my God?" How shall I express my love to my loving and lovely Jesus, who loved me and gave himself for me? How dearly, Lord, hast thou purchased my love, unworthy as it is? What hath the world or sin to do with that which Christ hath bought so dear! O for a heart ready to burst with love to him that is only worthy to be the object of it! O for a live coal from God's altar to kindle the flame, that many waters might not quench! Worse am I than a beast, if I be not ravished with Christ's matchless love.

When you see the elements divided and distributed among the communicants, believe it, that Christ is really, though invisible, dealing forth the effects and benefits of his death and sufferings to the worthy receivers.

When you see both the bread and the wine given, think that God is offering and giving Christ, and all Christ unto us; and we must be willing to take Christ and all that is in him, all his benefits, all his offices, all his laws, and all his cross he thinks fit to lay on us.

When the bread and wine are offered to you, and you hear Christ saying, *Take, eat, drink;* O then cast open all the doors and gates of your soul, that "the King of glory may enter in:" say, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without? As I receive the bread of the Lord into my mouth, let me receive the bread, the Lord, into my soul. Lord, it was my errand to receive thee into my heart, let me not go without thee." Stir up faith mightily, to receive Christ and all his benefits. Stretch out faith's arms as far and as wide as you may, to welcome, embrace, and clasp about your Saviour, and say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his:" Now may the marriage be sealed and ratified, and the knot cast which shall never be loosed again: and happy, happy for ever is my choice, rich is my portion, my soul is made up to all eternity.

When you are eating and drinking the bread and wine, let your soul be busy making close and particular application by faith of Christ and all his benefits, according to your various necessities. And consider, that as, by eating and drinking, your food incorporates with your bodies, and turns one with you; so Christ by faith is mystically united to you, and you are made one with Christ: as the broken bread enters into your body, and becomes your's by feeding upon it; so you are to believe, that as truly Christ's broken body, and the purchase of his blood, are

applied to you for curing and saving your soul, and that all his merits and graces are your's by faith; "This is my body that was broken for you." Again, as eating and drinking of proper food is very pleasant to our bodies, so we ought to take great satisfaction and complacency in partaking of Christ and his benefits. Let us satiate ourselves, in tasting of his goodness, and feasting on his heavenly dainties. And as by our earthly food our bodies are strengthened for labour, so by this spiritual food our souls and our graces are nourished and strengthened for the duties of religion.

Again, you are to look upon these sacramental actions, as a mutual giving and taking sasine and infeftment betwixt Christ and your souls. Hereby you get infeftment of a crucified Christ, his great purchase and glorious inheritance; and hereby Christ takes infeftment of your soul and body, to be his children, his heirs, his servants and soldiers, to obey him and fight for him while you live. You are hereby consecrate to be temples for his service and residence; beware of defiling the temple of the Lord, suffer not a herd of swinish lusts to enter therein, lest God abhor you and cast you off for ever.

When you hear these words of the institution, "This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do in remembrance of me:" consider why it is called a Testament; it is because in his ordinance we have Christ's testament and latter will sealed, wherein he leaves many a rich legacy to his poor friends: and here he gives a sealed copy of his testament into every one of their hands.

Quest. "What are the legacies he leaves?"

Ans. Pardon, peace, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, grace, and glory.

Quest. "But how shall I know if I have any interest herein?"

Ans. Are you one of Christ's poor relations? Can you claim any sibness to him by faith and regeneration? Then your name is in Christ's Testament.

Quest. "But how shall I be sure that the Testament is in force, and will be execute?"

Ans. It is become of force by the death of the Testator, who died, and left his Testament in the hands of the blessed Spirit to be executor of it, and to apply it to those the Testator appointed: yea, (blessed be God) the Testator is risen again, and lives to see the execution of it himself likewise.

Quest. "But, will I get all Christ's purchase and legacies just now?"

Ans. You shall be infeft, and have your right secured to all this great estate left by Christ's will to you; and out of it you shall have a present maintenance, till the time appointed come, when you shall enter into the full possession of the inheritance. You are but minors yet, and not fit to be intrusted with it; but it is secured in good hands for you, till you come to full age. In the meantime, you hear the dying Testator leaves a charge upon you, to "do this in remembrance of him." Think on him and his love to you; think what he has contrived, what he has promised, what he has done, what he is still doing, and what he is about to do for you: remember him who remembered you in your lowest estate, and is still remembering you: remember him that is coming again quickly in the clouds, to meet you, take you home to his palace, and put you in possession of all. He commands you to show his death till he come again.

When you hear of his coming again, consider what a glorious coming and glad meeting that will be. O believer, you now see Christ only through these elements by an eye of faith, but then you shall see him by an eye of immediate vision, you shall see him even as he is; and O how mightily surprised will you be at the sight! You will say, as the Queen of Sheba said of Solomon, The half was not told me when I was in my own country; but, "Behold a greater than Solomon is here."

Before you rise from the table, you may think on Elijah's cake baken on the coals, and his cruse of water, in the strength of which meat he went forty days and forty nights till he came to Horeb, the mount of God, 1 Kings xix. 6, 8. Think how much more substantial, durable and nourishing the food is that thou hast been partaking of, and bless God for it. Elijah is twice there wakened to take a double meal; and so ought you to rouse up and provoke your spiritual appetite to take another morsel ere you go; you should feed plentifully at Christ's table. It is a virtue to be a holy glutton at this feast: you know not if ever you get another feast like this, till you come to the mount of God above; this may be your last communion here, and the last time you shall drink of the fruit of the vine in this manner; take a large fill to strengthen your soul for your journey, you know not what blasts and storms may blow by the way: you have a siege to hold out, take in provisions here; you have a voyage to go, see that you victual your ship: death will try and put all your graces to it. The wisest virgins have no grace to spare at the coming of the Bridegroom: what storms of temptations and difficulties do many poor saints meet with on a death-bed? It is with much ado they put safe into the harbour at last: O then gather manna while it is falling, for your gathering time may be lost.

Consider, that, while you are at the table, you are near Christ your Physician; therefore be sensible of your maladies and look up to him with your finger on your sore, and cry with the Psalmist, Psal. xli. 4. "Lord, be merciful unto me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee." Now the balm of Gilead is among my hands, and it will be sad if I should miss a cure. The blood of Christ, that hath healed thousands, is now at hand; Oh let not my plagues continue with me. O let a drop of that precious blood light on my cold, dead, and hard heart, that some heat, life and softness may be got and preserved therein.

You are come to Christ on a good day, when he is on a throne of grace with a sceptre of mercy in his hand; see that you make all your wants known to him. A feasting time is a time of granting requests: "what is thy petition, and what is thy request, Queen Esther?" said king Ahasuerus at the banquet of wine. So said King Jesus to the worthy communicant at his royal feast, "What is thy petition, and what is thy request? What will ye that I shall do unto you?" as Christ asked the blind men, Mat. xx. 32. Let your requests be like those of the Psalmist, "Consider, and hear me, O Lord my God; lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death, Psal. xiii. 3. Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee, Psal. cxix. 175. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow, Psal. li. 7. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit." Psal. li. 12. Or, you may put some of the Spouse's petitions at this time, "Draw me, we will run after thee, Cant. i. 4. Awake, O northwind, come thou south, blow upon

my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits, Cant. iv. 16. Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or young hart upon the mountains of spices." Cant. viii. 14.

O communicant, thou art near to a crucified Christ when at the table, as the penitent thief near to him when on the cross; he got mercy from Christ when he sought it, and so may you, if you seek it with the same frame of heart. Cry, Lord, look on a poor sinner at thy table, as thou didst on him that hang on the cross. "Lord, Remember me, now thou art in thy kingdom." Thy wounds are open now; Lord, shelter me in them. Thy blood is running fresh: O bathe my diseased soul in this fountain, that I may be whole for ever. So much for the second head of directions. I now proceed to the third head.

CHAPTER III.

Concerning a Communicant's Behaviour after Partaking, and when the Communion Sabbath is over.

IN discoursing this head, I propose to do these following things: 1. To give some directions concerning your deportment when rising and going from the Lord's table. 2. Concerning your carriage when you go home to your closets and retiring places. 3. Concerning your behaviour and conversation in the world when all the work is over.

SECT. I.—*Containing Directions concerning your Deportment when Rising and Going from the Lord's Table.*

BELIEVERS are sometimes ready to say, "It is good for us to be here, let us build tabernacles, and dwell still." But this table, though it be satsifying, it is not lasting; though the meal be sweet, it is short. All things here below are transitory, and communions are passing things with the rest. You must rise and go down from the mount, and return to the world, and travel in the wilderness again. Oh, may the believer say, "And must I rise, and go back to that unsatisfying and soul-starving world again? What shall I do there, if my Redeemer go not alongst with me; Lord, take me by the hand, lead me, uphold me, and be thou still with me; and at last bring me to that endless feast thou hast prepared for thy people above, where I may ever lie in thy bosom, under the interrupted beams of thy smiling and cheering countenance, and for ever feed my hungry soul on thy blessed self, without the help of symbols or sacraments, and where the guests will be never called to rise from that glorious table any more."

Quest. What is that frame and disposition of soul that we should have in rising and going from the Lord's table?

Ans. With respect to that observe the following directions:

You ought to rise and go from the table,

1. In a wondering and admiring frame. Continue to wonder at the love of God in giving his beloved Son to die a cursed death for us. Though he loved him most dearly, yet he wounded him most deeply, that his precious blood might stream forth and save us. Hence it is said, Isa. liii. 10. "It pleased the Lord to bruise him." Junius reads it *Valde delectatus est;* i. e. He was exceedingly delighted in it. Strange! other parents, whose love to their children is nothing in comparison of the Father's love to Christ, do follow their children to their graves with many tears, especially when they die violent deaths: but the infinite God delighteth in the painful and bloody death of his only Son, because it tended to the salvation of believers: he willingly gave his own dear Son, to die a shameful cursed death, that you might live a glorious blessed life for ever. O what manner of love is this! And what art thou, O believer, that thou shouldst be the object of this love more than others? By nature thou art mean as the worm, vile as the mire, black as hell, and a child of wrath even as others: and thou hadst now been wallowing in sin, with the worst of the world, if free grace had not renewed thee; nay thou hadst been roaring in hell at this hour, if free grace had not reprieved thee. Look about thee, and see others refused, when thou art chosen; others polluted, when thou art sanctified; others put off with common gifts, when thou hast special graces. Though you and they perhaps sat together in the same desk hearing the word, or at the same table receiving the sacrament: yet free grace came and made the difference: "One is taken, and the other left." Here is matter for your admiration.

The consideration of this free love and distinguishing mercy of God should make thee say with David, "Lord, what am I, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And, what am I, the worst of men, that thou shouldst be thus mindful of me?" O how did Mephibosheth admire David's kindness, when he spake familiary with him, and said, "Thou shalt eat bread at my table continually?" 2 Sam. ix. 7. Observe his answer, ver. 8: "What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?" But surely, O believer, thou hast much more reason to say so, and wonder that such a mean creature should be set at the table of the great God, and honoured to feast with himself. Lord, what am I, that thou shouldst have noticed the like of me? Better deserved I to have been howling among the dogs without the door, than to be let in and feasted among thy friends; I better deserved to have been roaring in hell with devils, than to be set at thy table to rejoice with thy children. Lord, when thou wast pleased to look on me with an eye of pity, and embrace me in the arms of thy tender mercy; thou mightest justly have spurned my guilty soul into hell, saying, "Depart from me, I know you not." What a wonder of mercy is it, that I, who have forfeited all mercies, and deserved such a sentence as that in Jer. ix. 15. to be fed with wormwood, and to have water of gall to drink, should nevertheless have the flesh of the Son of God given me to be my meat, and his blood to be my drink? The Lord Jesus might justly have said unto me, as in Zech. xi. 9. "I will not feed you: that which dieth, let it die; and that which is to be cut off, let it be cut off." But O, how tender are his bowels, how compassionate his heart! Rather than my soul should starve, he is content to be slain that his flesh might become my food.

II. Rise and go from the table in a thankful and praising frame. Thankfulness well becomes this eucharistical feast, which is mainly designed as a thanksgiving to God for redeeming love. On this occasion you ought to "bless God in the congregation, even the Lord from the fountain of Israel," Psal. lxviii. 26. Now, you should stir up your souls, and all that is within you, to bless his holy name, with the Psalmist, Ps. ciii. 1, 2. 3. "Now you should with the angels sing, glory to God in the highest, that there is on earth peace, and good-will towards men," Luke ii. 14. "Now you should with John, sing praise to him that

loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood," Rev. 1, 15.

Oh, may the worthy communicant say, how shall I mention the loving kindness, and praises of the Lord, according to the multitude of his loving kindnesses, and according to all he hath bestowed on me, and his great goodness to the house of Israel? O that I could proclaim thy love to all the world, and make the whole earth ring with thy praises! O that I could sing praises to him that loved me: to him that made the world, and furnished it so richly for me to dwell in: to him that made my body so wonderfully, and gave me a soul so capable to serve and enjoy him: to him that remembered me in my low estate, and laid aside his glory, took on my nature, and paid my debt on the cross: to him that sent his Spirit to quicken me when dead in my sins, that opened mine eyes, bowed my will, and turned me from darkness to light: to him who forgives my iniquities, heals my diseases, redeems my life from destruction, and crowns me with loving-kindness: to him that hath endured from me many slights, put up with many affronts, and waited on me with infinite patience; even "to him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests to God his Father, a note the angels themselves cannot sing; and to him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, be glory, majesty, and dominion, now and for evermore! O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever. Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can show forth all his praise? Now blessed be his glorious name for ever: let the whole earth be filled with his glory"

And, O believer, remember that you only begin this duty of singing praise in this world, for eternity itself will not end it: endless eternity will be short enough for this glorious work of praise. You ought to be acquainting yourself much with this work while here, that you be not a stranger to it hereafter. Resolve with David not only to begin it, but to persist and hold on in it also, Psal. cxlv. 2. "Every day will I bless thee, and I will praise thy name for ever and ever;" as if he had said, I'll begin it now, and do it every day while here, in hopes that I will spend a whole eternity in it hereafter. Again, he says, Psal. cxlvi. 2. "While I live, I will praise the Lord; I will sing praises unto my God, while I have any being." And when I have no longer being on earth, I hope to have a being in heaven, where I shall praise him to better purpose; and wherein, Lord, I am deficient now in thy due praise, I will pay it hereafter in everlasting Hallelujahs. O communicant, hast thou not great ground to praise this day, that thou livest not among the dark Pagans, that never heard tell of Jesus Christ? That thou art not among the fallen angels, for whom a sacrifice was never provided? That thou art not among the damned in hell, who are without the reach of mercy, and of hearing the joyful sound? You have been set at a full table, when others suffer an everlasting famine. And, what will you render to the Lord for this distinguishing love and undeserved goodness? I have good ground to caution you against unthankfulness, as Moses did the Israelites upon the view of their entry into Canaan, Deut. viii. 10, 11. "When you have eaten and are full, forget not to bless God for the good land that he hath given you;" that you have a Goshen on earth, and the prospect of a Canaan above: bless him for a land of light that you dwell in, and for the rich table that he covers for you: bless God for a sacrament day, for it is one of the days of heaven; it is a day you ought highly to prize, and to praise God for. They that know the worth of this day could wish, with Joshua, that the sun stood still upon it, that it might be lengthed out, for their enjoying communion with God: but in a special manner they would wish that the *Sun of righteousness* stood still this day and shined, that, with Joshua, they might get a more full revenge on their enemies; viz. their lusts, these cursed Canaanites that remain still in the land.

III. You ought to go from this table in the eunuch's frame, who, after his sealing a covenant with God, went on his way rejoicing, Acts viii. 39. God's people are frequently in scripture called to *rejoice and be glad in the Lord;* and, to be sure, there is not a more fit season for it than now, when he hath been making such a glorious discovery of that great love, wherewith he loved them. A man that is condemned for a crime, and ready to be executed, O what joy hath he, when he receives his pardon! And should not believers rejoice in God, who here *receive the atonement*, and are, as it were, brought again from the gibbet by the mercy of God in Christ?

There are two things you ought to rejoice in; 1. In God. 2. In his ways.

As to the *first*, it is the duty of a covenanted people to rejoice in their covenanted God. With what joy doth Zaccheus entertain Christ, when he closed a bargain with him? Luke xix. 6.; and likewise the jailor, Acts xvi. 34. And to be sure, whenever the babe of the new man is formed in the soul, it will leap for joy. It is most reasonable that Christ should have a joyful welcome into the soul. God not only commands and presses this joy, as in Psal. v. 11. Joel ii. 23. Phil. iii. 1. and iv. 4. but he affords the greatest grounds for it. God the Father gives himself to us as a portion; his Son to be our Saviour; his well ordered covenant as a never-failing spring of consolation; his holy Spirit to be our comforter; his influences to blow up this holy flame of joy; his graces of faith, hope, and love, to breed and feed it; his ordinances to maintain and increase it; and particularly the Lord's supper is a spiritual feast instituted for cheering the soul: for, after it, we see that Christ and his disciples sung a hymn.

What ground of joy have believers in their covenanted Redeemer, in his love, in his victories, and in his purchase? What ground of joy in his person and natures? In God incarnate they may see heaven and earth conjoined, God and human nature eternally married together, and themselves very nearly related to God. O believer, he is "bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh, and has a fellow-feeling of your infirmities;" and is not this matter of joy?

What ground of joy have you in the attributes of God, which are all engaged for you, and become yours by covenant? The thoughts of God may be sweet to you as to the Psalmist, Psal. civ. 34. The thoughts of God are a terror to the wicked, but every one of his attributes may be a cordial to you, yea, even the most terrible of them: his justice, that before stood with a flaming sword to keep you out of paradise, doth now turn an advocate to plead for your happiness, 1 John i. 9. Justice is come over to your side, and pleads for your pardon and discharge, since Christ your surety hath paid the debt: and for the crown of glory to you, since he hath laid down the price.

His goodness and mercy afford you great matter of joy: why? for, as he is good, so he doth good, and will let his people want nothing that is good for them; he will hear their cry, pity them in danger, and be a strong hold to them in the day of trouble. And, when you meet with mercies and comforts, you may receive them as tokens of his special love: they come to you wrapt up in the bowels of Christ, and dipt in his blood, and so are doubly sweet. When you get a deliverance from any distress, you may say as Hezekiah, Isa. xxxviii. 17. "Thou hast, in love to my soul, delivered it from the pit of corruption." O believer, all thy mercies are covenanted to thee, which may make them sweet to thy taste: that word in Eccl. ix. 7. belongs to thee, "go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works." Every morsel of bread thou eatest comes from thy Father's hand, sweetened in the blood of Christ, and is an earnest of greater and better things laid up for thee.

God's wisdom and faithfulness may rejoice thy heart. He is a skilful physician, he ponders our case, weighs our necessity, and knows how to prescribe sometimes bitter potions, and sometimes cheering cordials: he knows how to time our blessings and our crosses also. O covenanted soul it may be sweet to thee to think that all thy afflictions, as well as mercies, are the fruits of infinite wisdom and faithfulness: yea thy being within the covenant, alters the nature and property of thy crosses, and makes them become good and medicinal to thee; thou art now to look on them as mercies covenanted and promised to thee. "When his children transgress, he will visit them with the rod.—In faithfulness hast thou afflicted me, saith the Psalmist." O what comfort may this bring thee, when thou considerest, that all thy afflictions are an article of the covenant, the effect of God's love, and a fruit of Christ's purchase: so that you may say of every rod you meet with, the Lord sees I want this, otherwise I should not be exercised with it: my covenanted God and Father knows that this, and no less than this, is needful for me: what am I, that he should be so mindful of me?"

You may rejoice in the almightiness of God. He hath an arm that is full of power, that can easily level your spiritual Goliahs, pull down satan's strong holds, and make good all his promises.

You may rejoice in his immutability. He is unchangeable in his love and in his covenant. Mutable creatures change their respects, and break their leagues and covenants: but God's covenant is indissolvable; for he is engaged for our part, as well as his own, Jer. xxxii. 40. "O believer, God hath promised both for himself and thee:" as you may further see in Heb. xiii. 5. compared with Jer. xxx. 9. and 2 Tim. i. 12. If once in the covenant, thou art always in it; you may sing that sweet song, Psal. xlviii. 14. "For this God is our God, for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death;" yea, likewise in death, and over death. That which dissolves the marriage-covenant among men, will not dissolve this: adultery will not do it; for God saith, "Though ye have played the harlot with many lovers, yet return unto me.—Turn, ye backsliding children, for I am married unto you." Death cannot dissolve it; yea it brings you nearer to your covenanted God, where you shall ever rejoice in his presence. Though death robs wordly men of their poor happiness, and hungry heaven, yet it doth no harm to you: nay, when you find death begin to assault your tabernacle of clay, you may "lift up your head with joy: for behold, the day of your redemption draweth nigh." You may sing with the Psalmist, Psal. lxxiii. 26. "My flesh and heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." What though my eye and my heart-strings be ready to break, and the lamp of my life be like a candle burnt to the socket, and near the going out; yet still God is my God and portion for ever.

Thus Olevian, a dying saint, comforted himself: "My hearing is gone, my smelling is gone, and my sight is going: my speech and feeling are almost gone; but the loving-kindness of God shall never depart from me." When the worldling's portion is gone, your's remains sure to you: lose what you will, you cannot lose that. Good cause had Habbakkuk to say, Hab. iii. 17, 18. "Altho' the fig-tree shall not blosom, neither shall fruit be on the vines, &c. yet I will rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation. O believer, the more you view your portion, you will find the more ground for your rejoicing therein: for in God you have all things you need; all things you can desire; yea, more than "eye hath seen, ear heard, or heart can conceive."

But *secondly*, as you ought to go from this ordinance rejoicing in God, so likewise in the ways of God; and like Jehosaphat, you ought to have your hearts lift up in the ways of the Lord. Put on holy resolutions to proceed with zeal, delight, and alacrity, in the ways of God's commandments: your hearts should now be enlarged to run and sing in his ways, and go about every duty with pleasure. Stedfastly resist every sin, and especially the sin that hath most easily beset you, your predominant sin, your beloved idol: abhor both inward and outward sins; flee drunkenness, uncleanness, swearing, lying, cheating, sabbath-breaking, &c. Make religion your main work, and make conscience of heart-holiness: study to live near Christ, make use of him and constantly depend on him, for righteousness and strength. Study to perform the duties both of the first and second table: carefully observe family duties and secret prayer. In a word, go on cheerfully in the ways of piety and devotion, and especially in those duties wherein communion and correspondence with God is to be obtained and kept up. Go on joyfully in the ways of justice and honesty, meekness and peace, temperance and sobriety, charity and beneficence, humility and self-denial; and trust in your covenanted God, for covenant strength and furniture for every good word and work.

IV. In going from the Lord's table, you ought to mix your joy and praises with a holy fear and trembling; and you have great cause for this, when you consider, 1. Your manifold short-comings in this solemn approach to God. Surely your souls were not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary, your preparation was defective in the sight of God. Have you not cause to be ashamed, that your hearts were not more deeply affected with the great sights presented to your view, and the glorious things put in your offer? Have you not ground to be humbled for the coldness of your hearts, the waverings of your minds, the deadness of your spirits, and carnality of your affections, when you was about this heavenly and spiritual work? Alas for the weakness of our graces, the inconstancy of our frames, and the manifold infirmities which cleave to our best performances! Had we no more sin to answer for, but the iniquities of our holy things, they would be too heavy for us

to fear. Let us be humbled under the sense of them, and look to our great high-priest to make atonement for them.

2. You have cause to be humbled and fear, considering the manifold dangers you are exposed to, and enemies you are environed with, who are never more busy than after a sacrament, and our being admitted to nearness with God. Christ, immediately after his baptism, and the solemn manifestation he had from heaven, was led away to be tempted of the devil, Matth. iv. 1. And it was after the Lord's supper that Christ told his disciples, that "satan desired to have them, that he might sift them as wheat," Luke xxii. 31. It was after Paul was wrapt up to the third heaven, that he was in hazard of being exalted above measure, or puft up with pride, and therefore had a messenger of satan sent to buffet him, 2 Cor. xii. Have you got any thing of the riches of Christ, and the treasures of heaven, at this ordinance? Then look well to yourselves that you lose it not, for the devil is going about seeking to rob you thereof: therefore be not lifted up or secure, but be humble and watchful, and walk circumspectly.

Sect. II.—*Containing Directions how to Behave when you go home to your Closets and Retiring Places.*

THINK not your work over on a communion-sabbath, when you are come home from the church: but as soon as possible retire.

1. For *prayer.* You should be more bent upon prayer now than ever. The Psalmist, when God had dealt kindly with him, resolves therefore that he will call upon God as long as he lived, Psal. cxvi. 2. This is a strange return he would give God for former favours: he would go and beg new favours from him, and lie the more closely about his hand; I will love God, and love prayer the better all my days. This is not the manner of men, but God is delighted with such a return.

Quest. "But what shall we pray for now? Can God give more than what he hath given us in the sacrament?"

Ans. Though God hath here given you the seal of the covenant, and a right to all its privileges and promises; yet he will be enquired of by you for the particular application and accomplishment of them: you must put God to his word, and pray with the Psalmist, Psal. cxix. 49. "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. Be it to thy servant according to thy word." Again, you should pray that God may continue and preserve any good frame or tenderness of heart, spiritual motions and resolutions, or any warmness of affections and desires that have been wrought in you by this ordinance; for our hearts are ready to cool, and our goodness to vanish "like the morning clouds and the early dew:" you have need therefore to pray with David, 1 Chron. xxix. 18. "Lord, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of my heart:" and, Psal. lxviii. 28. "Strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us." Your hearts are naturally deceitful, and your feet bent to backsliding; pray as in Psal. xvii. 5. "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not." You have no strength in yourselves to keep the promises, and perform the vows to the Lord which you have made: therefore beg from your covenanted God, that he may furnish you for every good word and work; for "it is he that worketh in you both to will and to do."

II. Self-examination is a duty most necessary on the back of this solemn ordinance, as well as before it. Review your carriage at it, so that you may be humbled for defects, or thankful for attainments; cast up your accounts, and see what you have gained at this gospel-market. Will you not be as wise for your souls, as you are for your bodies? Were you at a market trading for the things of this world, you would take this course after you had come from it: but, O "what will it profit you, though you should gain the whole world, if you should lose your souls?"

There are two things you should carefully search into, when you come home from the Lord's table: 1. If you had sincerity in covenanting with God. 2. If you had his gracious presence with you in this ordinance.

Quest. 1. "How shall I know if I have sincerely transacted with God at his table, and if he hath taken me into the bond of his covenant?"

Ans. 1. It is of great consequence for you to know this; for it is not every one that externally receiveth the seal of God's covenant, that is really taken into the bond of it: many thousands deceive themselves in this matter. You may discover your sincerity in covenanting, by reviewing the frame and condition your souls were in when you were about it, and by considering the frame and disposition they are in now.

I. "What was the frame of your souls when you were transacting with God?"

1. Were you low and vile in your own eyes, and deeply humbled under a sense of your own unworthiness and ill-deserving; so that you were made to say with the Centurion, from the bottom of your heart, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; I have lived all my days in rebellion against thee; the bottomless pit is my due?" Then this is a good sign of thy being brought within the covenant, according to Ezek. xvi. 62, 63.

2. Were you weary of the burden of sin? Did you groan under it as a *heavy load?* Were you sensible that it was *too heavy for you to bear?* as the Psalmist was, Psal. xxxviii. 3. Then it is a good sign; for it is to such that Christ affords rest in his covenant.

3. Did your souls long and pant for Christ, as the hunted *hart* for the *water-brooks*, the *scorched ground* for a *refreshing shower*, or a *condemned man* for a *remission?* Was it your cry, *None but Christ, give me Christ, or else I die:* Lord Jesus, here a poor beggar for thy bounty, a diseased Lazarus for thy cure, an empty belly for thee to fill, a naked back for thee to cover: *never was there a soul that stood more in need of thee than I.* Then this is a good token: for, wherever there is true faith, it empties the soul, discovers want and misery in ourselves, and great fullness in Christ. Faith comes with an *empty vessel* to Christ's *open fountain*, it comes with an *open mouth* to his *full feast*, and with an *empty hand* to his *rich treasure.*

4. Were you in a *resigning frame* when you took the *seal* of the *covenant* into your hand? For *faith*, as it embraces and lays hold on Christ, so it delivers up the soul to Christ; and, as it takes Christ wholly, so it gives up the soul wholly to him. Did you give all you are, and all you have, your children, relations, honours, estates, interests, time, talents, health, strength, and all to Christ, to be disposed of, and employed by him, according to his pleasure? Then this is a good mark of thy sincerity.

5. Were you in a renouncing frame, willing to part with every lust, and put a bill of divorce in the hands of every Delilah or beloved idol? Then it is a good sign; for every

sincere soul will say, at such a time, Ephraim, "What have I to do any more with idols?"

II. Consider the frame and disposition of your souls since you came from the Lord's table; for you may find out your sincerity hereby.

1. Ask your souls that question, which Christ himself once asked the Pharisees, Matth. xxii. 42. "What think ye of Christ?" Covenanted souls, to be sure, will have a very high opinion of him; for "to all that believe he is precious. Can you say, then, that you have high and admiring thoughts of Christ, and that you wonder at his beauty: once I was at peace without Christ, but now I see nothing but fire and wrath out of him: once I saw little beauty in him, and said, as the daughters of Jerusalem said to his spouse, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" But now I see him *altogether lovely:* yea, I see not only a matchless beauty in his person, but also in his way, his word, his ordinances, his people; nay, in his very cross, and every thing that belongs to him.

2. All covenanted souls will be mightily pleased with the contrivance, frame and design of the covenant; they will say, "It is well ordered in all things:" they will be satisfied with all the articles of it, and with all the offices and relations of Christ; they will be content to be governed by his laws, as well as to be justified by his righteousness. All they who have entered into a marriage-covenant with Christ will look to his person more than to his patrimony, and they will embrace his precepts as well as his promises. Try, therefore, if it be so with you. Are you pleased with the design of the covenant, viz. to exalt free grace? Would you have Christ all and yourselves nothing? Would you be content with heaven, though it were for no more than to stand an eternal monument of free grace, and that you might, with others, join in your note to glorify and exalt it? Do you love still to cry "not unto us, not unto us, but to Christ be the glory?" Then this is a good sign you are within the bond of this covenant.

3. Have you heart melting thoughts at the remembrance of Christ's wounds? Are you sensibly touched for your sins that pierced him, resolved through his grace, to pierce him no more, and that you will never give any harbour to those traitors that put to death the Son of God? Then it is a sign you have eyed him by faith at his table, and taken hold of his covenant.

4. If you be his covenanted friends, you will resolve to obey every commanded duty, John xv. 14. Ye will be a people zealous of good works. And remember this, ye will resolve to perform covenant-duties in a covenant-way, in a gospel method; *i. e.* ye will do all out of love and gratitude to your benefactor and Redeemer; ye will do all to glorify him; ye will go out of yourselves even to Christ for strength, and depend on him for all.

Quest. 2. How shall I know if I have met with Christ at his table, and enjoyed any thing of his gracious presence there?

Ans. Christ hath many ways of visiting his people, and holding communion with them; and, though he hath not done it in the way you were expecting, do not conclude that he hath not done it at all.

1. He sometimes draws near his people in this ordinance, by bringing light to their understandings and making gracious discoveries to their souls.——Sometimes he discovers to us his greatness and purity, so as to humble us to the dust, and make us seem nothing in our own eyes, and confess we are the vilest of sinners, and wonder that we are out of the pit: so was it with these holy men, Job xl. 4. Isa. vi. 3.——Sometimes he discovers his goodness and mercy, in giving his Son to die for such wretches, and offering pardon to such rebels: and thereby he sheds abroad his love into our hearts, and melts them in tears, confessions, and thankful resentments of his love, as in Luke vi. 41. 1 Tim. i. 16.—Sometimes he discovers Christ to be altogether lovely, sin to be altogether vile, the world to be altogether vain, holiness to be altogether necessary, and heaven to be altogether glorious.

2. He kindly visits his people, when he draws out their graces to a lively exercise, and particularly sends his quickening Spirit to melt their hearts into the exercise of repentance and mourning for sin, or to actuate their faith, and enable them to lean on Christ for pardon and salvation, and say with that poor man, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief:"—Or when he kindles love in the heart, and makes it burn while he talks to them, and opens the scriptures, as he did to the two disciples going to Emmaus; or help you to say with Peter, "Lord, thou that knowest all things, knowest that I love thee:"—Or when he draws out the desires, longings, and pantings of the soul after himself, and makes us thirst after him, and follow hard after him. Hence we see what a mistake many are in, who think there is no communion with Christ but by sensible consolations and manifestations of his love: for, where there is a holy shame, grief, and sorrow, wrought in the soul for sin, it is as real an evidence of his gracious presence, as when the soul is affectionately melted into love, praise, and joy Though Christ come not to you by the higher way, yet be thankful if he come in the lower way.

3. Christ holds communion with his people in this ordinance, by strengthening them for duty, and making them delight in his service, and count it their meat and drink to do his will, and reckon "one day in his courts worth a thousand elsewhere."

4. When he intimates his special love and favour to their souls, which he doth many ways, by dissolving their doubts and fears, scattering their clouds, shining on their graces, and clearing up their evidences; or whispering by his Spirit into their consciences, "Fear not, I am your salvation: Be of good cheer, all your sins are forgiven you: the Lord hath put away thy sins, thou shalt not die." It is this way the Lord sometimes brings his people into the *banqueting-house*, satisfies them, *as with marrow and fatness*, makes them to hear the *voice of joy and gladness*, fills them with *peace that passes understanding*, with *joy* that is *unspeakable and full of glory.* It is thus that he kisses them *with the kisses of his mouth* i. e. applies the comforts of his promises, which are the sweet words of his mouth, yea, *sweeter* to them *than honey or the honey-comb:* it is here he makes them to *drink of the rivers of his pleasures*, brings them to his *holy mountain;* and makes them *joyful in his house of prayer:* it is here he "brings them out of the miry clay, sets their feet upon a rock, establishes their goings, and puts a new song in their mouth, even praises to our God."

It might be proper in this place to speak to the cases of several sorts of communicants: but, having done this pretty fully in my *Sacramental Catechism*, I shall here speak only to two sorts.

I. Those who, after secret self-examination, and reviewing of their communicating, are put to complain that they

do not find any comfort or spiritual advantage by the solemn ordinance of which they have been partaking.

II. Those who cannot but acknowledge, to the praise of free grace, that they have been kindly dealt with, and privileged with special manifestations of God's love and favour at this holy ordinance.

First, As to the first sort of communicants.

There are sometimes found not a few of God's people who, on the back of their communicating, are in a disconsolate condition. "O (saith one) I have been examining myself since I came from the Lord's table, and reviewing my communicating; and I fear I have not met with Christ there, nor got any comfort or spiritual advantage by the ordination. I think God is angry with me; and what shall I do?"

Ans. 1st, Granting it be so that thou hast got no benefit by this ordinance, beware of laying the blame in the least upon the master of the feast, who is a bountiful Lord, and delights in mercy; but leave your complaint entirely upon yourself, and search for the cause of your disappointment in yourself. And it is likely, upon due search, you will find, that either you have been slight in your preparations for the duty: your appetite hath not been sharpened with a sense of spiritual wants; you have not been watchful over your heart, either before, in time of, or after your communicating; or perhaps you have gone about this work too much in your own strength, without looking to God for strength and quickening in the gospel method. Jacob told his wives, Gen. xxxi. "I see your father's countenance, it is not toward me as before." Now, what was the reason of it? "Jacob (say Laban's sons) "hath taken away all that was our father's," he hath enhanced his riches. Well, hast thou dealt thus with thy heavenly Father? Hast thou robbed him of his glory in any measure by thy self-confidence? Then it is no wonder that his countenance was not so pleasant toward thee as at other times. Be humbled then for your defects and short-comings: and say, "Lord, thou art righteous, but I am wicked."

2dly, God may hide his face from his people at the sacrament, either for their trial, or for their spiritual improvement and advantage. He may hereby try you how you will behave under such a dispensation; if you will love him and cleave to him, even when he hides himself, or frowns upon you. Do not despond, O believer, though God appear to frown, or to speak bitter things against you; but cleave still to him by faith, and bless his name that he is at all in speaking terms with you, and not wholly silent to you, as he is to many, upon whom he will not bestow a reproof, but gives them up to walk after the counsels of their own hearts. It is a great mercy to have God rebuking us for our good.

But the Lord may be hiding himself, to raise in you the greater earnestness and fervency in seeking after him. Thus he dealt with the spouse, Cant. iii. 3. She was too lazy and careless in her inquiries for him, therefore he retires; and thereupon she rose from her sloth, and went through all the streets of the city in quest of him, saying, "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? Tell him that I am sick of love." It were happy if your disappointment had the same effect on you, to make you rise and seek him more earnestly, and go further than you did before. The spouse went a little further, she went further than the watchmen, before she found him whom her soul loved; and so must you. You must go further than ministers, ordinances, or sacraments; go and look beyond all to Christ himself. Go also further in respect of diligence, sincerity, spirituality, and heart-holiness. Do as blind Bartimeus did, when he thought Christ was like to pass by him without noticing him, Luke xviii. 39. "He cried so much the more, q. d. Lord, pass not by me, allow me one word from thy blessed mouth, one crumb from thy gracious hand. O believer, do not limit God to the precise time of communicating, your feast may be yet to come; for the banqueting-house is not yet shut, though the communion-table be uncovered: therefore, lie still at the door, and cry so much the more, "Lord, others are served, and not I: hast thou not one blessing for me, even for me, O my Father? Lord, I cannot depart without it; I must even die at thy threshold." Thus pray in faith, and wait in hope, and God will come in due time. "It is good that thy soul should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord."

3dly, God's people do sometimes get gracious tokens of his bounty, and marks of his favour, when they are not well sensible of it; so that they have cause to say with Jacob at Bethel, Gen. xxviii. 16. "Surely God was in this place, and I knew it not." There may be real communion, when there is no sensible communion. The two disciples going to Emmaus, their hearts did burn with love to Christ, and Christ conversed with them, when yet they knew it not. Or they may sometimes reckon what they have got at the sacrament to be nothing, because they got not what they were expecting. They were perhaps expecting peace, comfort, or joy, which they have not found; and this makes them overlook any revivings and smokings of grace which now are begot in their hearts. Hast thou, O communicant, got a crumb of grace, do not undervalue it, though it be small, but be humble and thankful for it, for surely it is more than you deserve. It is not good manners for a stranger, when invited to a great man's table, to carve for himself; therefore be content with God's carving for you, and bless him he hath not sent you to the table of devils, and given you a portion with the damned.

Many are apt to think nothing is a feast, unless they get smiles from God, joy, peace, and sensible manifestations of his love: but there may be great bounty shown to us without these; particularly, if you have got any more sense of sin's evil, or concern for the hardness of your hearts; if you have got any higher esteem of Christ, and of the contrivance of salvation through his mediation; if you have any more hunger and thirst after Christ, any more love to holiness and the ways of Christ, any more desire after his presence in duties and ordinances, any more sense of your need of the fountain of his blood: then all these are gracious tokens of his bounty to your souls, for which you have cause to bless and magnify the Lord. We may enjoy the saving influences of the Spirit, when we do not feel his more abundant consolations. God may graciously accept of us, hold communion with us, and seal our pardon to us, though he do not testify it by giving in extraordinary joys. The truest communion with God is to enjoy communion with him in his graces, whereby our souls are made conformable unto God, and are stamped with his image. Well, if you have got any more grace, be thankful to God, though you have got no more comfort. Though you do not spring upward in joy, bless God if you root yourselves more downward in humility. Though you do not enjoy much of God in the ordinances here, yet be thankful if you get your desires more enlarged after the full enjoyment of God above. The

kindness of God must not be overlooked, nor the day of small things despised; but the least crumb of grace is to be noticed and received with thankfulness, and this is the way to get more.

We are not to judge of our profiting in duty, and of our gaining by ordinances, by our present feeling and receiving of sensible comforts: for the souls of God's people may be in a thriving state of grace, even when they are much cast down and sharply exercised. Let us then seriously reflect upon our communicating, and see if we can say that our hearts were single and sincere in the performance of the duty, and in our covenanting with God, and if we continue stedfast with God therein; this may administer ground of comfort to us, upon out after-reflection, though our souls were not lifted up with joy and comfort in the time of performance. God looks not so much to peoples sudden fits of passion, or flashes of affection, as he doth to the bent and tendency of a sincere soul.

Let none then go from this ordinance with any harsh thoughts of Christ, or at all to give credit to these evil reports that satan and our wicked hearts would bring up upon his good ways: but let us still love and praise him, and speak to the commendation of his grace and bounty whatever way he take in dealing with us. Though we should get no more from him, surely it is great matter of praise, if he continue to strive with us by his Spirit, when he lets others fall dead asleep; if he keep us waking and restless without him, when he suffers others to lie still in careless security; if he keep us still hoping and waiting in the way of duty, when others are sunk into the gulf of despair. Whoever they be that sincerely "trust in God's mercy, their hearts shall at last rejoice in his salvation," Psal. xiii. 5.

Secondly, As to the second sort of communicants before mentioned, namely, those of God's people, who cannot but acknowledge, to the praise of free grace, that they have been kindly dealt with at his table; they have been privileged with special manifestations of God's love and favour at this holy ordinance.

Well then, O believers, hath the Lord distinguished you from others at this occasion? Hath he taken you into his banqueting house, and dealt bountifully with your souls? Hath he feasted you with the goodness of his house, and allowed you his gracious presence, and the special intimations of his love? Then to be sure, you are under the highest obligations of love and gratitude to him: God looks for more at your hands than others, be careful to give him suitable returns, and improve what you have got to his glory. And, for that end, I shall give you the following advices.

I. Delight and solace yourselves in his presence; say, as in Psal. cxvi. "Return to thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee:" make Christ's love and favour the beloved centre of your soul. How much did Peter solace himself in that manifestation of Christ's love and glory he had on the mount of transfiguration? "It is good for us (said he) to be here, let us build three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias." Not a word of building one for himself: he was so satisfied and delighted with the glory he saw in Christ, that he was content to lie without doors to behold it: neither cold nor rain could make him faint or weary.

II. Is Christ come into your soul? Take care to entertain him suitably, and attend him duly; wander not from his presence, but keep close by him, and follow hard after him, that you may be able to say with the Psalmist, "I am continually with thee; I will lie down with thoughts of him at night, and when I awake I'll be still with him." Beware of any thing that may be uneasy to him; it is a pity that such a blessed guest should meet with any disturbance, or be smoked out of the house by sin: O then lay a strict charge on all your lusts, corruptions and worldly thoughts, to depart, that they "stir not up nor awake your beloved, till he please," according to Cant. ii. 7.

III. Earnestly intreat him to stay with you: say, "Lord, be not as a wayfaring man, that turns aside to lodge for a night, or a short time: but be thou my constant guest." And, when he mints to go away, strive to detain and hold him by prayer, as Abraham did Christ, Gen. xviii. 3. "My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away from thy servant:" and with the two disciples going to Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 29. say, "Lord, abide with us; for it is towards evening, the day is far spent: and it is said, they constrained him, and he went to tarry with them." In like manner, plead with Christ, Lord it is towards night, and I know not what a black cloud is coming on me or the church; I need thy strengthening presence before hand: Lord, stay with me a while; I know not how far I may go, and what storms I may meet with, before I get another such meal.

IV. Set conscience to the watch-tower of thy soul, charge it to keep its post, and strictly examine all that go out, and all that come in, what thoughts go out from the heart, and what temptations are seeking to come in: and when lusts come knocking at the gate, seeking entrance into the heart, answer them according to that word, Ezek. xliv. 2, 3. "It is for the prince: the Lord God hath entered in by it, therfore it shall be shut;" it shall be patent to none but Christ. O it is sad when conscience falls asleep, suffers an enemy to come up to the gates, and enter into the city, without giving warning. Charge conscience then to watch, and give timeous warning against every lust and temptation, against every declining of affections or backsliding of heart, and against every wrong or untender step that may blot your evidences or darken your sky; for though a believer cannot lose his salvation, yet he may lose the joy of his salvation, Psal. li. and be left to grope in the dark in a most uncomfortable state, without sun or stars appearing to him for many days.

V. Delight to think on Christ. "Let your meditation of him be sweet; remember him on your bed, and meditate on him in the night-watches; let him lie as a bundle of myrrh all night betwixt your breasts, i. e. in your heart." Carry him up and down in your thoughts all the day: mind what a view you got of Christ at his own table, think on what he has done and suffered; what a sea of wrath, what a sea of blood, a sea of tears, a sea of sufferings and sorrows, he did wade through, to bring redemption and pardon to you. If we rightly considered what cost and pains Christ hath been at for us, we might wonder how he should be one whole hour together out of his peoples' minds: oh what a shame is it to forget him! We see a worldly man doth not forget to think of his money, lands, buildings, and plantings, for a whole day or week to an end: but, alas! we weary to think on precious Christ and heaven for an hour or two: O let us lament this plague, and beseech our blest physician to cure it.

VI. The more you see of Christ and his beauty, be still

desirous of further discoveries of it: if you have shared of this holy feast, you will find it both satisfies and begets an appetite. No doubt Moses was ravished with divine contemplations through the forty days he conversed with God in the mount; yet, after he comes down from it, he still longs for more, and cries, Exod. xxxiii. 18. "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory." In like manner, thirst and pray for further discoveries of the king in his beauty.

VII. Take pleasure in commending Christ to others, and showing what a lovely Saviour and choice master he is: invite them to come taste, and see that God is good. Let his name be sweet and savoury to you, delight in mentioning it. How sweet was his name to Paul? For in 1 Cor. i. and the first thirteen verses of that chapter, he mentions his name no less than twelve times: he could never get enough of that sweet name Jesus, that rings with salvation: he sometimes there mentions it twice in one verse.

VIII. Remember that Satan envies you, and eyes you as a pirate doth a richly loaden ship, and will do what he can either to rob you of your treasure, or give you a troublesome voyage: you may expect trials on the back of this feast, and it may be from hands that ye would little expect; but resolve, whatever temptations come or winds do blow, that you will cleave to your Master, and never weary of his work and service: say to him, as the Hebrew servant to his master, Deut. xv. 16. "I will not go away from thee, because I love thee and thine house, and because I am well with thee." I am sure, O believer thou hast far better reason to say so than any else; there is no drudgery in Christ's service, you have the best master, the best work, and the best wages: have not you found him kind to you at this time? Will you ever forget it? You have at this time eaten plentifully of his bread? "O do not lift up the heel against him;" never betray him, nor give a woun to his interest any more.

IX. Be much concerned for his glory, and for the advancement of his kingdom. Pity those who are strangers to him, and pray for them; send potrions to them for whom nothing is provided: pity others who have not got your length, and put in a word for them; pray for a crumb to them from that full table at which you have been feeding so plentifully.

X. Hath Christ been dealing more kindly with you than others? Then he expects you will do more for him than others, Math. v. 47. *He hath done singular things for you*; see that you do singular things for him: carry as becomes his peculiar people. Be not content with common mercies, or such portions as bastards may have: be not content with common conversation; live not as the men of the world, whose hearts are set on things below, but live above the world, have your feet where other mens heads are: Show so much humility, mortification, patience, heavenliness, and charity in your walk, that the world may not only take notice that you have been with Jesus, but that you design to lodge and live eternally with Jesus. Live not according to common examples, but set Christ and his saints before you for patterns: and whatever others do about you, resolve to stand for Christ, though it were alone; say, with Joshua, "As for me and my house we will serve our covenanted God."

XI. Labour to keep still up a lively and spiritual frame of soul, and beware of losing what you have; be sensible that you are not able to maintain it more than to beget it: you have many enemies seeking to rob you of it; walk with a holy suspicion and jealousy, as a traveller, having much money about him, suspects every one he meets for a thief. Delight in Christian fellowship; one live coal helps both to kindle others, and to keep them burning, Heb. x. 24, 25. "Let us consider one another, to provoke to love and good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another."—Again, be tender and circumspect in your walk: for a tender walk keeps up a tender frame. Beware of the cares of the world and earthly mindedness; for, if you thrust a knife into the earth, it blunts its edge. Frequent sacramental occasions, and those heart-warming ordinances which God appointed for your souls advantage. Call your hearts frequently to account; say, "O my soul, how is it with thee now? Time was, thou hadst a good frame, good motions and desires: what's become of you now? Such a chamber, such a place in the field, such a kirk or communion-table, can witness the meltings of thy heart and flowings of thine affections towards Christ and things above: where are they now? But, above all, be much in secret prayer, and in the exercise of faith on Christ the fountain of life: intrust your hearts and frames to his keeping, who is your great Friend and Surety; say believingly, with the Psalmist, "Lord be Surety for thy servant for good: into thy hands, O Lord, I commit my spirit; for thou hast redeemed me, O God of truth." Let thine everlasting arms be underneath me, and hold up my goings. Plead for the constant supplies of his Spirit, that he, who is as the dew to Israel, may afford oil to your chariot wheels and wind to your empty sails. You have need to watch and pray, for Satan is still going about; this old crooked serpent can wind himself in at a very narrow hole; he hath many cold frost winds to freeze up your affections, many deceitful charms to lull you asleep; you may sleep, but he never sleeps. O communicant, watch; for if he find you asleep, he will soon steal away the living child, and lay a dead one in its room: God save you from this dead sleep.

XII. Have you tasted of God's goodness at this occasion? Sit not down satisfied in what you have got; but let it excite in you earnest longings for heaven, where the full feast is. These are but the foretastes and first fruits of the promised land, sent to wean your hearts from the world, and sharpen your desires after the Canaan that is above, where these first-fruits do grow and are full ripe. A communion-sabbath is the likest thing we have in the world to that everlasting sabbath, that is above: but, how small are the comforts of this lower table, if compared with the higher table? What is a sacrament-feast here, to the marriage-supper of the lamb? What is drinking of the fruit of the vine here, to the drinking it new with Christ in his Father's kingdom, where the glorious heavens will be the room, and the heavenly host the attendants? Here we feed on Christ by symbols and sacraments, and have but bad appetites; but there they enjoy and see him as he is: here are many traitors and unworthy communicants, that thrust themselves in among the children; but there no Judas, no unfurnished guest, can come, nor any thing that can impair the glory of that feast. What is the singing of psalms here, to the music of angels there? Had you been with the shepherds, Luke ii. and seen the angels, and heard the multitude of the heavenly host praising God, saying, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will towards men," you would never have forgot that glorious sight and sound;

but O that is little to what you shall see and hear above. The greatest manifestations of God here below are but a faint shadow of the beatific vision above. When Moses was talking a little with God in the mount, and saw his back parts from the clefts of the rock, it made his face so glorious, that the people could not behold it without a vail: but, O how will Moses's face and all about him shine now! It was little that he saw then, to what he sees now, and what we (if believers) will see ere long.

Peter was so transported on the mount with a sight of Christ's transfiguration, and Moses and Elias talking with him, that he was in an extasy of admiration, and said, "Master, it is good for us to be here, let us build tabernacles, *q. d.* Let us dwell still here, and not go down to yon vain empty world again; here's better company and purer delights." But, O how much more is Peter ravished with wonder now! This was but a small part of that glory, which Peter and the saints above see there.

O believers, you ought in a communion day to get up to the mount of meditation, as Moses did to the mount Nebo, and view this promised land; and, as ye see it, you ought to long for it, and also "rejoice in hope of the glory of God," and say, "O shall I ere long join with that one hundred and forty-four thousand that follow the Lamb? Shall I bear a part in that heavenly concert? Shall all tears be wipt from my eyes? Shall my poor dying body be turned into a glorious star? Shall I be for ever with the Lord, and drink of the rivers of pleasure that run clear as crystal alongst the banks of eternity, and whose streams make glad the city of God? And shall not my heart leap for joy at the prospect of it? The night is far spent, and the day is at hand, the sun is at the rising; and, will not a believer rejoice in hope of it?"

The wise men, when they but saw the star that pointed out where Christ was, yet it is said, "They rejoiced with exceeding great joy," Matt. ii. 10. But, O believing communicant, thou wilt shortly see the star of Jacob, namely, Christ himself, who is the "bright morning star," shining in his glory; and will not that cause far more joy to thee? If the disciples returned from the sepulchre with great joy, when they but got the news that Christ was risen from the dead; what joy will it be to thee, to see him raised and reigning in his glory, and thyself raised from the grave to reign eternally with him?

Well then, let a communion-day, and the comforts of it, put thee in mind of that happy state, and raise suitable desires and affections in thee towards it, and make thee long and say, "Lord, these joys are too great to enter into me now; O make me fit to enter into them!"

Lastly, As far as time and strength can allow, the evening of a communion sabbath should be spent in secret and family duties. I acknowledge our frail bodies may be much fatigued by our long attendance, intenseness and abstinence this day: but O if we could say this evening (and particularly ministers and elders, who had greater work this day upon their hands than others) that though we may be weary with our work, yet we are not weary of this work; for it is Christ's work, which is both pleasant and profitable, and carries its own reward in its bosom!

And since your bodies must be refreshed this night, and you must entertain some fellowship with others, there ought to be a more divine and heavenly air upon your conversations at this time than ordinary: let your carriage and discourse be such as becomes those who have been on the mount this day with God, that others may take notice of you, that you have been with Jesus.

When you see the table covered this night, or supper set upon it, you may think or say, "Now I am come from a communion-table to a common-table; from tasting of the upper-springs, to share of the nether-springs; from feeding on manna, to eat the bread that perisheth: how great is the change of my fare! Lord, let not this table be a snare to me, nor any wise tend to divert my mind either from the sweet table I have been at, or that blest table above I would be at." We may likewise take occasion to admire the infinite bounty and goodness of God to both our souls and bodies: O what pains and cost he is at with us! At our common table we see his beasts killed to maintain the life of our bodies, and at the communion-table we have seen his dear Son slain to preserve the life of our souls.

In the *last* place, keep a watchful eye upon all your thoughts and words this night; look well to the frames of your souls. Hath God shed abroad his love this day in your hearts? keep yourselves in the love of God. Lie down this night with sweet thoughts of Christ, fervently praying for a rich blessing upon the day's work, and for his gracious presence on the morrow, that the last day of the feast may be the greatest and sweetest.

SECT. III.—*Containing directions to all communicants in general, concerning their after conversation in the world.*

REMEMBER you have been covenanting with God, and taking solemn vows on yourselves at the Lord's table; see that your conversations be suitable hereunto. You have been admitted to great honours and special privileges: see then that ye show your thankfulness to God the author of your mercies, by the love of your hearts, the praises of your lips, and exemplariness of your lives. But more particularly, observe these following directions.

DIRECT. I.—*Study to be true and faithful soldiers to your General, whose colours you have solemnly sworn to.*

YOU have come under a sacramental oath to God; see that you keep it sacred and inviolable. The Psalmist gives it as a mark of a man that will go to heaven, Psal. xv. that he keeps his oaths and promises, even though it should be to his hurt and prejudice. How much more, then, should a man be careful to keep his oaths and engagements he comes under to God in the sacrament, when it is greatly for his good and advantage so to do? O communicant, be faithful to the Captain of your salvation, abide by his standard, desert him not in the day of battle, go not over to his enemies' camp. Remember what he hath done and suffered for you, and let the love of Christ constrain you to abide with him. Plutarch tells us of the soldiers of Pompey, that when he could not keep them in the camp by any persuasion, yet when Pompey threw himself on the ground, saying, if ye will go, ye shall trample on your general; it is said, they were overcome and persuaded to stay. So your general, Christ, when in the garden, threw himself on the ground, wrestling in an agony, to save you from sin, and stop your career to hell: O then do not trample on your general, but stop your self-destroying course, and abide with your Saviour. We read 2 Sam. xx. 12. that David's soldiers while marching very fast, when they saw

the dead body of Amasa lying in the way, (viz. the general wallowing in blood) they stopt their march and stood still. O communicant, though formerly thou hast been marching furiously in the ways of sin, yet when thou seest the mangled, wounded, pierced, and crucified body of thy Saviour before thee, thou shouldst stop thy course, and proceed no further. Oh, do not trample on thy wounded general, do not despise his bleeding wounds, nor forget his dying love. Keep stedfastly your sacramental oath, and never act contrary to it. Beware of plotting against him, or corresponding with traitors. Let it never be heard, that any of Christ's sworn soldiers shall either desert or betray their renowned general. If you would be faithful soldiers to Christ your general, then carefully obey his orders, courageously adhere to his interest, valiantly fight for his cause, and manfully resist his enemies, and abide by his standard to the very last. "Be thou faithful to the death, and thou shalt get the crown of life," Rev. ii. 10.

DIRECT. II.—*Study to be active and diligent in a course of new obedience, after the Sacrament.*

YOU should now walk circumspectly, be more humble and pious towards God, more just and righteous towards man, and more sober and temperate towards yourselves. Have a sincere respect to every commanded duty: keep the sabbath more exactly, hear more attentively, pray more fervently, meditate more frequently, and see to watch over your hearts, your words, and your ways, more diligently, that so you may please God, walk worthy of Christ, walk worthy of the covenant, of the sacrament, of the kingdom, of the gospel and grace of God. Let your present deportment be answerable to your future preferment; and see that there be some proportion betwixt your privileges and your duties.

It should be with a man after his communion with God in the sacrament, as it was with Jacob after his communion with God in Bethel, Gen. xxix. 1. "Then Jacob lift up his feet, (as it is in the original) and came into the land of the people of the east." After Jacob had met with God, then he lift up his feet, *i. e.* he went on his journey with strength, with spirit and cheerfulness. So after we have had fellowship with God in the sacrament, we should in the strength of that meal, lift up our feet, and go on cheerfully and resolutely in our journey towards heaven. Nay, we should, like Jehoshaphat, not only have our hands and feet, but also our "hearts lift up in the way of the Lord." We should now run his errand most cheerfully, sing in his ways, and serve him with alacrity. When God calls us to any duty, we should presently answer the first intimation of his will, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." O communicant, thou oughtest now to be swift to hear every one of God's calls; be like the Psalmist, Psal. xxvii. 8. "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." Though before I have neglected to seek thee in public with others, and in private by myself, and been, alas, very negligent in the duties of thy worship; yet now I will begin to read the scriptures, praise thy name, and pray diligently, not only in society with others, but also by myself in secret, and do all these duties of holiness mine oath at the sacrament doth bind me unto.' And see that you resolve and perform all these, leaning to the strength of your covenanted Redeemer.

DIRECT. III.—*Abandon all your former known sins, and strictly guard against them after the Sacrament.*

REMEMBER what Paul saith, Eph. iv. 28. "Let him that stole, steal no more," &c. In like manner, say I, let him that profaned God's name, profane it no more; let him that lied, lie no more; let him that used to break the sabbath, be drunk, cheat, be unclean, &c. do so no more. Hath Christ been washing you in the laver of his blood? O do not go back to wallow in the mire. Did he speak peace to you at the table? O do not turn again to folly.

Let never that be charged upon communicants, that was laid to Israel's charge of old, Exod. xxxii. 6. "The people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. Oh, will any sit down to eat and to drink at the Lord's table, and then rise up to play the wanton, play the prodigal, play the apostate, and join with the enemies of God. Surely, O communicant, if thou shouldst do so, thy sins will not be of any ordinary dye; they will be very heinously aggravated, and far more grievous and piercing to Jesus Christ than the sins of many others. David was not much troubled at Shimei's railing, but Absalom's rebellion pierced his very soul, 2 Sam. xvi. 11. "Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeking my life." So may Christ say, the sins of the wicked are no surprising thing, but the sins of communicants are very piercing: "He that did eat bread with me, hath lift up his heel against me," Psal. xli. 9.

O believer, hath Christ delivered thee from sin and satan, hell and wrath; and wilt thou rebel against thy deliverer? Oh wilt thou thus requite the Lord for his marvellous loving kindness! Mayst thou not say with the Jews, after their return from the Babylonish captivity, Ezra ix. 13, 14. "After such a deliverance as this, should I again break thy commandments, wouldst thou not be angry with me, till thou hadst consumed me?" If I should again join with the wicked, and return to my old sins, O what a dreadful place in hell might I look for?

DIRECT. IV.—*Keep a watchful eye and a strong guard against the temptations of satan, upon the back of a sacrament.*

SATAN is never more busy nor more violent to tempt and draw men to sin, than when they are new come from the Lord's table: why? He is exceeding malicious, and hellish in his enmity against souls; and he knows, if he can draw them into sin upon the back of such a near approach to God, it is the way to make their sins out of measure sinful before God, and exceedingly to widen the breach betwixt God and their souls. Look how Sennacherib dealt with Hezekiah after he had reformed the church, settled the worship of God, and put all in good order, 2 Chron. xxxi. 1. There it is said, "After these things, and the establishment thereof, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and entered into Judah, and encamped against the fenced cities, and thought to win them for himself." In like manner doth satan deal with communicants, after they have been at the sacrament, and have renewed their covenant with God, and established their resolutions against the commission of sin, and for the performance of duty: after these things will the devil come with all his forces, and encamp against the fenced cities (the communicants' hearts), and seek to win them for himself. He hath an army of stratagems, wiles, devices, snares, and temptations, always at command;

and lays many ambushments against the communicant: Oh what need have we to be on our guard after such a solemn ordinance, and to labour to foresee and prevent satan's hellish designs against us! It were happy if we could say with the apostle, "We are not ignorant of his devices."

O communicant, when satan comes to tempt thee to sin after the sacrament, say, What! wouldst thou have me perjured before God? Shall I, who have been at God's table, and have ate and drunk with him, lift up my heel against him? Shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? Shall I defile that body, wherein he hath chosen to reside? Shall I force him out of his habitation by any impurity, or offend him by entertaining nauseous thoughts, or the vile suggestions of that unclean spirit? Shall these hands, that have received the sacred elements, work deceit? Shall these eyes, that have been filled with tears at the Lord's table, be filled with lust or envy? Shall the mouth, that hath drunk of the consecrated wine, be full of rotten discourse? Imitate Joseph, when tempted flee with haste out of temptation's way, and say, "How shall I do this wickedness, and sin against God?" Or say, with the spouse, "I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them, I have washed my soul, how shall I pollute it with sin? I have taken on with Christ, and how shall I turn my back on so good a master? "Get thee behind me, satan."

Direct. V.—*Study that blessed art of improving and feeding on the sacrament, and a crucified Jesus represented therein, after you are gone from it.*

WE should not only feed on Christ while at the sacrament, but we should continue to feed on Christ, the master of this feast, when the communion-table is removed. As the Israelites in the wilderness, they did not only drink of the rock when they were at it, but after they were removed and gone from it, they still continued to drink of it. But, how could that be? The apostle tells us, that the rock followed them, 1 Cor. x. 4. i. e. the water that issued out of the rock followed them as they journeyed, in all their stages and removes. So, when we are gone from the clefts of the rock that were streaming to us in the sacrament, we should continue to make use of these streams, and share of the virtue and efficacy of this water of life, which follows us, and streams after us, all the while we are travelling in the wilderness of this world, till we come home to the heavenly Canaan. And as the streams of the rock not only followed, but also accompanied the Israelites, and run before them too; so we must have Christ with us, and depend on him in every step of our journey, and likewise have our eye still upon him as our guide and leader to heaven. O that we could learn the heavenly art of living by faith on the Son of God, by continued dependence on him, and making application to him for righteousness and strength; righteousness for removing our guilt, and justifying our persons before God; and strength for performing duties, conquering lusts, and bearing crosses! O that we could come with our daily sins and pollutions to a crucified Jesus, and make renewed and daily application of that blood we were bathing our souls with in the sacrament! May we still drink of the spiritual rock, and daily find the virtue, efficacy, and benefit of the sacrament, following and streaming after us while we are in the wilderness! May we constantly meditate on the love and death of our lovely Jesus, carry the print of the nails in our hearts, and continually bear about with us the dying of the Lord Jesus; that we may still look to him, draw nourishment from him, and walk on in the strength of the spiritual meal we have been receiving, till we come to perfection!

Direct. VI.—*Endeavour to keep up the lively and lasting impression of the vows of God upon you.*

CONSIDER seriously the engagements you have come under at the sacrament: you have done like the people of Judah in Nehemiah's time, Neh. x. 29. who entered into a curse and an oath to walk in God's law, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord. It is a solemn oath, and a fearful imprecation you come under at the Lord's table, to be faithful subjects and servants to Christ: you swear allegiance to the king of heaven, over the broken body and shed blood of the Lamb of God: you imprecate upon yourselves, that a cup of wrath may be put in your hands, instead of the cup of the new testament, if you deal falsely with God in his covenant, which you do here seal. Now, if you perjure yourselves, consider the hazard; you incur not only all the curses of God's law, but the sore vengeance of his gospel also: you not only draw down upon you the wrath of a just God, but likewise the wrath of a merciful Mediator: and whom have you to interpose for you, if he be against you?

O communicant, if thou shouldst like Samson, break all these bands asunder, and venture to fetch that sacrifice away from the altar, which thou hadst tied to it with such strong cords of oaths, vows, and covenants; mayst thou not expect to bring fire from the altar along with it, that will consume thee?

There are some who remember their vows no longer than the sacrament lasts: while they are at the Lord's table, they have perhaps some sense of their obligations to serve God and leave sin; but, when they rise and depart from the table, the sense of their engagements departs from them. I have read of the Abyssines, that after the sacrament they think it not lawful for them to spit that day till the setting of the sun. This is superstition in them; but yet their superstition will rise up in judgment against the profane carriage of many after the sacrament. Would they not spit that day? What shall we think of those who so soon forget their vows, that they do not stick to spit in Christ's face on that very day they eat his bread, by their loose and ungodly practices afterwards?

There are others not quite so gross, that will lay themselves under some restrictions for a day or two after the sacrament; but then, alas, they drop all their engagements, and return to their former sinful liberties. Oh, doth the sacramental covenant bind but for a day or two? Doth the efficacy of that solemn ordinance last no longer with you? Is not the bond thereof as strong on thy conscience the next month, or the next year, as the very day thou receivest? The sacrament of baptism is but once administered, and that in our infancy; and yet we own that the baptismal vow and covenant doth bind to the day of our death, though we should live an hundred years. Now, is it not the same covenant and vow we renew at the Lord's supper, which we make in baptism? Why, then, should not the bond in this sacrament be as binding and lasting as in the other?

O communicant, keep up always upon thy spirit a fresh

sense of thy sacramental covenant; renew the impressions thereof every morning in thy secret retirements, and then thou wilt be in better case to beat off all temptations to apostacy through the day. Say still to temptations, tempt me not from my allegiance and fidelity: the vows of God are upon me sealed at the sacrament, and recorded in heaven: not one of my fellow communicants, but will be witnesses for God, that they saw me personally and publicly own and renew my covenant with him: wherefore, for my oath's sake, and those that sat with me, I will not do this evil, and sin against God. Shall I alienate and pollute the heart so solemnly devoted to God? Shall I make light of my oath, turn disloyal to my King, and false to my God? Shall I ever be so ingrate or perfidious, as forget his kindness to me, or my vows to him? Shall he escape that doth such things? or, shall he break the covenant and be delivered?

Thou hast great need to pray that God may fix the lasting impression of thy vows upon thy heart, for it is naturally deceitful, prone to forget God and gad after the vanities of time. Cry with the Psalmist, Psal. cxix. 36, 37. "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not unto covetousness: turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou me in thy way." Let me never be so eager upon the world, as to forget to retire to converse with my Saviour: let me never so perplex myself with worldly business, as to omit to pray, to meditate, to read and sing due praises to my God. No, no; I will say to the world and all time's things, I am not at my own disposal: "I have sworn, and will perform, that I will keep God's righteous judgments." O how deeply am I obliged to him that has paid my debt! What shall I render unto the Lord? Lord, though I can do nothing that is satisfactory, let me do something gratulatory. Christ gave himself a sin-offering for me, let me give myself a thank offering to him, let me offer up myself a living sacrifice to my Redeemer, who offered up himself a dying sacrifice for my redemption.

DIRECT. VII.—*See that you crucify sin, after you have been seeing Christ crucified set forth before your eyes in the Sacrament.*

HATH sin been so cruel as to put to death the Son of God? See that henceforth you have no pity upon the murderer of Christ your Saviour. As Saul eyed David to kill him, so do you eye those traitors, your sins, from this day forward to kill and destroy them. Never correspond or parley with them any more; never entertain a favourable thought of them, nor give them a kind look again, seeing they have done so horrid and inexcusable a deed.

O communicant, hast thou seen Christ struggling to satisfy justice for sin, and save thee from it; and, will you after all chuse wilfully to walk in sin? Will you not burn the spear that pierced him, and break in pieces the nails that crucified him? Every one of Christ's wounds is a mouth opened to plead for your wounding and killing of sin. Had you seen Christ wrestling in the garden in his bloody agony, sweating great drops of blood, lying on the ground; had you heard him utter these words, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me:" had you seen his soul beset on all hands by your bloody sins, and even brought to a nonplus, John xii. 27. when he knew not (to speak with reverence) well what to say; had you seen him bound, led and nailed to the cross, with a black angry cloud upon his soul, crying out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Would you not have vowed a revenge upon sin? O could you have loved or hugged the soldier, or been fond of the spear that pierced his blessed side? Well, O communicant, this thou dost, when thou huggest thy sins, and especially when thou entertainest thy predominant lust or darling sin: your other sins are as the nails in his hands and feet; but this as the spear that made a great wound in his side, and went nearer his heart than any of the rest.

Oh, never suffer sin to live any more in you, that would not suffer your Saviour to live in the world; never allow that a room in your heart, which would not allow him a room amongst the living on earth. O beware of crucifying Christ afresh. Never dispute any more, when a temptation is presented, whether Christ or Barabbas should be preferred; your lusts denied or Christ crucified: but presently cry out against your lusts, "Crucify them, crucify them." Have you seen God taking off your former burdens, and laying them upon the back of his dear Son, who willingly took them on for you, though they pressed him down to the earth? O then, go not to lay any more loads upon him. Hath he taken you and washed you from your sins in his own blood? O do not return with the sow that is washed to her wallowing in the mire. Hath the Lord been graciously sealing the pardon of your sins? Go not to turn his grace into wantonness, by venturing to run on in a new score. If you have washed your feet in the blood of the Lamb, O beware of defiling them again.

DIRECT VIII.—*Walk always under the sense of God's all-seeing eye upon you in every thing you do.*

A HOLY and circumspect walk is what every communicant should endeavour, especially after the sacrament; this would tend, not only to your own peace and comfort, but also to the glory of God, and the promoting of his interest and kingdom in the world. Were your lives tender, circumspect, and shining in holiness before the world, there would be little need of miracles to confirm the word, or convert infidels; for your conversations would allure strangers, and mightily recommend religion unto them; so that they might thereby be drawn to seek acquaintance with the God of holy communicants, as Nebuchadnezzar was with the God of Daniel: and thus you would be instruments of turning many to righteousness, and so shine as the stars for ever and ever.

Now, if you would shine in a holy walk and exemplary conversation, then you must, like Caleb, "walk after God," Numb. xiv. 24. you must imitate him in his holiness and purity. Again, you must, like Enoch, *walk with God*, Gen. v. 22. live in communion and fellowship with him. And then, you must, like Abraham, *walk before God*, Gen. xvii. 1. live and carry as those who believe he hath a special eye upon you in all that you do. And when you go about any action or business, spiritual or temporal, say to your souls, "I have a watchful eye over me, that pierceth into all my thoughts, that discovers the principles from which I am acted, and the ends to which I move: let me act then, as one that still believes this, as one that must shortly be accountable to God for all I do, and I know not how soon." Or, say to this purpose, "Now I am going about such a business, such a duty; and, if Christ shall send for me at the end of it, what account will I be able to

give of my mangement to him? What do I know, but at the end of this duty I may either be in Abraham's bosom, or in a gulf of misery?"

Walk now in all your steps, as if you saw Christ crucified before you, breathing forth his dying love to lost sinners, and pouring out his blood to cleanse them from sin. Would not that be a great aw-band upon you, to restrain you from sin? Walk now, as a damned soul would walk, were he again to live under the offers of mercy: how diligently (think you) would he obey, how fervently would he pray, and how peremptorily would he reject all temptations to sin? So ought every sincere communicant to do, that intends to please God and walk worthy of the vocation wherewith he is called.

Direct. IX.—*Endeavour to walk cheerfully and contentedly under every lot and condition.*

YOU may look for trials and difficulties while you sojourn in this world: but, in midst of all, you should aim to be much in the eunuch's frame after the seal of baptism, Acts viii. 39. who "went on his way rejoicing." Have you got the seal of God's covenant? Then, whatever your afflictions be, you cannot but have a reviving cordial, for your sins are pardoned. Let not worthy communicants say they are sick, when their iniquities are forgiven them. Should they walk dejectedly, who have got an interest in the new covenant secured, and all the promises and privileges of it ratified and confirmed to them? For, what do they want, but is to be had here? Whatsoever is a blessing is secured here, either sanctified riches, or a contented poverty.

A worthy communicant may say, Let God do with me as he will in this world, I desire to be content, seeing he hath engaged himself to be with me in all states and conditions, and to order all things for my advantage: surely "he cannot lie, he cannot deny himself;" all his words are oaths for their certainty, and all his promises "the sure mercies of David." Let my covenanted God chuse out my lot for me, surely it shall be with more wisdom and with more affection than I can chuse for myself. He whom Almighty wisdom and goodness takes a fatherly care of, and hath engaged to feed, cannot but have enough. If Christ be mine, all things are mine; nothing is excluded, where he is included.

Direct. X.—*Delight in the company of the People of God.*

SHAKE off all ungodly society, and have your hearts linked to all those that bear Christ's image. Set the Psalmist's example before your eyes in this matter, Psal. cxix. 115. "Depart from me, ye evil doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God." And verse 63. "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts. It is a true saying of Solomon's, Prov. xiii. 20. "He that walketh with wise men, shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." Make the liveliest of God's people your greatest intimates, and upon all occasions improve their fellowship to the best advantage. Beware of the cooling of your affections to the people of God; but let that divine sentence still run in your minds, 1 John iv. 11. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." Let the love of God, manifested to you at the sacrament engage you to carry lovingly and affectionately to all his people. Henceforth behave yourselves as servants of the same family, branches of the same vine, members of the same body, and children of the same Father.

Direct. XI.—*Study to shine in the graces of Meekness, Patience, and Forgiveness of Injuries.*

THIS is the way to make you like your glorious Redeemer and Pattern; and this is the way to adorn the profession of religion, and to make it amiable in the eyes of strangers. And surely all those who have been sharers of God's infinite mercy and goodness in the sacrament, will come away from it with a disposition to bear injuries, and a readiness to forgive those that do them wrong.

Direct. XII.—*Labour to keep up constant longings for communion occasions here below, and for the eternal Supper of the Lamb above.*

SURELY those who have met with Christ in this ordinance will be breathing for further discoveries of his sweetness and beauty. You ought to be saying, like Moses, when he came down from the mount, "I beseech thee, Lord, shew me thy glory:" let me have new minifestations of thy excellency, fresh intimations of thy love, and clearer discoveries of thy will. Oh, when will the opportunity return? When shall I come and appear before God? When shall I again see his power and glory in the sanctuary! When shall I taste his love and goodness again in the sacrament? When shall I again behold his well covered table, sit down thereat with his children, and be satisfied as with marrow and fatness?

But seeing this lower table is transient and uncertain, look for one to come which is fixed and abiding. "Yet a little while, (saith Christ) and I will see you again, and I will come and receive you to myself." O believer, your lovely bridegroom will keep his word and his day, he will come and marry you to himself for ever: therefore ever stand upon the watch-tower, wishfully looking for his appearance; never slack thy watch, nor let thy expectation cool, till he come and take thee home to himself, and set you down at the higher table, where he shall for ever lay aside his vail, and his amiable countenance never more be clouded with frowns; where you shall not have a sacramental but a beatifical vision; where you shall not remember him, but behold him as he is; where you shall feed on him without signs, and see him without a vail: where all your sorrows shall be turned into joys, where, for every reproach you met with in God's service, you shall reap eternal honour; for every hour of sorrow, you shall enjoy endless ages of comfort. "Make haste, my beloved, let the day break and the shadows fly away. Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Take me to that place where mysteries shall be turned into revelations, faith into vision, hope into fruition, espousals into embraces, sorrowful sighs into nuptial songs, drops of tears into rivers of pleasures, transient glances into the radient and direct beams of the sun of righteousness, short tastes into everlasting feasting and fulness. How small are the comforts of the lower table, if compared with these of the higher table? How dark are the discoveries believers have here, if compared with these bright manifestations above? But because I have insisted on this head formerly, I shall add no more here upon it; but wish that we may come at length experimentally to know the difference, to our everlasting comfort.

CONTENTS.

THE END.

A

SACRAMENTAL CATECHISM;

OR, A

Familiar Instructor

FOR

YOUNG COMMUNICANTS:

PLAINLY UNFOLDING THE NATURE OF THE COVENANT OF GRACE, WITH THE TWO SEALS THEREOF, BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER.

BY

THE REVEREND JOHN WILLISON, LATE MINISTER

OF DUNDEE.

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1815.

A
SACRAMENTAL CATECHISM.

PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH it cannot be denied, that there are many excellent books written, and sermons delivered, concerning the Lord's supper; yet it is sadly to be regretted, that there remains still a lamentable ignorance among many, of the nature of this holy ordinance, and the principal acts required in communicating. Which consideration chiefly hath moved me to handle this subject (of which too much cannot be written or preached, seeing it is the epitome of the whole Christian religion, both as to doctrine and practice), in a plain catechistical method, and have studied the easiest words and expressions that I could devise, to make the nature of the covenant of grace, and the seals thereof, plain and intelligible to every vulgar capacity.

As I do not know much that is written upon this subject, in this method, so I have observed, in treatises of the Lord's supper, that generally there is but little said of the nature of the covenant of works with the first Adam, or of the covenant of redemption with the second Adam, or of the covenant of grace with the elect, to which this sacrament is annexed as a seal: and that yet less is said of the sacrament of baptism, the first seal of the covenant; which certainly should, in the first place, be considered and understood by every man, before he adventure to partake of the second seal of the covenant, which bears a special relation to the first. Wherefore I have thought fit, in this catechism (for the better understanding the nature of this sacrament) to give a succint view of the gospel scheme, and method of man's salvation, by opening up the nature of the foresaid divine covenant, and of the sacrament of baptism, before I come to treat particularly of the Lord's supper.

All Christians should study to have distinct uptakings of the gospel-covenant, and of this ordinance, which is the compend and seal of it: and, in a special manner, young persons, before their first admission to it when they are hereby, in a solemn and explicit manner, to renew their baptismal bonds, and give their voluntary consent to the covenant. O young people, take heed to your first communicating, for very much depends upon it; you are, as it were, about laying the foundation-stone of your salvation-work, which ought to be done with much spiritual skill and knowledge, if you would have a sure building; if you approach to this holy table in ignorance, you stumble in the threshold; nay, you will surely be unworthy communicants, and so may provoke God to smite you with the plagues of judicial blindness, heart-hardness and formality, which may cleave to you all your lives, and so you are undone for ever. Wherefore, as you regard your immortal souls, pray for knowledge and spiritual illumination; apply to your great prophet Jesus Christ for it; improve the means and helps which he affords you, and seriously peruse this catechism, before you first communicate; that so you may have some right uptakings of the nature of the covenant of grace, and seals thereof; and particularly, of the obligations you already lie under by the first seal; that you may with knowledge, seriousness and solemnity, go, and personally renew your baptismal covenant with God, and get it ratified, by receiving of the second seal thereof. For this cause it is, that our General Assembly, by their act, Ass. 1706, ses. 12. do recommend to all ministers, "diligently to instruct persons, especially before their admission to the Lord's supper, particularly as to the covenant of grace, and the nature and end of this ordinance as a seal thereof; and charge, upon their consciences, the obligations they lie under from their baptismal covenant, and seriously to exhort them to renew the same." And accordingly, I have known some ministers at very much pains with young persons, before their first communicating, instructing them as above directed, telling them, that they were now to enter into the state of adult church-membership, to be taken into Christ's family, and share of the children's privileges, sealed to them in baptism; that therefore they must now make a choice for themselves, ratify their parents' deed, and become Christians by their own voluntary consent, as well as by their parents' dedication, and renew their baptismal covenant, with judgment and understanding. And after much pains taken upon them in private, they have called their young communicants together in a public manner, catechising them, and opening up the nature of the gospel-covenant, and their baptismal engagement to them; and, with some solemnity, asking each of them their consent thereunto, and taking them engaged personally to renew covenant with God in secret, and make choice of God for their God, and Christ for their Saviour and husband, before they should approach to his table; and upon these terms giving them their tokens. Unto all which they joined suitable directions and encouragements, concluding all, by giving up and recommending these young communicants to God in solemn and fervent prayer. Which method I have known accompanied with great tenderness, and many tears, among the young people; one of them helping to affect another, yea, and make very moving impressions upon the whole audience; and I doubt not, but such occasions have been, to some,

the time of their espousals to the Lord Jesus Christ, which they are to remember with thankfulness and praise.

Moreover, I entreat young communicants, to beware of contenting themselves with a literal knowledge of the doctrine of the covenants, and of the sacraments; but O press and pray hard for the inward teaching of God's Spirit, that light in your heads may be joined with heat in your hearts. And pray for the firm and solid belief and sincere love of all these truths which you know; and that your knowledge may be a sanctified and practical knowledge, and increasing like the morning light.

Again, I beseech you to beware of resting upon your purposes, prayers, or tears, your personal covenanting, or any performance of yours whatsomever; let none of these come in Christ's room; be not satisfied with a form of godliness, without seeking after the life and power thereof. Be never easy till you get your hearts opened to close with Jesus Christ in the gospel-offers, and get an inward change wrought upon your souls, by the regenerating grace and spirit of God, and grace excited in you to a lively exercise; and then you may approach with holy confidence to your Redeemer's table, and expect welcome.

Sacrament days in Scotland have been solemn and sealing days, yea, days of heaven to many; at such occasions many have had their trysts, and Bethel meetings with God, which they will never forget. O let us all then beware of formality creeping in among us in our preparation for and partaking of this solemn ordinance; for then God will withdraw himself from our assemblies, and our solemn feasts will be melancholy and heartless. How sad will our case be, if communicants and professors of religion, turn easy about this matter, and be satisfied with the shadow without the substance; with pure ordinances and sacraments, without Christ's presence in them; with communion days, without communion with Christ the Master and maker of the feast. O communicants, however frequently you approach to the Lord's table, yet still make conscience of secret, serious, and solemn preparation for it; press always for a token of Christ's love at his table. There is nothing so supporting to poor believers, in this wilderness, yea, and when under the greatest trials and difficulties, than the believing views they have sometimes got, of a well ordered covenant of grace, made over and sealed to them by this sacrament: these have been the cordials of many, when they have been stepping in over the threshold of eternity. Let us then be providing such cordials against that critical time.

At first, when I fell to compose this book, I thought to contain it in a small compass; but having a design to instruct, and direct, confirm some; confute, reprove, and reform others; the book swelled to this bulk, before I could in any measure reach my end.

1st, My design is, to instruct the ignorant, in the knowledge of the gospel way and method of salvation, through the mediation and suretyship of Jesus Christ; and therefore I was obliged to give such as clear a view as I could of the covenants of works, of redemption, and of grace, with the seals thereof.

2dly, I intend to direct and assist all sincere young communicants, that desire to be rightly guided in this weighty work, so as they may not wound Christ nor their own souls, but please God, and get a gracious meeting with their Saviour; and, for their sakes, I have fully displayed the nature, parts, ends, and uses of the Lord's supper, shewed what is required of them before they come, what is incumbent on them when they come, and what is incumbent on them when they go from the Lord's table; and also have subjoined to this book some suitable materials for meditation and prayer, both before and after partaking.

3dly, My end is, to support and encourage those troubled and exercised souls, who dare not neglect this ordinance, and who make conscience of attending it, and preparing for it, but are oft filled with doubts and fears, least they be unworthy communicants, apprehending they have no right to Christ's table, in regard they do not perceive any sure marks of grace in their hearts, nor find any sensible benefit by the ordinance: wherefore I have, for the sake of such, laid down many marks for examining their state, their graces, their frame, and profiting by this ordinance: and also have intermixed the book with a great variety of cases of conscience, which I have handled and resolved for the relief and support of such serious souls.

4thly, I design to confute those who corrupt this holy ordinance, or in any measure deviate from Christ's institution; and therefore I have gone through the several parts of the institution, shown the usefulness and significancy thereof, and have fairly proposed the matters in controversy, with the adversaries objections, and answered them.

5thly, I am to reprove and reform those, who rush upon this ordinance in an ignorant or careless manner, without due preparation; by showing who only have a right to this table, what is the nature and importance of the work of communicating, with the sin and danger of doing it unworthily.

6thly, I intend likewise to reprove those who live in the habitual neglect of this ordinance; by laying open the necessity and advantages of worthy communicating, and the guilt and hazard of neglecting Christ's institution and dying command.

7thly, To reprove those who satisfy themselves with the communicating once in a year or two years, as they have the occasion only in their own parish kirks, and no oftener; by showing the obligations that lie on all Christ's disciples to partake often. And I shall add, in this place, that there is ground to fear, that the unfrequent celebration and participation of this blessed feast, which Christ hath prepared for us, is an evil that many in this church are chargeable with, and for which the Lord may plead a controversy with us. How can we expect but he will depart from us, when we stand at such a distance from him, and come so seldom near him in the method he hath appointed? Can we look for the smiles of Christ's countenance, when we live so much in the neglect of his dying words? Is it any wonder our hearts are so hard, when we are so seldom applying the blood of Christ for softening them? Or that our graces be so weak and withered, when we so little use the means for strengthening and cherishing them? Is not the frequent use of this ordinance, in the way Christ hath appointed, an excellent help, to soften our hearts, renew our repentance, strengthen our faith, inflame our love, increase our thankfulness, animate our resolutions against sin, and encourage us to holy duties, and shall we willingly neglect it? It is no wonder that we complain we miss what we aim at and expect in this ordinance, when we are so little sensible of former neglects. It is a sad sign our receiving of this sacrament is not right, when it leaves not in us earnest breathings for the like opportunity: is it possible for us to meet with Christ, and taste

of his sweetness and fullness in this ordinance, and not long for another meeting?

Let none think, that the frequency of the administration would expose to contempt; for I am sure no worthy communicant will undervalue this ordinance, because of a frequent repetition, but rather prize it the more. Did the primitive Christians bring it to contempt, by partaking every Lord's day? Nay, was not their esteem of it much higher than those who dispense, or receive it only once in two years? I wish the words of our dying Saviour, and the acts of our General Assembly, relative to this matter, were more adverted to, by one and all of us.

The mind of our church, with respect to this point, is well known: for our directory for public worship declares, "That the Lord's supper is frequently to be celebrated." Our reformers appointed it to be administrate in parishes three or four times in the year, and that ministers who were slothful in the administration of it, should be censured, as appears from the acts of Ass. 1562, and 1596; which are also approven by Ass. 1638, who further appoint, "That some course be taken for furnishing of the elements, where the minister of the parish hath allowance only for once in the year;" that so the want of a fund for communion-elements might not hinder the frequent administration of this ordinance. Again, lest the multiplicity of preaching, or ministers assisting at it, should hinder its frequency, the General Assembly, anno 1645, did appoint, "That ministers should have, at this work, but two assistants, who were to provide their own parishes at home with preaching; and that there be but one preparation-sermon on the Saturday, only one sermon on the Sabbath-morning before serving of the tables, and one thanksgiving-sermon after the communion."

And that the church, since the Revolution, continues to be of the same mind with our predecessors, concerning the frequency of celebrating this ordinance, appears from the late acts of the General Assembly thereanent; particularly the 9th act of Ass. 1701; where it is recommended to presbyteries, "To take care, that the sacrament of the Lord's supper be more frequently administrate in their bounds; and that the number of ministers to serve thereat be restricted, so that neighbouring churches be not thereby cast desolate on the Lord's day." But the act, which is most plain and particular on this head, is the 11th act of Ass. 1712, entitled, "Act, appointing the more frequent celebration of the Lord's supper." And it runs thus: "The General Assembly, considering that the assemblies of the national church, having, by several acts, appointed the frequent celebration of the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper, in all the congregations of this church: and judging, that the due observation of these acts will greatly tend to the glory of God, and the edification of souls; therefore, they do hereby enjoin all presbyteries to enquire, if these acts be duly observed by all the brethren; and, in case any minister shall neglect to celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's supper in his parish for a whole year, the assembly appoints the presbytery, in which the said parish lies, to call for an account of the reasons of his omission of that great and solemn ordinance, and to approve or disapprove the same, as they shall see cause, and to record their diligence in this matter. And, for making this effectual, the General Assembly enjoins the synods, at their several meetings, to enquire at the presbyteries within their bounds, what care they have taken to execute the said act," &c. And further, that the Lord's people may have opportunity of frequent communicating, the General Assembly, by the 6th act, Ass. 1711, "Do recommend to presbyteries to do what they can, to get it so ordered that the sacrament of the Lord's supper may be administered in their bounds, through the several months of the year. And this they enacted, for redressing the practices, that are too common in most places, of crowding the whole communions of the bounds, in the space of a few sabbaths, in the summer season; whereby ministers, who are called to assist at these occasions, are exceedingly hurried and straitened; and serious exercised persons are deprived of the benefit of that holy ordinance during the rest of the year, which is certainly a very great loss; and also many parishes, by this method, are allowed the sacrament no oftner than once in two years: which practices are still continued, notwithstanding of all the excellent acts to the contrary. However, I am glad to hear, that in some parishes, ministers have begun to celebrate this ordinance twice in the year: I heartily wish this practice were general among us, and people had a lively appetite after this quickening feast.

I confess, there is one thing among us, which is a great obstruction to the frequent celebration of this ordinance, viz. The great number of ministers and preachings now used on such occasions, which truly makes that solemn work a business of such outward toil and labour to the administrators, as discourages them frequently to undertake it. So that, till some regulation be made in the foresaid respect, I despair of seeing this holy ordinance dispensed so frequently among us as it ought to be.

In the days of old, there was less preaching at communions, but much power and life in them; but in our days, there is much preaching, but little power. Not that I am against much preaching at these occasions, where there is an appetite among the hearers, and where plenty of ministers may be had, without laying the neighbouring congregations desolate, or proving any let to the frequency of this ordinance; but to make it a standing order, that there shall be so many preachings, whether there be an appetite or no, or whatever inconveniencies should follow, I apprehend, cannot be so easily justified. I acknowledge, about the time of our late happy revolution, when so much preaching at communions began to be a settled practice, there were such vehement desires among the people after the ordinance, and lively preaching of the word, that had been so scarce for so many years before, that it was necessary to gratify them with much preaching at these solemn occasions; but it is not to be expected that these longings should always continue. In those primitive times of Christianity, when the disciples' hearts flamed with love to their lately crucified and asscended Redeemer, they had such burning desires after the ordinances and preaching of the gospel, that the apostle Paul, at the celebration of the Lord's supper, Acts xx. 7. was encouraged to continue preaching to the people till mid-night; yet none ever pleaded, that the apostle's practice on that occasion should be a standing rule for the church in all time coming.

But that I be not too tedious in this preface, I shall only acquaint my reader, that I have chosen to handle this excellent subject in a catechistical method, as being the most easy and familiar way of instructing the ignorant, and most easy for the memory to retain. The work of catechising hath been signally blessed of God, for instructing people in the principles of Christianity: and where this is neglect-

ed or contemned, people understand little of the most excellent sermons they hear, and are little edified by them. Proper food must be provided for children, as well as meat for strong men. And hence it is, that the chief Shepherd enjoins his servants to feed his lambs, as well as his sheep.

I know the church of Scotland is already provided with excellent Catechisms, both Shorter and Larger, and with a choice explanation of the Shorter by Mr. Vincent, all which I earnestly recommend to the reader's diligent perusal; and especially our Larger Catechism, as containing a noble system of divinity; it would be the advantage of all the members of this church, to be at more pains in reading, considering, and laying it up in their memories, than generally they are. The approbation of the Larger Catechism, by the General Assembly, 1648, sess. 10. should not be forgotten; in which we find, that, after the most exact trial and examination, both by the respective presbyteries of this church, and by the assembly itself, they do declare this Catechism to be most agreeable to the word of God, and the received doctrine of this church; and that it is a rich treasure for increasing knowledge among the people of God; where also they bless God that so excellent a Catechism is prepared, with whom I do heartily join issue. But, seeing it cannot be expected that any Catechism of its bulk (which is of an universal nature, treating on all the heads of divinity) should be so full and copious about the sacraments, and particularly the Lord's supper, as the necessity of some do require; I have adventured to compose this Sacramental Catechism, for the benefit of young communicants, and others weak in knowledge; and have studied to contract as much of the doctrine of the covenants, and of the sacraments, as possibly I could, into so small bounds. And, in doing this, I frankly acknowledge I have borrowed many things from others that have written upon the subject, and especially from our excellent Larger Catechism.

And in the whole composure, I have copied, as closely as I could, after the approven form of sound words, expressed in the word of God, and agreeably thereto, in the Confessions of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms of this church, which are justly to be accounted most valuable pieces of our reformation.

And truly I esteem it a singular mercy to this church, in these shaking and fluctuating times, when new thoughts and expressions in matters of faith are vented, which are not agreeable to the form of sound words formerly used in this church, that we have such an approven standard of doctrine to look to, as is laid down in our excellent Confession of Faith and Catechisms, plainly founded on the scriptures of truth; and which all the members of this church are strictly bound to maintain, both by solemn national vows, and private engagements at baptism; not to mention the particular obligation which all the office-bearers of the church come under, both by word and writ thereunto, at their respective ordinations and admissions to their functions. Only I pray the Lord may give us grace, constantly to maintain and keep up the due and suitable impressions of these engagements on our spirits; which, if we have, there is no doubt but we will carefully evite every appearance of error; nay, even be afraid to disuse the former modes of speaking and expressing gospel truths used in the church, or adopt new phrases and expressions in their stead; seeing such a practice hath often introduced new errors into the church. It cannot but be thought strange, that any lovers of our Zion, for the sake of some fond new thoughts and peculiar expressions (which perhaps their hearers cannot comprehend so well as themselves, but are apt rather to construct to a wrong sense), should choose to recede from the old approven ways of speaking, or find fault with those that retain them, whereby their people are brought to stumble at worthy gospel ministers that have not learned their new phrases, and pass harsh censures on them; which not only tends to mar peoples edification, but also to endanger the peace of our mother church, and the purity of her doctrine. For, by such courses, the seeds may be sown that may spring up (if God prevent it not) into the noxious weeds of schism or error, when we of this generation are rotting in the dust. I cannot yet be persuaded, but Rutherford, Gillespie, Durham, Guthrie, and other such eminent lights in this church (that were blessed with such large measures of the Spirit of God), had as clear discoveries of the gospel-mysteries, and doctrine of grace; were as spiritual and evangelical in their preaching, frame, and conversation; and also honoured by their master to bring in as many souls to him, as any in our day; notwithstanding that they taught, "The covenant of grace its being mutual, faith being its condition; the necessity of personal covenanting with God, of leaving sin in order to come to Christ; of closing with him upon the terms of the gospel; of obeying gospel-precepts, making vows at the sacrament," &c. Though perhaps, in some places, those who would adventure to speak in the style of the foresaid worthies, may lay their account with being censured as legal preachers.

I pray the Lord may give us one heart and one way, that we may all think and speak the same things; and that he may always preserve this church from the infection of error of one sort or another, whether Arminian or Antinomian; and that no opinion or expression be vented among us, that either tends to the discouragement of free grace, by ascribing too much to the power of corrupt nature in the business of man's salvation; or that, under the pretext of advancing free grace, doth weaken peoples' obligation to holy duties.

But, reader, I shall not any longer detain thee from perusing this Catechism; if thou findest in it any thing profitable or edifying to thy soul, then give God all the glory: and if any thing in it show the author's weakness, I beg you may not rashly censure, but pray for him, who would willingly contribute his mite for the advantage of the weak and ignorant.

A SACRAMENTAL CATECHISM.

QUESTION. *FOR what end hath the Lord appointed sacraments in his church?*

Answer. To be visible signs and seals of his gracious covenant with man, in order to represent and apply Christ and his benefits to his covenanted people; to strengthen their faith in his promises, and solemnly to engage them to his service.

Q. *Why hath the infinitely glorious God chosen to carry on the business of man's salvation, in the way and method of a covenant, or gracious paction with him?*

A. For these reasons: 1. To display the mildness of

his nature, and moderation of his government; for, though he be the absolute emperor of the world, and may make of his creatures what he pleases, yet he sweetly tempers his supremacy with goodness, seeking (as it were) to reign with his subjects' consent.

2. To show his marvellous goodness, and condescension to the sons of men; in that he humbleth himself to treat familiarly with them, make promises, and come under obligations to make them happy and glorious. "Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him; and the son of man, that thou thus visitest him!"

3. God deals thus with men, that he might have reasonable service from a willing people, and their voluntary consent to his good laws. For though he might prescribe to man what condition of happiness he pleased, yet he would require nothing of him but what he should be obliged to judge a just and easy yoke.

4. That his people might serve and obey him, with the greater delight, having such gracious covenant-promises for their encouragement.

Q. *How many covenants hath God made with man, concerning life and salvation?*

A. Two; the first being called the *covenant of works;* the second, the *covenant of grace.*

Q *What is the covenant of works.*

A. It is a gracious agreement, which the great Creator made with our first parents, Adam and Eve, in their state of innocence; and in them, with all their children descending from them, by ordinary generation: wherein God promised them life and happiness, upon their perfect obedience to his holy will and law; and threatened them with death and misery in case of disobedience; and withal, giving them, for the trial of their obedience, a particular command, that they should not eat of the "tree of knowledge of good and evil," Gen. ii. 17. Gal. iii. 10, 12.

Q. *How doth it appear that God made such a covenant with our first parents?*

A. Because in this affair, the scripture lays down the essential parts of a covenant: we have two distinct parties contracting, God on the one part, and man on the other. We have God requiring something of man, viz. obedience to his will; and we have this requisition, attended with a promise of life upon obedience; and a threatening of death upon disobedience. And, lastly, we have Adam submitting or consenting to all this: for seeing he was made after the image of God, perfectly holy, he behoved certainly to consent to God's holy will, when at first laid before him, and that immediately by God himself, his gracious and bountiful Creator. And this also is confirmed by several places of scripture, Hos. vi. 7. Rom. ii. 27. Rom. vi. 14. Gal. iv. 24.

Q *Why is this covenant, by the compilers of our Confession of Faith, called sometimes a covenant of works, and sometimes a covenant of life?*

A. Because works, or perfect obedience, was the condition of this covenant, on man's part; and life, or perfect happiness, was the reward promised on God's part.

Q. *Was there no grace manifested in the first covenant?*

A. Yes, in several things: 1. In that the glorious Creator was pleased to descend (as it were) to a level, and transact a covenant with his own creature, and thereby come under bonds and obligations to him, Psal. cxiii. 5. 6. Rom. xi. 35.

2dly, In taking such pains to help the mutability of man's state and free-will, by hedging in his way with promises and threatenings; and thereby graciously fortifying and arming him against all temptations to sin, by furnishing him with arguments, both from the promise of reward in case of obedience, and the threatening of punishment in case of transgression.

3dly, In that he was pleased to promise a reward so great and glorious as eternal life, to man's obedience, when he was sufficiently obliged to it by the law of his creation, though nothing had been promised for it.

4thly, In that he created Adam with sufficiency of power and grace to enable him to perform God's whole will; gave him all the creatures to obey him, and allowed him intimate communion with himself.

* Q. *What law or rule had our first parents given them for their obedience, in the estate of innocency?*

A. They had both the moral law, and a positive law; both a general commandment, "Do this and live," and a special commandment, "not to eat of the tree of knowledge."

Q. *How were these laws given and promulgate to our first parents?*

A. By their creation in a perfect state, they had the moral law written and engraven in their hearts. But the positive law was given them by external revelation, Eccles. vii. 29. Rom. ii. 14, 15. Gen. ii. 17.

Q. *Why is that special command called a positive law, and distinguished from the moral law?*

A. In regard it is of the nature of a positive law, to command or prohibit things that before were indifferent, and only become good or evil by virtue of the command, and not of their own nature; so the eating of the tree of knowledge was neither good nor evil, but as commanded or forbidden by God. That law was not founded on the light or dictates of nature, as all the moral precepts are; which therefore are a standing and unalterable rule of righteousness.

Q. *Why did God forbid the eating of that tree?*

A. 1. To let Adam know that he was not absolute owner of what he possessed, but only a servant; and that God was the supreme Master and Lord of all.

2dly, To keep him in mind, that his happiness did not lie in time's things, but in the pleasing of God, and enjoying his favour.

3dly, To try his obedience and regard to the divine authority; and to render him for ever inexcusable, if he should disobey God in so easy a command, when he had such helps and encouragements to keep it.

Q. *Did our first parents keep their covenant with God?*

A. No; for though they had sufficient strength given them for keeping it perfectly, yet being left to the freedom of their own will, they did so mismanage the same, that they misbelieved God, hearkened to the devil, and complied with his temptation to eat the forbidden fruit: whereby they sinned against the clearest light, and were guilty of the most cursed ingratitude and rebellion against God.

Q. *What state did the breach of the covenant of works bring man into?*

A. Into a most wretched and miserable condition, having thereby lost God's image, his favour, and all communion with him, plunged himself into a fearful gulf of sin; and fallen under the sentence of death, and all sorts of miseries, temporal, spiritual, and eternal.

Q. Was the whole posterity of Adam brought into this woeful state by Adam's sin?

A. Yes; all of them who descended from him, by ordinary generation: so that never any, but the man Christ, was excepted.

Q. How can we be charged with Adam's guilt, seeing we were not existent when he sinned?

A. Because when the covenant was made with Adam, he acted as a public person, representing his whole posterity who were then in his loins; and thus the covenant being made with them in him, they sinned in him, and fell with him, Rom. v. 12, 18, 19. 1. Cor. xv. 21, 22.

Q. Was there no remedy provided for Adam in the first covenant in case of a breach?

A. No; for it threatened death for the least transgression, and left the transgressor hopeless under the curse, without a promise of pardon upon repentance, or of new strength upon losing what he had, or of a surety to answer for him, Gen. ii. 17. Gal. iii. 10.

Q. *Was it possible for fallen man to find out a remedy for himself?*

A. No; for he lost all power to do any thing that was good; and his misery called for a ransom of infinite value; which none but God could provide, Rom. vii. 18. Psal. xlix. 7, 8. Mic. vi. 6, 7. Hos. xiii. 9.

Q. *Is the covenant of works now disannulled, so as it hath no power over any man?*

A. No; for every natural man and unbeliever, is as much under the power and obligation of this covenant as ever Adam was; it still stands in full force against all such; they are obliged to perform its condition, viz. perfect obedience, and also to undergo the penalty for breaking it, for they lie still under its sentence, according to John iii. 18. "He that believeth not, is condemned already," *i. e.* by virtue of the covenant of works, which they have violated. And Eph. ii. 3. it is said, "We are all by nature the children of wrath," *i. e.* we are doomed to wrath and destruction by the broken covenant of works, and still lie under the sentence, while we are in the state of nature.

Q. *Is any man now able to answer the demands of the covenant of works?*

A. No; for, as we have lost our strength to perform its condition, so it is impossible for any created power to pay its penalty, or give satisfaction to infinite justice for the offence of sin.

Q. *But how is it consistent with justice to require that from us, which we are utterly unable to perform?*

A. Though we by our own fault have lost our strength to obey, yet God doth not thereby lose his just right to demand what belongs to him. A *creditor* loseth not his right to crave a just debt, because the *debtor* has squandered away his stock, and is turned bankrupt; nay, he is still liable and his children too. So in this case our being unable to pay, will not absolve us from our debts; especially seeing the inability is brought on by ourselves.

Q. *Is there any way for such bankrupts as we are, to be discharged of that debt, and loosed from the bond of the first covenant?*

A. There is no way, but by taking hold of the new covenant, and flying to its Mediator and Surety for the payment of our debt.

Q. *Are believers in Christ wholly absolved from the obligation of the covenant of works?*

A. They are wholly loosed from this covenant, as to its power of justification and condemnation. It can neither justify nor condemn them, since God hath entered into a new covenant with them for their justification. But though it be no ways binding upon believers, as a covenant; yet still it binds them as a law, or rule, for regulating their hearts and lives: for the law being of universal moral equity, it remains a perpetual rule of righteousness to believers as well as others, and it is impossible that a rational creature can at any time be loosed from its obligation as a holy and just law; though believers are freed from its condemnation as a covenant. As the law or covenant of works is (in respect of its threats and whips) a school-master to drive us unto Christ for righteousness and justification; so Christ graciously frees his people from the rigour and condemning power of this school-master; but refers them back to him as a guide and director of their walk and behaviour, Gal. iii. 13, 24. 1 Cor. ix. 21. Rom. vi. 14. Rom. vii. 16, 22, 25.

Q. *Is it simply impossible for any man now to enter heaven by the way of a covenant of works?*

A. Yes, certainly, for that way was eternally blocked up by Adam's fall; so that there is no passage by it ever since, Rom. iii. 20. Rom. viii. 3. Gal. ii. 21.

Q. *If there be no salvation by that covenant, why doth the Lord now require sinners to perform the condition of it,* viz. perfect obedience; *as he did the Israelites of old, and that young man,* Mat. xix. 17. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments?"

A. The Lord insists on the terms of the first covenant with all sinners in a natural state, not to shew that life is attainable that way, but for these reasons.

1*st*, To shew the equity of the terms of the first covenant, the justice of its sentence, and his right to demand obedience and satisfaction thereto.

2*dly*, To humble proud self-conceited sinners under a sense of guilt, and convince them of their own impotency.

3*dly*, To drive them out of themselves, and make them despair of salvation by their own righteousness, and of finding life by the first covenant, Rom. vii. 9.

4*thly*, To convince them of the absolute necessity of betaking themselves to the covenant of grace, and the righteousness of the Mediator therein provided, Gal. iii. 22, 24.

Q. *Why have men such a natural inclination to be justified and saved by the way of the old covenant of works?*

A. It being the covenant of nature, and made with Adam when all mankind was in his loins; men, by nature do still entertain a deep impression of it. Besides, man by nature being a proud and selfish creature, he is unwilling to be beholden to another for righteousness and salvation, but strongly inclineth to be his own saviour, and to stand upon his own legs, and this we all derive by natural generation from Adam. Hence it was that the Jews and Pharisees of old, sought so earnestly to establish their own righteousness, and declined to submit to the righteousness of Christ, Matt. xix. 16. Luke xviii. 11. Rom. x. 3. Hence also the Galatians of old, sought to join their own works with Christ's righteousness (as the Papists do now) in the matter of justification. We are all naturally married unto the law, or a covenant of works, that is our first husband; and from it we must necessarily be divorced, in order to our being married to Christ and his righteousness, in a covenant of grace. But so strong and rooted is our inclination to our first husband, the covenant of works; that even the best believers have a natural hankering after it, and

find it the greatest difficulty in the world, to get their hearts weaned and pluckt from self-righteousness; and from seeking to be justified and accepted with God, by virtue of something in themselves.

Q. *Did God leave all mankind to perish under the sentence and penalty of the broken covenant of works?*

A. No; for God of his own free-grace from all eternity, hath elected some to be redeemed and saved from it, Eph. i. 4, 5.

Q. *What way hath God chosen to redeem and save elect sinners from their lost and perishing estate?*

A. Man being wholly miserable, and incapable of any relief by the first covenant; God of his infinite mercy was pleased to frame a gracious new covenant, answering all the demands of our miserable circumstances, and constituted his own Son to be the Mediator and Surety of it; and this is now the only way and method of salvation, Gen. iii. 15. Gen. xvii. 2, 7. Rom. viii. 3. Acts iv. 12.

Q. *What is this gracious new covenant, which God hath made for redeeming fallen man?*

A. It may be said to be twofold, 1*st*, The covenant made from eternity with Christ, in name of the elect, commonly called the *covenant of redemption.*

2*dly*, The covenant of reconciliation, made in time with the elect in Christ, commonly called the *covenant of grace.*

Q. *Doth the word of God give any ground for this distinction?*

A. Yes, Psalm, lxxxix. 3. &c. Isa. lix. 21.

Q. *What is the covenant of redemption?*

A. It is an eternal and gracious agreement in the counsel of the glorious Trinity, upon the foresight of man's fall, for the redemption and recovery of elect sinners: wherein God the Father, out of his infinite mercy, gave a certain number of fallen mankind to God the Son, as their federal representative and Surety, to be by him redeemed and saved: and for this end, demanding of him, that he should assume their nature, and in their room satisfy divine justice, by paying their whole debt both of obedience and suffering, the which they were obliged to do by the covenant of works: and also, that he should undertake to gather all the lost elect and bring them unto God. And for his encouragement in this great work, it was promised to the Son, that he should have all requisite furniture, support, acceptance, and success: and likewise a glorious reward to himself, together with grace and glory to his people. With which proposals of the Father, the Son, out of his infinite free-love, did most cheerfully comply; undertook to do the whole work required of him, accepting of, and claiming the promises made unto him, Psalm lxxxix. 3, 4, 19, 20, &c. Isa. xlix. 3, 4. &c. Isa. lix. 20, 21. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. i. 2. Heb. x. 5, 9. Psalm ii. 7, 8. Isa. l. 5, 6, 7. Psalm xl. 7, 8. John x. 18. John xvii. 4, 5.

Q. *What is the covenant of grace?*

A. It is God's free and gracious paction with elect sinners in Christ, proposed to and made with them in the gospel: wherein, according to his eternal compact with Christ their surety, and for the sake of his mediation and merits, he graciously and immutably promiseth pardon, peace, grace, and glory to them. Particularly, he promiseth, in an absolute manner, to grant them the blessings of vocation, faith, regeneration, and other means of salvation. And, in order to the obtaining of the pardon of sin, the adoption of children, and eternal life (all which blessings are purchased by Christ) he requires of them, that they believe "in his Son the Lord Jesus Christ," and accept of him with all the benefits of this covenant, by a true and lively faith, which they are called to show forth by a sincere repentance, and study of new obedience. All which gracious promises and demands, the elect, in due time, upon God's call, do cordially acquiesce in, accept of, and give consent unto: and this they do, through the grace and strength of Christ their surety, according to his eternal engagement for them, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. Heb. viii. 10. John i. 12. John. iii. 16. James ii. 18, 22. John vi. 37. 44, 45. John xvii. 12. Acts v. 31.

Q. *Was not this new covenant a most wonderful, gracious, and suitable contrivance and remedy for our misery in a fallen state?*

A. Yes, for though the first was a glorious covenant, contrived in infinite wisdom; yet, seeing it could not answer the demands of the miserable circumstances we plunged ourselves into, God was content to lay it aside, and frame a new one suitable to our misery. For the first covenant leaving man helpless, hopeless, and remediless under its sentence, having no provision for pardon, place for repentance, nor room for a Mediator, God pitied us in our undone state, (though he could more easily have destroyed Adam and his posterity, and made a new world of innocent creatures, to have been governed by the first covenant) yea, he took down that glorious fabric of obedience and rewards, and framed a more gracious and excellent one in its stead, for saving lost man. And seeing man was disabled and incapacitate for covenanting with God by himself a second time, God found out a Mediator and Surety to bind for him and perform both the condition and pay the penalty of the first covenant, and answer for any new thing to be demanded of him. And thus both God's justice is satisfied, and man's happiness secured; the law-breaker's life saved, and the law-maker's honour maintained; and free-grace highly glorified.

Q. *Is there not a great affinity betwixt the covenant of redemption, and the covenant of grace.*

A. Yes, for they agree not only in their spring, ends, and indissolvable nature, but likewise in their substance and matter; in so far as the *covenant of redemption* doth comprehend the whole of the *covenant of grace*, both promises and demands: for the whole blessings and benefits promised in the covenant of grace to the elect, were from eternity promised in the covenant of redemption to Christ their head and representative; and so to the elect in him: and for the condition or qualifications required of the elect in the covenant of grace; they were first demanded of Christ their head in the covenant of redemption, who then undertook and became Surety for his people's performance. So that we see, in some respect, the covenant of grace is only a transcript of the covenant of redemption, according to 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. i. 2. Gal. iii. 16.

Q. *Wherein then doth those two covenants differ?*

A. In these respects, 1*st*, As to the time of making them; the covenant of redemption being made from all eternity; but the covenant of grace only in time, by the preaching of the gospel.

2*dly*, The federates, or parties covenanting, are different: in the covenant of redemption, the Father and the Son are the only parties covenanting; but in the covenant of grace, God and the elect are the parties. I grant, that Christ is a federate in the covenant of grace, as well as in that of redemption, but in different respects: for in the

first he stood as principal, but in the second as Surety. In the first he was the only party; but in the second he hath the elect joined with him, Christ is the Mediator and Surety of the covenant of grace, but the covenant of redemption hath no mediator or surety; the Father and the Son trusted one another upon the agreement.

3dly, These two covenants differ from one another as a prior treaty or agreement made by one friend for the behoof of another, doth differ from the posterior ratification of it by the party concerned, for whose good it was made. Our blessed Redeemer Christ, graciously sisted himself as the elect's representative in the covenant of redemption, transacted with God the creditor for the payment of their debt, and made a most advantageous bargain for them. But it being made without the elect's knowledge, it was necessary that their consent should be had to this treaty and method of salvation; wherefore God is pleased to cause it to be promulgate and proposed to them in the gospel, for the gaining of their consent. And God's voice to them in the gospel, is to this effect: "Are you content with what Christ my Son hath engaged and done in your name? Are you willing to quit all other methods of salvation, and come to me through a Mediator, and rely wholly upon his righteousness? Are you satisfied with the remedy provided for you in the covenant of redemption?" O, saith the poor soul (being determined thereto by the powerful operation of the Holy Ghost, whose office it is, according to the foresaid eternal agreement, to apply the remedy prepared by Christ), "This is a most noble method of salvation, I am well pleased with the eternal treaty and the execution of it, with the Mediator and his righteousness, and with the great and precious promises made to me in him: I renounce all other ways of salvation, and rely entirely on Christ to bring me to God." And this is that which we call the covenant of grace.

4thly, They differ in respect of their comprehensiveness; the covenant of redemption being far more large and comprehensive than the covenant of grace, in regard it doth contain it and much more: for the covenant of redemption hath in it, not only what is promised to, and required of the elect, but also many distinct demands of Christ as their Surety, and promises made to him as such, which do not immediately concern the elect: such as these, it was required of Christ that he should "leave his glory, take a body of flesh, fulfil the law, and suffer death: also, that he should quicken the elect by his spirit, convert and sanctify them, guide them through the world, and bring them safe to glory at last." Again it was promised to Christ personally, for his encouragement to engage in this work, that he should have all "needful assistance and furniture for it, acceptance and success in it, and a glorious personal reward, an honourable resurrection, and high exaltation above all principalities and powers. That he should have the administration of all things put in his hands, for the good of his people; as an unsearchable treasure of grace and rich supplies given him, to communicate to them, whatever is for their good and happiness:" whereupon Christ as our Surety, freely undertook the work proposed, and laid hold on the promises, both those made to him personally, and those made to his seed in him, Gal. iii. 16. 2 Tim. i. 9.

Thus we see how many things there are in the covenant of redemption, required of, and promised to Christ as the elect's Surety and representative, distinct from the things promised to and required of the elect themselves: which last part makes up the covenant of grace when promulgate to them in the gospel for their consent and acceptance; so that it is plainly a part or branch of the covenant of redemption, and differs nothing from it but as a part doth from the whole, or as the map of a particular province distinctly bounded and illuminated, with a new inscription or dedication, differs from a general map of the whole kingdom whereof it is a part. The covenant of grace, as proposed to and made with Christ in the elect's name from eternity, can hardly be distinguished from the covenant of redemption; for thus it is a constituent part thereof, and incorporated with it. But as it is drawn out by itself, to be proposed to the elect in the gospel and their consent obtained to it, it becomes a distinct covenant Nay, it is distinct both in respect of conditions and promises.

1. In respect of conditions; death and satisfaction for sin thereby, was the great condition of the covenant of redemption on Christ's part; but faith, and closing with Christ thereby, is the condition of the covenant of grace on the elect's part. I grant indeed, that Christ our Mediator is bound for the performance of both those conditions, but it is in different respects; for the first he is engaged as principal, but for the second, as surety. Christ undertook, for us, things of two sorts; first, things that he was to do for us, by himself: secondly, things that he was to make and enable us to do: the first sort he performed for us, according to the covenant of redemption, as the principal party engaged for them. The second, he works in us as the surety of the covenant of grace, which from eternity he undertook to be. Now there is a great difference betwixt these two; for though it be certain and true, in the strictest sense, that Christ actually died for us, and satisfied justice for us, and in our room; yet it can noways be said that he repents or believes for us; these are formally our acts, though it be Christ that enables us to do them, and works them in us.

2. In respect of promises; the great promise on God's part to Christ, in the covenant of redemption, was giving to him a seed and a glorious reward: but his great promise to the elect, in the covenant of grace, is the giving of redemption and eternal life to the party believing. The tenor of the covenant of redemption, as made with Christ from eternity, runs thus; "make thy soul an offering for sin, and thou shalt see thy seed:" but the tenor of the covenant of grace, as proposed to the elect in the gospel, is, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt not perish in thy sins, but have everlasting life." Isa. liii. 10. John iii. 16.

Q. *Wherein doth the covenant of grace differ from the covenant of works?*

A. In many things, such as, 1. The covenant of works, which God entered into with our first parents, was a covenant of friendship, betwixt God and an innocent creature, that were in amity together. But the covenant of grace is a covenant of reconciliation betwixt enemies, an offended God and guilty man; the first flowed from divine love and goodness; but the second from divine compassion and tender mercies.

2. The first covenant was universal, being made with all mankind in Adam. But the second in particular, being only made with the elect in Christ.

3. The condition required of Adam in the first covenant, was working and obeying, and that to perfection; but that required of us in the second, is believing.

4. The first covenant makes the proper condition of life, and the ground of man's justification before God, to be the righteousness performed by the man himself: but the second, declares it to be the righteousness performed by our surety Christ, apprehended by our faith.

5. The first covenant did not provide, nor so much as admit of a Mediator or surety to answer for Adam's performing his part of it, or of any remedy in case of breaking it; for it allowed no place for repentance; it gave no hopes of forgiveness upon any condition whatsoever. But the second covenant doth graciously admit and allow of all these.

6. The first covenant could be broken and disannulled, but the second is indissolvable and everlasting, because of the sufficiency and faithfulness of its surety, Isa. liv. 10. Isa. lv. 3. Heb. vii. 22, 24, 25.

7. The least sin or failing, on Adam's part, made void the first covenant, excluded him from all the blessings promised in it, and rendered him perfectly miserable: but all the sins and failings of the elect cannot dissolve the second, to deprive them of happiness, Psalm lxxxix. 31, 33, 34. Jer. iii. 14. Heb. xiii. 5. 8. 1 John ii. 1. 2.

Q. *Hath our faith the same place in the covenant of grace, that Adam's obedience had in the covenant of works? Or, is faith the condition of the covenant of grace, in the same sense, that Adam's obedience was the condition of the covenant of works?*

A. No, for Adam's obedience was his righteousness before God, and the proper ground of his justification and claim to happiness: it was a real and pleadable condition according to the covenant, upon which Adam's title to life and happiness was properly founded. But this cannot be said of the believer's faith; for faith is not his righteousness before God, nor the ground of his justification and claim to happiness; it being only the instrument or applying condition required of him for interesting him in the righteousness of Christ his surety; which alone is the proper ground of his justification and claim to happiness; and the only pleadable and meritorious condition of life and salvation, which the poor naked and guilty soul must flee to and depend upon.

2. The condition required of Adam, in the first covenant, was to be performed by him in his own strength, i. e. the strength that was given him at his creation. But the condition required in the second covenant, is not to be performed by the elect sinner in his own natural strength, but by the strength freely promised and communicated to him in this covenant.

Q. *Doth not the covenant of grace oblige us to obedience, as well as the covenant of works did?*

A. Yes, but not in the same way, or for the same ends.

Q. *What is the difference betwixt legal and evangelical obedience?*

A. It is very great in several respects: 1. Legal obedience was peremptorily commanded as man's duty: but evangelical obedience is also freely promised, and given as the gift of God.

2. The first could not be admitted, unless absolutely perfect: but the second is accepted, though imperfect, if sincere.

3. They vastly differ in their ends, the first was required as the proper condition of life and happiness, but the second, as an evidence of our faith, and conformity to our Redeemer. The first was for the justification of our persons; but the second for the testification of our gratitude for redeeming love. The first was required as the legal condition for purchasing of heaven and glory; but the second, as a gospel qualification in order to possessing it only.

Q. *What names or epithets doth the covenant of grace get in scripture?*

A. A great many, particularly it is called a testament, a covenant of peace, a covenant of life, a covenant of promise, a new covenant, an everlasting, holy, sure, and well ordered covenant, Heb. ix. 15. Ezek. xxxvii. 26. Mal. ii. 5. Eph. ii. 12. Heb. xii. 24. Isa. lv. 3. Luke i. 78. 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

Q *Why is this covenant called a testament?*

A. It is frequently called so in scripture, and that because the everlasting inheritance promised in it, with all things thereunto belonging, is freely bequeathed and made over to the elect; yea, even the things required of them, are freely promised to them: and all these precious promises and legacies are made sure and firm to them by the death of Jesus Christ the testator, Heb. ix. 16, 17. Matth. xxvi. 28.

Q. *Is the covenant of grace a scripture term, and what is the import and meaning of it?*

A. This term indeed is not found in the express words, though it be oft exprest in words equivalent. The term is very significant and most fitly appropriated to this covenant; in regard the free grace (i. e. the undeserved mercy and goodness) of God is richly and gloriously displayed in this covenant. It was free grace that inclined God at first to contrive it, that moved him afterwards to reveal and propose it. It is free grace that determines the elect to consent to it, and abide in it. And it is the exalting of God's free grace which is the great end and design of it. But more especially it is called a covenant of grace, in respect of the matter of it, all the blessings and good things promised in it being God's gracious and free gifts to undeserving sinners, proceeding merely from his gratuitous bounty and astonishing free love in Christ. Yea, so full of grace is this covenant, though God is pleased to require faith of us, as the condition to interest us in the benefits of it, and also good works to show forth that faith; yet, both that faith, and these works, are as freely promised and given to the elect by virtue of this covenant, as any other blessing in it, Eph. i. 4, 5, 6. Eph. ii. 8, 9, 10. Zech. iv. 8.

Q. *What are these blessings, gifts, and benefits, which are so freely offered and promised to us in this covenant?*

A. They are so many they cannot be numbered; and so great, they cannot be expressed. The great things stipulated on God's part in this covenant, and that which is the sum and substance of all his other promises, is, *I will be your God*, Jer. xxxi. 33. This is the fullest, largest, sweetest, sublimest, and most comprehensive promise in the whole Bible. The covenant of works had no such promise that we read of; God said only to Adam, *Do this and live, i. e.* Thou shalt have life and happiness. But in the covenant of grace he said, *Believe in my son,* and *I will be thy God, i. e.* I will not only give you life, heaven and glory, but I will give you myself, a Jehova, all I am, all I have, and all I can do, shall be thine. *I will be thy God*, includes all God's blessings to his people, whether grace or glory, earth or heaven, time or eternity. It implies his standing instead of all relations to them; his being their father, their king, their husband, their master, their friend, their benefactor, and all things to them. Further, *I will be your God*, im-

ports an interest in all the divine attributes and perfections; you shall have my wisdom for your direction, my power for your protection, my mercy for your pardon, my grace for your sanctification, my faithfulness for making good all the promises to you, and my sufficiency for giving you perfect happiness. Nay, a whole trinity shall be your's; the Father with his eternal love and pity, the Son with all the fulness of his purchase, and the Holy Ghost, to make application of the blessings of that purchase unto you.

Q. *What are the blessings of Christ's purchase contained in this covenant?*

A. All the blessings and mercies that ever were or shall be enjoyed by any believer in time or eternity; they are all the fruits of Christ's purchase, and run to them in the channel of this covenant. The chief of these particular blessings, are, "The new heart, illumination, faith, repentance, pardon, freedom from the law's curses, reconciliation, adoption, sanctification, access to God, hearing of prayers, the quickenings, consolations, and conduct of the holy Spirit, increase of grace, peace of conscience, perseverance, the ministry of angels, suitable outward provision, through-bearing at death, resurrection to life, and eternal glory:" together with all the graces of the Spirit, and innumerable other blessings, temporal, spiritual, and eternal: Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27. Heb. viii. 10, 11, 12, Psal. xxiii. 1, &c. Psal. xxxiv. 10. Psal. lxxxiv. 11. Psal. xci. 11, Isaiah xxxiii. 16. Isaiah xli. 10. Jer. iii. 19. Hos. xiv. 4, 5. John x. 28. 1 Cor. i. 30. 1 Cor. iii. 22. 2 Cor. i. 20. 2 Cor. vi. 18. Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. Jer. xxxii. 38, 39, 40, 41. Rom. viii. 26, 28. John iii. 18, 36. John xiv. 16, 17, 26. Isaiah liv. 13. Isaiah liii 11. Rom. iii. 24, 25, 26. 1 Tim. iv. 8. Phil. iv. 19. 2 Pet. i. 4.

Q. *Whether is the covenant of grace absolute or conditional.*

A. If the definition before given of this covenant with the scripture texts whereon it is founded, be duly considered and compared, we will find it is partly absolute, and partly conditional.

Q. *In what respect is the covenant of grace absolute?*

A. In respect of the first blessings and benefits promised in it, which serve as means for obtaining the ends of the covenant, such as effectual vocation, regeneration, faith, and repentance; these are promised, and given absolutely and freely by God for Christ's sake, without depending on any condition to be performed by the elect, Heb. vii. 10. John vi. 44, 45.

Q. *In what respect is this covenant conditional?*

A. In respect of the second and subsequent blessings of it, which are as the end of the foresaid means, such as union with Christ, justification, adoption, and glorification. God is pleased to suspend the bestowing of these till that condition be performed by the elect, which he requires, viz. faith, John i. 12. Gal. ii. 16. Phil. iii. 19.

Q. *In what sense is faith called a condition on our part, in this covenant?*

A. I shewed before that it is not to be meant in that sense, that obedience is called the condition of the covenant of works; that we do not understand it as an act any way meritorious or pleadable before God for a reward, or an act performed by our own inherent strength, or elicite by the power of our free-will. But we mean only that faith is an act or qualification required of us in point of duty, as necessarily antecedent to the conferring of the promised blessings of pardon and life: and that the bestowing of these blessings is suspended, till this act or condition be performed.

Q. *Is faith the only condition of the covenant of grace?*

A. In this covenant there are conditions of three sorts: 1. There is *conditio propter quam*, or a *condition for which* the blessings of this covenant are bestowed on the elect; and that is Christ's satisfaction and merits, in respect whereof all the blessings of the covenant are truly conditional, except that of election, and God's purpose of redemption.

2. There is *conditio per quam*, or a *condition by which* we come to get an actual title to, and interest in the second or subsequent blessings of the covenant before-mentioned, and that is faith, which is required as a necessary condition, instrument, or mean of application on one part, in order to our partaking of these blessings, Rom. v. 1. Acts xvi. 30.

3. There is *conditio sine qua non*, or a *condition without which* the foresaid blessings of pardon and eternal life cannot be enjoyed: so repentance and new obedience may be called conditions of this sort; in regard they are absolutely necessary for all Christians partly as the concomitants, fruits and evidences of a true faith; and partly to prepare and "make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light," Luke viii. 3. Zech. xii. 10. Col. i. 10, 12. Heb. xii. 14.

Q. *Doth it not detract from the grace and freeness of this covenant, and afford something to the creature whereof to boast to say that the covenant requires any condition on our part?*

A. If any act or duty required of us in this covenant, were to be performed by our natural strength, or by the help of common grace; or if it did give a right to the blessings of the covenant in any meritorious way, either by way of *congruity* or *condignity* in the popish sense: then indeed, it would derogate from the free grace of this covenant; wherefore, with all sound Protestants, we must abhor all thoughts of such duties, works, or conditions as these. But when we call faith a condition, and understand it only of a gracious instrument or qualification in the elect, purchased for them by Jesus Christ, absolutely promised by God in this covenant, and wrought in them by the holy Ghost; a grace, that receives all from God and gives the entire glory to God: such a conditionality of faith is noways inconsistent with a covenant of grace, or of promise, Eph. ii. 5, 8.

Q. *Since faith is not performed by our strength, but wrought in us by the holy Spirit, how can it be said to be a condition on our part?*

A. Though the grace and power of believing be derived from God's Spirit, yet the act of believing is properly the act and deed of the gracious soul, as being exerted and performed by his faculties; and hence it is that the Spirit of God stiles these truly our works, that are wrought in us by his grace, Isa. xxvi. 12. *Lord, thou hast wrought all our works in us.* They are still termed *our works*, though performed by his grace.

Q. *May not love, repentance, humility, self-denial, holiness, and new obedience, be called conditions of this covenant, as well as faith, seeing these are likewise required of all that enter into this covenant, and many blessings of this covenant are also suspended until the performance of them?*

A. There is a very great difference betwixt the conditionality of these graces, and that of faith, as I shall afterwards make appear. In the mean time, I own, if conditions be taken in a large sense, for every thing, duty, or qualification, that is necessarily required of those that enter into this covenant; then indeed all the forementioned graces and qualifications may be called conditions or terms in this co-

venant; and some of these terms, conditions or qualifications are necessary as antecedents unto our entering into this covenant, others as concomitants of it, and others as consequents to it, though indeed they are also freely promised to the elect.

Q. *What are these terms or qualifications, that are required as antecedents unto our entering into this covenant?*

A. Such as hearing of the word, some knowledge of God, and sense of our misery, and despair of help in ourselves, and a sight of our need of a Mediator, *&c.* All these may be called antecedent or preparatory conditions of our entering into covenant, in regard they are necessarily and previously requisite unto it, Mat. ix. 12. Luke xv. 16, 17. John iv. 10.

Q. *What are these terms or qualifications, that are required as concomitants?*

A. Such as, repentance, love, humility, self-denial, spiritual hunger, &c. these may be called concomitant conditions of our entering into this covenant, in regard they do necessarily accompany it, and are inseparable from true faith, Mark i. 15. Acts ii. 38. Luke vii. 47. Luke ix. 23. Phil. ii. 3, 8. Mat. v. 6.

Q. *What are these terms or qualifications, which are required as consequent unto our entering into this covenant?*

A. Such as, evangelical obedience, taking up the cross, patience, perseverance, &c. these we find laid down as fruits and evidences of faith, and required as necessary conditions of our enjoying and possessing the ends of this covenant; *viz.* eternal life and glory, Gen. xvii. 1, 2. Luke ix. 23. Heb. xii. 14. Heb. x. 36, 38. I say, all these may be called conditions, or terms in this covenant, in the sense before specified; as being duties and qualifications necessarily required of all those that enter into it; and so we find these words, conditions and terms, used by many sound Protestant Divines.

Q. *What is the difference betwixt the condition of faith, and these other conditions required? Or what perference hath faith to these, in reference to this covenant?*

A. Repentance, and the other graces and qualifications before-named, are only conditions of certain connection, without which we cannot be justified, united to Christ, or inherit his purchased glory: but faith is the only instrumental, uniting and applying condition of our justification, by, and through which, as a mean and instrument, we are actually justified, united to Christ and entitled to all the blessings of his purchase. It far excells all other graces, in regard it hath a peculiar influence on our justification, and union with Christ. It doth that noble office to us, which no other grace or act of ours is capable of, because of its special aptitude and fitness for taking hold of the Redeemer, and closing with his righteousness. Hence we are frequently said to be justified by faith, but never by repentance, love, or any other grace. And the righteousness that doth justify us, is oft called the "righteousness of faith and by faith." And it is so called to teach us, that as the righteousness of Christ is the only meritorious condition of our justification and our partaking of the great blessings of that covenant; so faith is the only instrument and applying condition thereof, Rom. iv. 13. Rom. x. 6. Phil. iii. 9. Gal. 5. Heb. xi. 7.

Q. *Doth faith justify, and entitle us to the blessings of the covenant, as a work, grace, or habit in us, of special excellency and worth before God?*

A. Not at all, for if it be considered as a work or grace in us, it hath not any more intrinsic worth or value, than other gracious habits, nor any more influence on our justification before God, than other graces have, which is indeed none at all. Faith then, doth not any ways justify us upon the account of its own worth, or as it is a work or grace of ours; but only as it is an instrument having a peculiar fitness as the hand of the soul, for apprehending of Christ, and applying his righteousness, which is the only ground of our justification before God. And upon this account only it is, that faith is preferred to all the rest of the graces, and called the only condition of the covenant of grace on our part.

Q. *Why is Christ called the Mediator and surety of the covenant of grace?*

A. 1. He is called the Mediator of it, because he graciously interposeth betwixt God and man, who were at variance, and by his blood and Spirit reconciles them together, and brings them into a covenant of peace and friendship. 2. He is called surety of this covenant, because he graciously undertakes for both parties fulfilling their parts of it, *viz.* that God shall perform all his promises to the elect, and that they shall do whatever God requires of them, 1 Tim. ii. 5. Heb. ix. 15. Heb. vii. 22.

Q. *Doth God need any surety or cautioner on his part?*

A. Not at all, upon his own account, for he is the faithful and immutable God, *for whom it is impossible to lie*, or falsify his promise. But only on our account, for our guilt having made us suspicious that God would not accept, or dwell with such unworthy creatures: it was requisite for our comfort that the Son of God should be surety to us, for the performance of these promises, that are truly so great in themselves and may justly be astonishing to our thoughts.

Q. *Is this covenant universal, or made and entered into with all men, as the first covenant was?*

A. No; it is only made and entered into, with such as accept the offers and terms of it, and these are none but the elect, Isa. lv. 3. Ezek. xi. 19, 20. Heb. viii. 10. Rom. ix. 4. Rom. xi. 5, 7.

Q. *Is this covenant offered to none else?*

A. Christ, and the benefits of this covenant are tendered to all that hear the gospel, without exception: and this is plain from the many general calls and invitations of Christ to lost sinners, with the promises thereto annexed, which we have recorded; together with his peremptory commands, that require every man to come to him, and believe in him, and that under the pain of damnation, Prov. i. 20, 21, 22, 23. Prov. viii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Isaiah xlv. 22. Isaiah lv. 1. Mark xvi. 15, 16. Acts ii. 38, 39. Rev. iii. 17, 18. Rev. xxii. 17.

Q. *Have all men, even the worst, sufficient warrant from these general calls, commands, and promises to come to Christ and take hold of this covenant, with all its benefits and promises?*

A. Yes; they may do it warrantably, without any fear of presumption, firmly expecting welcome upon their coming. Nay, they heinously sin against God and their own souls, if they neglect to do it, Isa. li. 3, 4, 5. John iv. 37. Heb ii. 3 Heb. iv. 1, 2.

Q. *Why is this covenant offered and tendered to all the hearers of the gospel indefinitely, seeing it is only made with a certain number of them, viz the elect?*

A. Because it hath so pleased a wise and sovereign God, who doth all things, "according to the counsel of his will,"

and is not bound to give an account of his matters. Yet, we may adventure to say, that he doth it for these ends; namely, that he may proclaim the sufficiency and perfection of Christ's ransom, together with the freeness and fulness of divine grace, as a sufficient foundation for all to believe, and flee to Christ for refuge. And also, that by this method the elect may be gathered out of the multitude, and the refusers of Christ left without excuse, Eph. ii. 11. Job xxxiii. 13. Mat. xx. 16. Luke xv. 22. Heb. ii. 3. Heb. xi. 13, 14.

Q. *Is there any to salvation, but by the covenant of grace and Christ its Mediator?*

A. No. Acts iv. 12. 1 Cor. ii. 13. Gal. ii. 16.

Q. *How then were the faithful saved, who lived under the law before Christ's coming in the flesh?*

A. Though they had a dark and legal dispensation of the mystery of grace, yet they were under the same covenant, and saved in the same method with us; for they had the same Mediator and surety, typified to them by Moses and the sacrifices; they had the same promises of remission and salvation, which we have: and they were called to look through the types and figures, and act faith on Christ to come, as their only Saviour and Redeemer. And so they were justified by Christ in the method of the covenant of grace, and saved by virtue of the blood of Christ their surety, which was agreed upon to be shed for them in due time, according to the covenant of redemption; upon which account he is called "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. xiii. 8. See also Psalm. ii. 12. Isa. xlv. 22. Acts x. 43. Gal. iii. 7, 8, 9. 1 Cor. x. 4.

Q. *Was the covenant of grace promulgate and dispensed to the church, always after one and the same manner?*

A. No; but in different manners; yea, so different, that though the covenant of grace, under all periods, hath still been the same for substance, yet, because of its gradual revelation and different administration, is distinguished into the Old and New Testament, or the old and the new covenant of grace. The old covenant being that which was administred before Christ's coming in the flesh; and the new, that which is administred since his coming, Heb. i. 1. Jer. xxxi. 31. 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7, 8. Heb. viii. 13. Heb. ix. 1.

Q. *Wherein doth the dispensation of the new covenant of Grace, differ from that of the old?*

A. The Old Testament, or covenant of grace, was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, and other types: which did all point forth Christ as to come. But the new covenant of grace is administered by the preaching of the word, and dispensing of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, which shew forth Christ as already come. Moreover the new dispensation of the covenant is far more easy, clear, efficacious and extensive than that of the old, Heb. x. 1, 2, 3 &c. 1 Pet. i. 10. Matth. xxviii. 19. 1 Cor. xi. 23. Heb. viii. 6, &c.

Q. *What way hath God taken to establish and confirm the covenant of grace to us?*

A. Several ways: 1. By his word of promise: 2. By his oath: 3. By the death and blood of his Son: 4. By outward signs and seals, commonly called sacraments, Gen. xvii. 7. Gen. xxii. 16, 17. Heb. vi. 13. to 18. Heb. xi. 16, 17. Rom. iv. 11.

Concerning the Sacraments.

Quest. *WHAT is the proper signification of the word Sacrament?*

A. It is not a scriptural word, more than the word Trinity is: yet seeing the thing signified is there, and the word is very significant, it may be lawfully used. Anciently the word sacrament was a military word, in use among the Romans, and signified the "solemn oath which the soldiers took, to be true to their general;" afterwards, it was used by ecclesiastical writers, to signify any holy mystery, and particularly the sealing ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper; and indeed it is very applicable to them, seeing, by receiving these seals, we solemnly engage ourselves to be the Lord's, and swear to stand by him as faithful soldiers, fighting under his banner against all his enemies.

Q. *What is the true nature and use of a sacrament?*

A. It is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ in his church, and annexed as a seal to the covenant of grace; wherein, by outward and sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of his mediation, are represented, sealed and applied to those that are within the covenant, to confirm their interest in him, to strengthen and increase their faith and all other graces, to testify and cherish their love and communion one with another, to put a visible difference betwixt those that belong to the church, and the rest of the world: and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ according to his word, Gen. xvii. 7, 10. Rom. iv. 11. 1 Cor. xi. 24. Rom. xv. 8. Rom. vi. 3. Eph. iv. 5.

Q. *Why is it said to be an ordinance instituted by Christ in the church?*

A. 1. To show that Christ is the sole king and head of the church, who alone hath the power to appoint her ordinances. 2. To distinguish the sacraments of Christ's institution from those of Popish invention, viz. the five bastard sacraments of *ordination, confirmation, pennance, marriage*, and *extreme unction*: none of which are instituted by Christ for sacraments; nor have they the parts of true sacraments, and none of them are seals of the covenant of grace.

Q. *What are the parts of a sacrament?*

A. Every sacrament hath two parts: the one external and earthly; and the other spiritual and heavenly. There is an outward sensible sign, that doth represent, convey, seal, and apply the spiritual benefit thereby signified.

Q. *What is a sensible sign?*

A. That which is obvious to the outward senses of *hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling, or hearing*. And such are both the sacramental elements and sacramental actions.

Q *What things do sacraments signify and seal?*

A. 1. As they are signs, they signify and represent the grace and good-will of God in Christ to his covenanted people. 2. As they are seals, they ratify and confirm his people's right to all the blessings and promises of the covenant, and likewise their engagements to new obedience.

Q. *Is not the word alone sufficient to salvation? What need is there for sacraments?*

A. It is enough to satisfy us, that the infinitely wise God hath thought fit to adjoin sacraments to his word, as necessary means of his peoples salvation and comfort. And since he hath thus graciously appointed them; it becomes us with reverence, thankfulness, and diligence, to receive them, and to judge the contempt or abuse of them a heinous sin before God.

Q. *How doth the word and sacraments differ as means of salvation?*

A. In several things; 1. The word is directed to the

bodily ear; but the sacraments to the eye and other senses. 2. The word is preached to all without exception; but the sacraments belong to none but the members of the church. 3. The word is the ordinary mean of begetting faith; but the sacraments are means for confirming and increasing it, Mark xvi. 15. Acts xviii. 36. Gen. xvii. 7. 1 Cor. iii. 5. Rom. iv. 11.

Q. *Why hath God adjoined sacraments to the word?*

A. 1. That he might give a further proof of his condescending goodness and tender concern for his peoples good. It is a wonderful condescension in God to dispose his grace into a covenant form, and enter into a paction with us; but it is yet more, to be content to add seals to it, for our further confirmation and consolation.

2. That they might serve to awaken the affections and excite grace. Sacraments are, as it were, a visible gospel; the offers of free love and benefits of Christ's purchase are thereby exposed to the eye, as the word doth sound them in the ear. God knows our stupidity and dulness, that we are much more affected with things that we see with our eyes than that which we only hear

3. That he might provide against that prevailing plague of unbelief in his people: and strengthen their weak faith, by giving them sensible signs of his love, and visible pledge of their interest in it. For (as Christ said to the nobleman of Capernaum, John iv. 48.) "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe."

Q. *Are the sacraments efficacious to work grace in all that partake of them?*

A. No; for we read of baptism administered to Simon Magus, who still remained a naughty man: and that the Lord's supper may be received by persons unworthy, Acts viii. 23. Luke xiii. 26, 27. 1 Cor xi. 27.

Q. *Whence have the sacraments their efficacy.*

A. Negatively they have it not from themselves, *ex opere operato*, according to the papists: nor from the intention or holiness of the minister that dispenseth them. But, 2. Positively, they have it from Christ's blessing, and the Spirit's working in and by them upon the souls of such as partake of them. It is only Christ, who, by his Spirit, puts life and virtue in the sacraments, and makes them effectual means for conveying and applying his saving benefits to his peoples souls.

Q. *What were the ordinary sacraments of the Old Testament dispensation?*

A. Circumcision and the passover, which are now abrogated by the coming of Christ, who was typified by them.

Q. *Hath not Christ appointed sacraments under the New Testament dispensation, in the room of those which he abolished?*

A. Yes; viz. Baptism and the Lord's supper.

Q. *Are not the sacraments, both of the Old and New Testament, for substance the same?*

A. Yes; for they both represent and exhibit Jesus Christ, and the same spiritual benefits and mercies through him, Rom. iv. 11. 1 Cor. x. 1.

Q. *Is there no difference betwixt them?*

A. Yes; in several respects: 1. The Old sacraments represented Christ as to come; but the new, as already come. 2. The old represented Christ more darkly; but the new more clearly and plainly. 3. The old were only to endure till Christ's coming in the flesh; but the new, until Christ's coming in glory. 4. Their outward signs differ much one from another.

Q. *How doth it appear that circumcision and baptism are the same in substance?*

A. In respect they are both sacraments for initiation, typifying and representing our natural pollution and original guilt, the necessity of being purified from carnal affections, and the way of our salvation by the shedding of Christ's blood.

Q. *How doth it appear that the passover and the Lord's supper are the same for substance.*

A. By the following things, 1. They both represent Christ crucified, and commemorate his love in delivering his people from the bondage of sin and satan.

2. The Isralites behoved to prepare themselves for keeping the passover, for some time before; particularly they kept the paschal-lamb four days in their houses, before it was killed; during which time (as their writers tells), it was tied to their bed-posts, that by their constant hearing of its bleatings, they might be excited to look back and remember their sore bondage in Egypt, and their gracious deliverance from it; and also to look forward and remember the sufferings and agonies of the Messiah for their sins. In like manner, communicants ought to prepare themselves for the Lord's supper, by serious and frequent meditating upon their misery by nature, the evil of sin, and the bitter agonies which Christ endured in delivering them from it.

3. As the paschal-lamb was roasted with fire; so Christ, in the Lord's supper, is held forth as scorched with the fire of God's wrath.

4. As the paschal-lamb behoved to be eaten, and that wholly; so Christ, in the Lord's supper, must be received by faith, and that wholly in all his offices.

5. As the lamb in the passover behoved to be eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs; so Christ must be received, in the Lord's supper, in truth and sincerity, with bitter repentings for sin.

6. As the lamb, in the first passover, was to be eaten by the Israelites in haste, with their loins girt, staves in their hands, and shoes on their feet; so Christ in the Lord's supper, must be received without delay, with holy resolution and preparation for our spiritual journey, travelling as pilgrims through the wilderness of this world.

7. As the blood of the lamb was to be sprinkled on their door-posts and lintels, for securing them from the destroying angel, that cut off the Egyptians first-born; so, in the Lord's supper, we must have our whole souls besprinkled with Christ's blood by faith, for securing us from the stroke of divine justice; nay, also our outward conversation, that is visible to the world, must be sprinkled that they may take notice of our having been with Jesus, Exod. xii. 1. Cor. v. 7, 8.

Concerning Baptism.

Quest. *WHAT is the true nature and use of baptism?*

A. Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, annexed as a sign and seal of God's covenant with believers in Christ; wherein Jesus Christ hath ordained the washing with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; to be a sign, not only of the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church; but also a sign and seal of his interest in the covenant of grace, with all its blessings purchased by the blood of Christ, represented by that water, and particularly to signify and seal his ingrafting into Christ his remission of sins

by his blood, and regeneration by his spirit; his adoption into God's family, and resurrection into everlasting life. And likewise his solemn dedication to God through Jesus Christ; and entering into an open and professed engagement to be the Lord's, wholly and only his; and to walk with him in newness of life, Mat. xxviii. 19. Gal. iii. 27. Mark i. 4. Tit. iii. 5. Eph. 5, 26. Rom. vi. 4, 5, 6, 11. 1 Pet. iii. 21.

Q. *How many sorts of baptism are mentioned in scripture?*

A. We read of six-fold baptism, 1. The Levitical baptisms or washings, Heb. ix. 10. 2. The baptism of tears or repentance, Luke vii. 38. 3. The baptism of affliction, blood, or martyrdom: thus Christ and the martyrs were baptized, Mat. xx. 22, 23. Luke xii. 50. 4. The baptism of the Holy Ghost, or the conferring of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, Acts i, 5. 5. It is sometimes put for the Christian faith or doctrine of baptism, Acts xviii. 25. 6. There is the sacrament of baptism, which we now speak of.

But principally, baptism is two-fold, external and internal, *fluminis et flaminis*, of water, and of the Spirit.

Q. *What parts doth the sacrament of baptism consist of?*

A. Of two parts: 1. The outward and visible part signifying. 2. The spiritual and invisible part thereby signified.

Q. *What is the outward part signifying?*

A. The washing of the body with water, and the using of the words of institution.

Q. *What is the spiritual part signified by the washing with water.*

A. 1. The washing away of the guilt of sin, or our justification by the blood of Christ applied to the soul. 2. The washing away of the filth of sin, or our sanctification by the Spirit of Christ in the work of regeneration Rev. i. 5. John iii. 5.

Q. *What is signified by the words of institution, or baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost?*

A. 1. It signifies that ministers have authority from God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to administer this sacrament of baptism, Mat. xxviii. 18, 19.

2. It signifies the baptised person his entering into a solemn covenant with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, his chusing and taking God the Father, as his God and Father; God the Son as his Redeemer and Saviour; and God the Holy Ghost, as his guide, sanctifier, and comforter; also it signifies, his consecration to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and his coming under engagements to the faith, profession and obedience of the holy Trinity; together with his solemn renouncing of the three great enemies of the holy Trinity, *viz.* the devil, the world and the flesh, 2 Cor viii. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 21.

Q. *Why is the blood of Christ, and blessings of the new covenant, represented here by water.*

A. Because of the near resemblance they have to one another in these things; 1. Water hath a cleansing virtue for taking away filth and pollution from the body, so Christ's blood cleanses the soul from sin.

2. Water hath a refreshing virtue to a thirsty traveller, and the dry withered herbs; so Christ's blood and benefits are most refreshing to the poor thirsty soul.

3. Water hath an extinguishing quality, for quenching fire; so the blood of Christ quencheth both the fire of God's wrath, and the fire of our lusts.

4. Water hath a mollifying virtue; it softens the hardened earth; so Christ's blood hath softened many a hardened heart into tears, and melted them into a compliance with God's will.

5. Water is most necessary, our bodies could not live or subsist without it; so the blood of Christ is the most necessary and useful thing in the world; our souls without it would perish eternally.

6. Water is cheap and free to all, no man is denied of it; so the blood of Christ is offered freely to all that please to accept of it.

7. Water hath no effect nor operation upon us, unless it be sprinkled or applied; so neither hath the blood of Christ any effect upon us, till it be applied by faith.

Q. *Is there no sacramental element or rite to be used in baptism, but the washing with water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?*

A. No; for though the papists do join herewith, salt, spittle, oil, and the sign of a cross, yet they have no warrant for these from Christ or his apostles: and therefore they are not to be regarded, but as superstitious and antichristian additions to Christ's holy institution.

Q. *For what special ends hath the Lord appointed baptism?*

A. They are various; 1. To be a notour badge of our Christian profession, to distinguish us from Jews, Pagans and Mahometans.

2. To be a teaching sign or symbol. for instructing us in the knowledge of the great articles of the christian faith; particularly, it is a looking glass to show us our natural pollution and misery by reason of sin, and our remedy provided in the blood of Christ.

3. To be a confirming seal of God's covenant for assuring believers of the reality of his love, the truth of his promises, and the certainty of their title to the childrens' inheritance, and (as it were) for giving them infeftment and seising in all the blessings of Christ's purchase; even as men are invested in the right, and put in the possession of a bargain by formalities of law; as a house is delivered us by a key; or a field by stone or earth.

4. To be a gracious channel and means for conveying grace, and soul-purification, and spiritual blessings, to those for whom they are designed.

5. To be an obligatory bond on our path to be true and faithful to God, to renounce the service of sin and Satan, and to walk with God in newness of life.

6. To be a trysting place for parents, to meet and treat with Christ concerning the salvation of their young ones. For all which see Gal. v. 3. Acts ii. 38, 41. Rom. iv. 11. Col. ii. 11, 12. Acts xxii. 16. Eph. v. 26. 1 Peter iii. 21. Luke xviii. 15, 16.

Q. *When God doth seal his covenant with believers at baptism; what things are engaged and sealed on his part?*

A. 1. That he will be our God. 2. Receive and own us as members of his visible church. 3. Give us a sealed ought to church ordinances and privileges. 4. Cut us off from the old stock of nature, and ingraft us into Christ. 5. Take us into his family, and under his providential care. 6. Entitle us to Christ's purchase, and make over all the blessings and benefits of the new covenant, *viz.* remission of sin, regeneration, adoption, sanctification, resurrection to life, and eternal glory and happiness.

Q. *Doth baptism seal and apply these things equally to all who are baptised?*

A. No; for to elect infants and believers in reality, it seals and applies these things absolutely. But to those who are only believers in profession, it seals and applies conditionally, *i. e.* upon supposition that they be what they profess.

Q. *Have unbelievers then no benefit by their baptism?*

A. Yes; in so far as they are hereby distinguished from the rest of the world, externally separated from Satan, the world and the flesh, are dedicated to Christ and his service, become members of the visible church, and have a sealed right to gospel ordinances and privileges, if they do not forefeit these by their after-carriage, Rom. ix. 4. 1 Cor. viii. 14.

Q. *Is there any thing engaged or sealed on our part in baptism?*

A. Yes, *viz.* that we will be the Lord's, *i e.* that we will be wholly the Lord's, soul and body, in all we are, or have. 2. That we will be only the Lord's, and therefore renounce all other Lords and masters, the devil, the world and the flesh. 3. That we will be the Lord's by practice as well as profession, that we will mortify sin, wage war against Christ's enemies, fight under Christ's banner, and study conformity to him. Rom. vi. 4, 5, 12. 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. 2 Cor. viii. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 21.

Q. *Are the benefits sealed to believers immediately conferred upon them, at the moment of baptism?*

A. Though a sealed right to these be then given them, yet the efficacy of baptism is not necessarily tied to that moment of time wherein it is administred: for God being a most free agent, makes this ordinance effectual, and confers his grace when and how he pleaseth; besides the fruit and power of baptism reacheth to the whole course of a believer's life, John iii. 5, 8.

Q. *Doth not baptism remove original sin and confer regenerating grace to all the partakers of it?*

A. No; for many partake of baptism who are unregenerated still: baptism of its own nature, or by itself, operates nothing; but only as the Spirit of God, (the author of grace) doth concur therewith; and being a free agent, he works grace before, at, or after baptism, as he pleaseth. And for original sin, it is not then taken away from believers themselves, except as to its guilt and dominion, (if it please the Spirit to co operate at that time, and apply the blood of Christ), but as to its pollution and inherence, it remains in part during their whole lives, as is sadly verified by the complaints of the best of God's people, Psal. li. 5. 6. 7. Rom. 7. 23. 25. Acts viii. 13. 23.

Q. *What is the necessity of baptism?*

A. It is necessary in respect of the command of Christ, who hath appointed it as a sign and a seal of his covenant, and an external mean of salvation; and therefore ought to be held in reverence, and sought for with all due care: and to contemn or neglect this ordinance of Christ's institution is a very heinous sin, Mat. xxviii. 19. Luke vii. 30. Acts xvii. 14. Exod. iv. 24. 25.

Q. *Is outward baptism absolutely necessary to salvation? Or are they damned who die without it?*

A. It is not the want, but the contempt of this ordinance, that exposeth to damnation; for the converted thief wanted baptism and was saved; besides, it would be a great injury to free grace, and a horrid thing in itself, to say, that it is in the power of wicked men to damn the souls of others, by their wilful neglect of this ordinance, or that the Israelites infants, who died before the eight day, or while they were in the wilderness, were all damned; neither are parents guilty in this matter, if they do not neglect this ordinance of Christ, when and where it may be had. Rom. iv. 11. Acts x. 2, 4, 22, 31. 45, 47.

Q. *Where should baptism be administred?*

A. In the place of public worship, and in the face of the congregation, where the people may most conviently see and hear; and not in private places.

Q. *What is the necessity thereof?*

A. In regard baptism is the public entry and door to Christ's house, or the ordinance whereby persons are solemnly admitted into the church, and made members of Christ's family: and therefore it is necessary that the church should be publicly called and assembled to the administration of this public church-ordinance. And that, for these reasons:

1. That thereby they may witness, homologate and consent to the admission of new members into the church or family of Christ.

2. That the engagement of parents or the party baptised may be public and solemn before many witnesses.

3. That there may be many to join in prayer for a blessing upon the ordinance: It is much for the interest of both parents and children, to have the prayers of all the godly in the congregation for them, on such an occasion; which to be sure are far more prevalent and effectual, than the prayers of a few.

4. That the whole congregation may be edified by the dispensing of this solemn ordinance, and excited to remember and improve their own baptism, and be faithful in keeping the covenant engagements which they then sealed before many witnesses, and also be humbled for former breaches.

Q. *To whom is baptism to be administered?*

A. Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, "and so strangers from the covenant of promise," till they profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him: but infants descending from parents, either both, or but one of them, professing faith in Christ and obedience to him, are in that respect within the covenant, and so to be baptised, Acts viii. 36, 37. Gen. xvii. 7, 10. Gal. iii. 9, 14. Acts ii. 38, 49, 41. 1 Cor. vii. 14. Luke xviii. 15, 16. Rom. xi. 16.

Q. *To whom is baptism not to be administered?*

A. Not to heathens and infidels, or persons openly scandalous; for these being without the covenant, and out of the visible church, have no right to the seals thereof; neither have their infants while they continue so. But if upon hearing the gospel they repent and believe, duly make profession of their faith and obedience, they have a right to this ordinance, Eph. ii. 12. Mark xvi. 15, 16. Acts. viii. 13, 36, 37.

Q. *Who properly have a right to baptism?*

A. All the members of the visible church, and their infants, Acts. ii. 39.

Q. *What is it you call the visible church?*

A. It is a society made up of those who in all ages and places of the world, do profess Christ and the true religion; and of their children.

Q. *What is the invisible church?*

A. The whole body of the elect that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ their head.

Q. *Do all that are baptised become members of the invisible church, and thereby ingrafted into Christ?*

A. No; for our baptism makes us only members of the visible church.

Q. *What is it to be really ingrafted into Christ?*

A. It is for sinners to be cut off from the old stock of nature, and united to Jesus Christ, that they may grow up in him, and bring forth fruit unto him; and this is done upon our believing.

Q. *Are adult persons and infants to be baptised in the same way and method?*

A. No; for the adult, or persons come to years, must first be instructed in the faith of Christ, and principles of Christianity, and are to make profession of the same, with confession of their sins, before they be baptised, according to the ancient practice, Matth. iii. 6. Matth. xxviii. 19. Acts. viii. 47. But the infants of believers (of whom these things cannot be expected or required) are to be baptised without such profession or confession, their parents undertaking as sponsors for them.

Q. *But how should infants be admitted to baptism, till they believe and confess their faith, seeing according to Mark xvi. 16. they must first believe, and then be baptised?*

A. This is only meant of adult persons without the visible church. And though infants do not actually profess their faith, as being incapable of it; yet they are to be ranked among believers, as being the children of believing parents: for infants are but parts of the parents wrapt up in another skin, and to be accounted but one person with them, as the root and branches are but one tree according to Rom. xi. 16. We are to judge of children by their parents, till they come to the use of reason, and be capable to chuse their own way, and then indeed they may disinherit themselves by their degeneracy. But till then we are to judge of them by the parents, as we do of a graft taken from a tree and implanted in a new stock; for we judge of the graft by the tree from which it was taken, until it bear fruit by itself, whereby it may be discerned. It is upon this account that God calls the children of his people, *His children*, and children *born unto him*, Ezek. xvi. 20. Now if children have a covenant relation to God, or be within the covenant (as the children of believing parents certainly are) they have a right to the signs and seals of it also, Gen. xvii. 7. Deut. xxix. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. Acts ii. 39.

Q. *Ought not infants, according to this argument, to be admitted to the Lord's supper also?*

A. The infants of believers have, indeed, upon the same account, a remote right to this seal likewise; though for the present they are incapable to receive it, as wanting the actual exercise of reason, which is absolutely necessary, in order to our examining ourselves, and decerning the Lord's body; these being the indispensable duties of all such as partake of the Lord's supper, 1 Cor. xi. 28, 29.

Q. *Should they not, for the same reason, be kept from the seal of baptism, seeing they understand not the nature of that ordinance, nor the duties of the baptized?*

A. 1*st*, They understand as much of it as the Jewish infants did of circumcision, at eight days of age; and yet that ordinance behoved not to be longer delayed. Now there is the same reason for administrating the sacrament of baptism to infants under the gospel, that there was for circumcision under the law, seeing baptism is now come in its room, as the sacrament of initiation or entrance into the church, which circumcision then was. If, by divine warrant, not only Abraham, but all his seed, had a right to the initiatory seal of the covenant, Gen. xvii. 7, 10. then believers now, who are Abraham's children, and under the same covenant with him, must still have the same privilege; seeing that ancient grant was never afterwards repealed, but expressly confirmed under the gospel, according to Acts ii. 39. Gal. iii. 9, 14, 16.

2*dly*, Infants may reap the benefit of baptism, though they understand not its meaning. The infants Christ took up in his arms, Luke xviii. knew not his meaning, yet they got his blessing. An inheritance bequeathed to a poor child in the cradle, is of use to it, though it understand not the advantage at present, nor hath the comfortable possession, till it come to years.

3*dly*, It is to be observed, that though the Jewish infants did partake of circumcision, yet they were excluded from the passover; and that for the same ground that we exclude our infants from the Lord's supper, which is now come in its room; viz. the want of the actual exercise of reason. For none were to share of the passover but such as could ask concerning the meaning thereof, Exod. xii. 26. But this was not absolutely needful for partaking of circumcision, in regard that was only for conveying a right; but the other was for commemorating a benefit, which necessarily supposed understanding.

Q. *Is there any other scripture warrant for the baptism of infants, beside that of the circumcision of the Jewish children?*

A. Though that be sufficient warrant for it; yet we have more; for, 1. Christ commands his apostles to disciple and baptise all nations, of which infants are no small part: as our Saviour excludes none from the ordinance, so he limits no time nor age for the dispensing of it: there was no need to give any express charge concerning infants, seeing their privilege was settled for many ages before, and they still in possession of it, by the initiatory seal of circumcision, which was the same in substance with baptism. This was never reversed, but their right declared to continue, Acts ii. 39.

2. Infants are capable both of grace and glory, and consequently are capable of baptism, which seals our right to these, Luke i. 15. Matt. xviii. 9. Luke xviii. 15.

3. Children of believers are pronounced holy, 1 Cor. vii. 14. *i. e.* federately holy, as being within the covenant; and therefore they must needs have a right to the seal of it.

4. Infant baptism was universally practised in the ancient church, they deriving it from the apostles, whose example they followed in this matter; and of whom we have it several times recorded, that they baptised such as believed with their households, such as the house of Lydia, the jailor, and Stephanas, Acts xvi. 15, 33. 1 Cor. i. 16.

Q. *To whom pertains it to present the infants of the visible church to baptism?*

A. It belongs properly to the parents, and not to these who are called *god-fathers* or *god-mothers*—because children have a right to baptism, only in and by their parents: and these only have a power, both by the law of God and nature, to dispose of their young ones, and to order their education; and they only are accountable to God for them. And, in the sense of the law, their will is the children's will. Upon all which accounts, parents only ought to present their infants to God in baptism, and consent for them to the covenant of grace, Josh. xxiv. 15. Deut. xxix. 10, 11.

Q. *What doth the parents bringing and presenting their children in baptism import and signify in itself?*

A. It imports these things: 1. A public acknowledgment, that their children are defiled by original sin, and need washing as soon as they come into the world.

2. That they are bound by the ties of nature and common justice, to do all they can, for their children's help and relief in this miserable state; that they may (so far as lieth in them) repair the injury done them, by conveying original corruption to them.

3. That they believe no remedy can cure them, no fountain can cleanse them, but that of Christ's blood, which is represented by the baptismal water.

4. That they willingly dedicate and devote their children to God, to be enrolled in his family, numbered among his children, and entirely disposed of by him.

Q. *What are the special duties incumbent upon parents, on the occasion of presenting their children in baptism?*

A. 1. To wonder at God's grace and condescension, in taking such pains on us, as to lay the great mystery of godliness and scheme of our salvation before our eyes by visible rites and signs, thereby to affect our senses, and the more effectually to excite our minds to a serious consideration of the great things which God hath done for us. Since the gospel report which the word brings daily to our ears (concerning our misery and remedy, our ruin by sin, and recovery by Jesus Christ) makes but little impression on us; he is pleased to give a perceptible view of these things by baptism to the eye, to try if our eyes will affect our hearts, according to Lam. iii. 51. And ought not this goodness to melt even the hardest heart?

2. To admire God's free grace and mercy, that he is willing to take both us and our children into covenant with himself: that after the first covenant was broken on our part, he was content to enter into a second (a covenant all of grace), and that with his own condemned rebel creature! Abraham fell upon his face when God was covenanting with him; and David was astonished with admiration at it, Gen. xvii. 3. 2 Sam. vii. 19. And so ought we upon this occasion.

3. Parents ought to search and see if they be really in covenant with God themselves: for, when we dispense this sacrament, we are to look on the parents that claim the benefit of it to their children, to be persons in covenant with God, otherwise their children have no right to the seal of it. Therefore it highly concerns parents, on this occasion, to enquire if they have as yet entered into covenant with God, by their own personal transaction, and renewing of their own baptismal dedication and engagement. And if they have dealt faithfully with God in this covenant, yea, or not.

4. Parents ought, on this occasion, to renew the covenant which they made with God in their own baptism, take hold of the covenant of grace for themselves, accept of Jesus Christ the Mediator of it, close with his righteousness, and dedicate themselves, as well as their children, to the Lord; and thus transact with God and Christ in secret. Which they are likewise publicly to own and renew, at the presenting of their infants, by a solemn profession of their faith in God the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost; and dutiful obedience to him according to his word: believers should rejoice to come with their children to baptism, because every time they do it, God renews his covenant with them and theirs; as he did with Abraham at circumcision, Gen. xvii.

5. They ought to be fervent in prayer, wrestling with God for the purification and acceptance of their young ones through Christ's blood; and for a solemn blessing upon the ordinance to be dispensed to them: that God may join the inward and privy seal of his spirit, with the outward seal of this sacrament.

6. They ought to study to be well acquainted with the great truths of the Christian religion, as contained in the holy scriptures, and agreeable thereto, summed in our Confession of faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms; that so they may be capable to instruct and train up their children in the knowledge of these truths, according to the engagements which they publicly take on. Alas! there is little conscience made of such a solemn promise by many; they are ignorant of our excellent Confession of Faith and Catechisms, and will not so much as buy them, or read them over; notwithstanding of their reiterated engagements on this occasion.

7. They are to make a solemn surrender and dedication of their children to God in Christ, as children of his family, subjects of his kingdom, and members of Christ's mystical body: and that for the end they may be washed in Christ's blood, saved by his grace, guided by his spirit; ruled by his laws, and disposed of by his providence. Thus we are to bring and present our children to God in baptism, as *living sacrifices to him acceptable through Christ Jesus.*

8. We are, in the name and behalf of our infants (they being parts of ourselves, as we showed before), to consent to the gracious offers and terms of the covenant of grace, and that they will be the Lord's wholly and only his. And for this end to teach them (when they come to understanding) the knowledge of God, and the way of salvation through Christ, according to his word; and to instruct them in the duties of the covenant, particularly the necessity of faith, repentance, and new obedience. And because children are more ready to be influenced by our examples than our precepts, we are to engage to show them the copy of a holy life, family-worship, and secret prayer, in our own conversation. Thus Abraham, the father of the faithful, entered into covenant with God for himself and his seed after him, Gen. xvii, 7, 9. And according to that covenant, "he commanded his children and household after him, to keep the way of the Lord," Gen. xviii. 19. And so believing parents under the gospel, being under the same covenant with faithful Abraham, "ought to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, Eph. vi. 4.

Q. *What are the duties incumbent upon the congregation, or those that are witnesses to the administration of the sacrament of baptism?*

A. 1. Patiently to attend, and wait till it be done; for, to remove before the administration of baptism, as many do, argues both a contempt of Christ's solemn ordinance, which he hath instituted for his church's good; and want of charity to those who are to be baptised, in that they decline to stay and pray for them, and receive them into the communion of the visible church. And likewise it shows, that they have little regard to their own souls, when they turn their backs upon such an excellent mean of edification, as this is. Let such consider, whether it had been just and becoming for the whole congregation to have dealt so with respect to them when they were baptised, as they deal now in reference to others. Stay still, and pray for the members to be ingrafted, as others did for you.

2. To witness the administration of it with a holy awe and becoming reverence to the great author of it, and mystery represented by it. Remember that it derives its authority and institution, not from man, but from the exalted Lord of angels and saints. Had this ordinance been of man, it had been vilipended and come to nought many years ago; but being of divine original, it hath kept its authority

throughout the whole Christian world, for the space of these 1700 years. Wherefore it becomes us all to pay a dutiful regard to the administration of it.

3. Admire the wonderful kindness of God to fallen man, that he pitied us when wallowing in our blood and pollution, and provided a suitable remedy for us. Though he might in justice have suffered such wretches to drop into the devil's arms and hell's flames from the very womb; yet, behold he stretches out his merciful and fatherly arms to embrace us, as soon as we enter into the world; *Suffer little children* (saith he) *to come unto me*, to *me* their Friend and Saviour.

4. Bless God that hath ordered your lot to be born within the pale of Christ's church, of Christian parents who early presented and dedicated you in such manner to God, whereby you got a sealed right to gospel-ordinances and privileges, nay, to Christ and all the benefits of the new covenant, upon the condition of your faith; so that now you have encouragement to come and claim your right. Especially you, whose happiness it is to be born of godly and believing parents, bless God for this mercy, plead your interest in the covenant, for your claim is certainly better than others; you may go to God as your father's God, and therefore plead he is your's too; for when God entered into covenant with your fathers, he made it both for them, and for you their seed: and how pleasant is it to sing with Moses at the Red sea, Exod. xv. "He is my God, I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him." But beware of thinking that your being of such parents, necessarily entitles you to the saving blessings of the covenant, though you should do nothing yourselves; nay. if you put not in your claim when you come to age, you forfeit your right. Yet questionless, your birth still entitles you to many external privileges and mercies; upon which account, it is said, 1 Pet. iii. 21. "The like figure unto Noah's baptism doth now save us;" *i. e.* as the ark (which was a type of baptism) wrought a temporal salvation for all Noah's family; so baptism entitles the families of believers to many temporal privileges and blessings. But though all Noah's family was admitted into the ark, this did not entitle them to admission into heaven; so neither will our outward baptism save us from the deluge of God's wrath, and bring us to heaven: and therefore the apostle adds for explication in the forecited verse, "Not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God;" *i. e.* not the outward washing of the body with water; but the faithful answer of a resolved soul, accepting of and adhering to the covenant sealed in baptism: for at the first planting of Christianity, people were generally grown up when baptised, and made answer publicly for themselves, making profession of their faith and obedience to the holy Trinity, and their renouncing the devil, the world, and the flesh.

5. Bless God that you are born under the New Testament times, when the fountain for cleansing sinners is so fully opened in the word and sacraments, that the streams of it are daily so near you, and you invited to wash therein. Our access to the fountain is now plain and easy. It it not lock'd up, covered with leaves, or obscured with types and figures, as under the law: we have now an open view of it: there is a wide vent made to its streams, by Christ's death and wounds upon the cross; and excellent channels framed for conveying it to us, *viz.* the preaching of the gospel with its sacraments. O how inexcusable will we be for ever! if after all this we contemn the water of life, and die in our pollution.

6. Be concerned for the precious souls of those that are to be baptised; pray fervently for them, that God may come and bless his own ordinance to them; give the inward grace with the outward seal: applying Christ's blood to the soul, as water is sprinkled upon the body, that he may regenerate them by his spirit, stamp them with his image, make them instruments of his glory: that they may rise up, and do God better service in their generation, than, alas, we have done in ours.

7. When you see and hear parents solemnly engaging for their children at their baptism; let such as are parents, that have come under the like engagements, consider how they have performed them. Do ye make conscience of praying for your children, teaching them the principles of religion, admonishing them of their duty, warning them against sin, and learning them to read and pray? When took you them aside to tell them of the vows you took on at baptism in their name, and press them to renew personally their baptismal covenant? O have you not cause on this occasion to be humbled for your neglect and shortcomings, in performing your solemn engagements, and seek forgiveness through the blood of sprinkling! O negligent parents! remember what a fearful meeting will be betwixt you and your graceless children one day at Christ's tribunal, when they will come with accusations and curses in their mouths against you for your unfaithfulness in performing your solemn engagements, with respect to their precious souls.

8. Let every one upon such an occasion call to mind his own baptism, how he was thus once presented, dedicated and sprinkled in like manner; and study by all means to improve his own baptism, which is a most needful, though much neglected duty.

Q. *How is it that we ought to improve our baptism?*

A. 1. Be sensible of the greatness of the privilege and dignity conferred upon you, in being baptised in the name of Christ, and sacramentally sprinkled with his blood for the remission of sin; and think much upon it. Alas, there are many who never think on Christ, or his blood, and put no value upon their baptism. I have read of Lucian, a scoffing Atheist, when he apostatized from the profession of Christianity, he mocked at his baptism, saying *He got nothing by it, but a syllable to his name;* he was Lucius, before, and at baptism was called Lucianus. And what do many get by their baptism, but a name! Why, they undervalue their baptism, never think on it, nor study any way to improve it.

2. You ought personally and explicitly to renew your covenant and solemn dedication to God sealed at baptism. It is not enough that you are Christians by your parents' dedication, but you must be so by your own also, by ratifying your parents' deed, when you are of age; otherwise your baptism will profit you nothing; nay, instead of profiting you, it will be a witness against you, if you do not personally transact with God in Christ, and give away yourselves to the Lord in truth and sincerity.

3. Improve your baptism, by labouring to secure and clear up your interest in the pardon of sin, adoption, sanctifying grace, and other blessings sealed to you in that sacrament. Remember, that these blessings were only sealed to you conditionally, upon your believing in Christ; and that they are not actually conferred, till you be sensible of

sin, and close with Christ and his righteousness. Go, then, O penitent sinner, apply to the blood of Christ, by faith, which was sacramentally applied to you at baptism, and plead with God for pardon of sin; make use of your baptism as a strong argument for it, say, "Lord have I thy seal, as well as thy promise, for my pardon? Got I not a pledge of it from thee, at my baptism? Behold thy ring and the bracelets, are they not thine? Lord make good thy word, thy sealed promise;" I believe, Lord, help my unbelief.

4. Press also for the joyful sense of this benefit of pardon sealed to you in baptism; the having whereof is the most comfortable thing in the world. We see the Eunuch, when he had got this seal of baptism, went on his way rejoicing. "O now (thought he) my case is blessed, I am a pardoned man, God hath received me into his family, and taken me into covenant with himself, and implanted me a member of his mystical body: I that was a plant of a strange vine, am now ingrafted into a noble stock; and shall I not be glad and rejoice in his salvation?" Thus, O believer, improve the seal of baptism, in order to your growing up to the comfortable assurance of your pardon of sin and adoption into God's family; seeing these blessings are irreversibly promised and sealed to you in that sacrament.

5. Improve your baptism as a spur to holiness and diligence in Christ's service; forget not him whose name you bear, whose livery you wear, and whose colours you are sworn to. Seeing you are solemnly dedicated to God, and all you have is consecrated to him at baptism; O then live as those who are not your own; spend your strength and time, not in serving sin and the world, but in worshipping of God, in loving, praising and glorifying of him, *whose you are, and whom you ought to serve.* Alas, there are many, who list themselves to God's service by baptism, and yet turn deserters, and go over to the devil's camp, taking on to fight against their King and Lord, to whom they are sworn. They live as if they had been solemnly devoted to, and baptised in the name of the cursed Trinity of hell, the devil, the world, and the flesh, instead of the ever blessed and glorious Trinity of heaven: alas, they live as if they had renounced that, and not the other; which is certainly a most fearful guilt, and cannot miss to be attended with a severe doom.

6. Be humbled for your manifold pollutions, your falling so much short of the grace of baptism, and walking unsuitably to your solemn engagements. Have you not cause to lament before God, for forgetting and slighting the free love of God manifested to you in baptism; and for having so little recourse to the fountain that was opened to you therein, for sin, and for uncleanness; and that you feel so little of the efficacy of the precious blood of your Redeemer (which was represented and applied to you in that ordinance) for melting of your hearts, cleansing you from sin, and quickening you to holiness.

7. Improve your baptism as a shield against Satan's temptations: 1. Are you tempted to despairing thoughts of mercy, or troubled with perplexing doubts and fears? Then remember the seal of free love you got in baptism. Christ himself was tempted after his baptism, to doubt of his filiation and Sonship: but gave Satan a peremptory repulse; teaching us thereby to do the same. Luther saith, that all his answer to the devil, when he tempted him to despair, was, *Babtizatus sum, & credo in Christum*, I am baptised into the belief of Christ. 2. Are you at any time tempted to sin? then remember your baptism. Luther also tells of a holy virgin, that when she was tempted to sin, replied, *Babtizatus sum*, I am baptised; and indeed this is a sufficient answer to all Satan's temptations. "I am baptised and dedicated solemnly to God; I am not my own, but the Lord's; I am sworn to Christ, and how shall I serve the devil?" Profanity in a Christian is apostacy from Christ, and on the matter a renouncing of his baptism which is a fearful, nay, a develish sin.

8. Improve it as an argument to courage and resolution in time of danger or persecution. Stedfastly adhere to the doctrine of the Trinity, in whose name you are baptized; be not ashamed of Christ or his truths, seeing his name is called upon you, and you solemnly owned him before the whole congregation. "He that is ashamed of me," saith Christ, "and of my words, in this sinful and adulterous generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels," Mark viii. 38. Dionysia encouraged Majoricus her son, an African martyr, when he was going to die, with these words, "Remember, son, that thou wast baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

Lastly, Do not trust to your baptism, and your having the name of Christ called upon you. An empty name and profession of Christianity will not save you; Simon Magus was baptized, and yet perished: many go with baptismal water on their faces, and sacramental bread in their mouths, to hell at last. Kings have both their common and privy seals; rest not in the outward seal, but seek the inward seal of God's spirit changing your nature, and applying the blood of Christ for cleansing your souls.

Q. *Why may not baptism be administered to a person oftener than once, as well as the Lord's supper?*

A. 1. It is not commanded to be reiterated, as the Lord's supper is, 1 Cor. xi. 26.

2. Circumcision under the Old Testament was not reiterated.

3. The nature of this sacrament doth not require or allow of repetition: for as the Lord's supper is for nutrition, this is for initiation and implantation. This is the sacrament of our new birth and admission into the church: now as we can be but once new born, and once entered into the church; so we are no oftener to be baptized, Tit. iii. 5.

Q. *Wherein doth the two sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper agree?*

A. In these things, 1. They have both the same author, Jesus Christ. 2. They are both seals of the same covenant. 3. They signify and seal the same things, viz. Christ and his benefits. 4. They are both to be dispensed by ministers of the gospel, and by none else. 5. They are both to be continued in the church till Christ's second coming.

Q. *Wherein then do these two sacraments differ?*

A. In these things; 1. Baptism is to be administered but once, but the Lord's supper often. 2. There is but one element in the first, viz. water; but in the second there are two, viz. bread and wine. 3. The first may be administered to infants; but the second, only to those that are of years, and capable to examine themselves. 4. The first doth signify our regeneration and admission into the church: but the second doth represent Christ as our spiritual nourishment, and sealeth our continuance and growth in him. 5. Baptism is the door of Christ's house, by which we must enter; but the Lord's supper is the table at which the children must feed and receive strength.

CONCERNING THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Quest. *WHAT is the Lord's supper?*

A. The Lord's supper is a sacrament of the New Testament; wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is shewed forth: and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal or carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace; to the confirming of their union and communion with Christ, renewing of their covenant with God, and their thankfulness to him; and their mutual love to, and fellowship one with another, as members of the same mystical body, Matt. xxvi. 26, 27, 28. 2 Cor. xi. 23, 24, 25, 26. 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

Q. *Who is the author of this sacrament?*

A. The Lord Jesus Christ, who is the glorious King and head of his church, to whom alone it appertains to institute her ordinances.

Q. *What may we learn from its being Christ's ordinance?*

A. That we ought therefore, to have a special regard to it, and beware of either neglecting or abusing it.

Q. *When did Christ institute this passover?*

A. In the same night wherein he was betrayed, and immediately after he and his disciples had eaten the Jewish passover.

Q. *Was not that a very remarkable night?*

A. Yes, it was a night ever to be had in remembrance, being the last night before Christ's death, the night wherein he began his bitter agonies, and swate the bloody sweat for us; a night wherein he saw heaven, earth, and hell, even justice, men, and devils, all drawn up in battle array against him.

Q. *Why did he institute this sacrament at such a time?*

A. For these reasons; 1. Because this ordinance was to commemorate his death, and so it was very fit to appoint it when he was going to die.

2. To encourage and strengthen the hearts of his drooping disciples, now when he was about to leave them (as to his bodily presence) and they were to meet with many trials.

3. To shew the great weight and import of this ordinance; had it not been a matter of the greatest concern to our good and his glory, it had not taken up the thoughts and care of our great Redeemer just when he was going to die, and undergo such unspeakable sufferings.

4. To lay the greater obligation upon us to attend this ordinance, and religiously to observe the charge and instructions he gave concerning it; as being the words of a dying man; nay, of a dying Saviour, who did more for us that night he spoke them, than all the angels of heaven, or relations on earth, could or would have done.

Q. *Did not Christ's matchless love to us appear wonderfully, in chusing such a time to institute this ordinance?*

A. Yes; 1. In that he minded and spoke so much of us, when his time was so short. 2. That he provided so carefully for us, when his danger was so great. Which shews that still his people lay nearest his heart; that he regarded their interest more than his own, and preferred their comfort to his own safety; for though he saw all his enemies in a full march against him, and his all at stake, whence it might have seemed high time for him to be providing for his own safety: yet he spent much of the short time he had, in providing a sweet feast, and bequeathing rich legacies to his poor people that he was to leave behind him.

Q. *Why did Christ institute this sacrament immediately after the Jewish passover?*

A. To shew that the passover was thereby abrogated, and the Lord's supper come in its room.

Q. *Are we not bound to receive this sacrament at night, after Christ's example?*

A. The circumstances of time, place and company, in the first administration, not being essential to the ordinance, were not intended for our imitation. We are no more required to receive it at night, than to do it in an upper room, with but twelve in company. Moreover, the time was occasioned by the passover, that was always eaten at night, and in private families: in the room whereof, and after which the Lord's supper was to be instituted. But now when we have numerous assemblies for religious worship, the night would be highly convenient for them.

Q. *What are the usual names and designations given to this ordinance?*

A. It is called the sacrament of the Lord's supper; the Lord's table; the communion; the breaking of bread; the cup of blessing; the feast; Christ's testament; the eucharist; 1 Cor. xi. 20. 1 Cor. x. 16. Acts ii. 46, 1. 1 Cor. v. 8. Luke xxii. 20.

Q. *Why is it called the sacrament?*

A. It is called so, by way of eminency: and because here we take a most solemn oath of fidelity to our Redeemer.

Q. *Why is it called the Lord's Supper?*

A. Because, 1. It was instituted when Christ was eating the passover-supper with his disciples, which was at night. 2. The supper then was accounted the principal meal of the family. 3. It is ordained only for those that dwell in Christ's family, and abide with him both day and night.

Q. *Why is it called the Lord's table?*

A. Because he is the author of it; yea, he is both the maker and matter of this entertainment; the feeder and the food also.

Q. *Why is it called the communion?*

A. Because in the right partaking of this ordinance, we have communion and fellowship with Christ, share with him in the benefits of his death and purchase, and also have communion one with another.

Q. *Why is it called the breaking of bread?*

A. Because, in this ordinance, bread is broken and made use of, as the outward symbol and seal of Christ's wounded and broken body, with all the glorious benefits flowing therefrom.

Q. *Why is it called the cup of blessing?*

A. Because, 1. In the using it, we bless God for his free love to us in Christ. 2. It contains offers, and sealeth to us in a sacramental way, all the blessings of the new covenant.

Q. *Why is it called Christ's Testament?*

A. Because in this ordinance we have Christ's Testament and latter will sealed, and a copy of it put into the believer's hand, containing the rich legacies he hath left them.

Q. *Why is it called a feast?*

A. Because hereby the believers are richly entertained by Christ, have sweet intimacy with him, and great expressions of his love; and their souls are nourished and strengthened for duty. It is both a marriage-feast and a feast of commemoration.

Q. *Why is it called the Eucharist by the ancients?*

A. It signifies the *thanksgiving;* because, 1. When this

sacrament was instituted, it both began and ended with the giving of thanks. 2. Because the great design of it is to keep up the thankful remembrance of Christ's death and redeeming love. And believers, when they partake, should with their whole souls give thanks to God because he is good; and sing glory to God in the highest.

Q. *What parts doth the Lord's supper consist of?*

A. Of two parts; 1. The outward sensible signs, 2. The spiritual and heavenly things thereby signified.

Q. *What are the sensible signs made use of in this sacrament?*

A. They are of three sorts; 1. Sacramental elements. 2. Sacramental actions. 3. Sacramental words.

Q. *What are the sacramental elements here made use of?*

A. Bread and wine.

Q. *What are the things signified and represented by them?*

A. The body and blood of Christ, with all the benefits and blessings flowing therefrom.

Q. *What is the necessity of two elements or signs in this sacrament, bread and wine both, might not one suffice?*

A. The Lord hath thought fit to ordain them both to be used: and for these reasons; 1. To show us the fitness and and certainty of his covenant, and to stregthen his people's faith the more in the belief of its promises. Why hath he annexed two seals or sacraments to his covenant, but chiefly for this end? And why hath he instituted a two-fold sign in this sacrament, but for the same design? What Joseph saith to Pharaoh's dream, is most applicable here, Gen. xli. 32. "The dream is doubled to Pharaoh twice, because the thing is established of God, and God will shortly bring it to pass." In like manner, O believer, you may perceive here, by the doubling of the sign, that the mercies and blessings sealed in this sacrament are firmly established to you; they are even "the sure mercies of David," and God will shortly bestow them upon you.

2. These two signs are both appointed, because of the unbelief and hardness of our hearts. It is a sad truth of us all, what Christ said to the two disciples, going to Emmaus, Luke xxiv. 25. "O fools, and slow of heart to believe what the prophets have spoken." Nay, we are slow to believe even that which Christ the great Prophet himself hath spoken, when he came in our nature to teach us. And therefore, for curing of this plague, the Lord gives us one sign after another, as he did to the hard-hearted and unbelieving Israelites in Egypt, when he sent Moses to deliver them: to convince them the more of his truth and faithfulness, he gave Moses two signs to shew them: and saith to him, Exod. iv. 8. "And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe, nor hearken to the voice of the first sign, they will believe the voice of the latter sign."

3. Both these signs are appointed here, that we may have a more full and distinct representation of Christ's death and sufferings; and may be helped to be the more distinct in our meditations and acts of faith upon this wounded and bleeding Saviour.

4. To shew us the plentiful redemption that we have in Jesus Christ. That there is in him not only sufficiency, but all fulness and abundance. That he hath suitable supplies for our necessities, and complete nourishment for our starving souls. There is here both the bread of life, and wine of consolation.

Q. *Are not bread and wine too mean things to be seals or signs of God's covenant?*

A. Although they are but common things in themselves, yet having the stamp of divine institution, they become highly valuable, in respect of their signification and ends. A small piece of wax or lead is of little worth in itself; yet when appended to a charter by authority, it serves to give or confirm a right and title to a great inheritance. Of the same use are bread and wine in the Lord's supper; they are seals appended to God's covenant by divine authority, and serve to confirm the believers right to Christ's purchase, pardon of sin, and eternal life, and so are highly valuable. Our gracious Redeemer thought fit to chuse for this end things that were not costly or rare, but common and easy to be had (though most useful in themselves to human life) because he would not be burdensome to his people with any of his ordinances.

Q. *Why hath Christ chosen bread to represent his body?*

A. Because of the resemblance betwixt bread and Christ's blessed body, in these things: 1. Bread ere it be fit to nourish us must be first sown, and die in the earth; so Christ's body behoved to die, and be buried in the earth, in order to feed and nourish our souls.

2. Bread must be prepared by threshing, bruising, and grinding in the mill, and baking in the oven; so Christ, that he might be a fit Saviour to us, was content to be bruised betwixt the milstones of God's justice and our sins, and to be scorched in the oven of his Father's wrath.

3. Bread thus prepared is most excellent and useful for nourishing and strengthening our bodies; yea, it is the most necessary thing in the world, none can live without it: hence it is oft called the staff of bread, as being the support of human life. So Christ's broken body is a most excellent and necessary means provided by God, for preserving our souls' lives; without which we would eternally perish.

4. Bread is most pleasant, as it doth refresh, strengthen, and satisfy our hungry bodies; and hence it is called bread that strengtheneth man's heart, Psal. civ. so Jesus Christ and his broken body is most precious, pleasant, and satisfying to a sensible needy sinner. The hungry believing soul will highly prize this food, though others, who are full, and insensible of their wants, do loath and despise it.

5. Bread must be broken, eaten, and received into the stomach, before it can be of any use to the health, and advantage of our bodies; so Christ's body must be broken, received, and fed upon by faith, ere it can be of use to the spiritual health, and advantage of our souls in this sacrament.

6. Bread, thus received and eaten, becomes one with our bodies; so we, by a believing partaking of Christ's broken body, become one with him, John vi. 56.

Q. *Why hath Christ made choice of wine to represent his blood in this sacrament?*

A. Because of the resemblance betwixt wine and his precious blood, in the following particulars:

1. Wine, in order to prepare it for our use, must be squeezed out of the grape, which for that end is crushed and bruised in the wine-press; so our blessed Saviour was crushed in the wine-press of his Father's justice, till the precious juice of his sacred body did gush out, for the saving of our souls. None could afford our perishing souls this remedy but Christ alone: hence he saith, Isa. lxiii. 3. "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me."

2. Wine doth refresh and cheer the heart of man, Psal. civ. so Christ's blood doth much more cheer and refresh

the soul of a humble penitent sinner, that makes application of it by faith.

3. Wine doth warm the cold heart: much more doth Christ's blood warm the cold affections with the heat of divine love.

4. Wine is useful to animate and encourage the faint-hearted; much more doth Christ's blood revive and embolden the poor drooping and disconsolate soul. It heartens him to go with a holy boldness to the throne of grace: "yea, to walk through the valley of the shadow of death, and fear no ill."

5. Wine is good for medicine; it cleanses and cures; so the blood of Christ is the most medicinal thing in the world; for it cleanses and cures the putrifying wounds of the soul, 1 John i. 7. Isa. liii. 5.

6. Wine, however excellent in itself, can be of no use to us, unless it be drunk and applied; so Christ's blood, (though the most sovereign thing in the whole world for our perishing souls) will do us no service, if it be not received and applied by our faith.

SO MUCH FOR THE SACRAMENTAL ELEMENTS: LET US COME NEXT TO THE SACRAMENTAL ACTIONS.

Q. *What are the outward sacramental actions in the Lord's supper?*

A. They are twofold, some on the part of the administrator; and some on the part of the receivers.

Q. *What are these actions on the administrator's part?*

A. They are four; as may be seen in Christ's example: 1. He took bread. 2. He blessed the bread and wine. 3. He brake the bread. 4. He gave both of them to his disciples.

Q. *What is signified by the minister's taking of bread?*

A. It signifies God the Father his chusing and taking Christ among men, to be a surety and sacrifice for lost sinners, and his laying upon him, as such, the whole sins of the elect. John iii. 16. Isa. liii. 6. 2 Cor. v. 21.

Q. *What is signified by the blessing of the bread and wine?*

A. It signifies these things: 1. The consecrating and setting apart of the bread and wine, from a common to an holy and sacramental use; and that by solemn prayer for a blessing from heaven upon them.

2. This blessing being also expressed by the giving of thanks, it signifies a solemn thanksgiving to God for his astonishing grace and mercy to lost sinners in giving them a Saviour and surety: and also for his giving them this blessed ordinance for conveying and sealing Christ's glorious purchase to them.

3. This blessing being of the same import with consecrating or sanctifying, it signifies God's sending his Son into the world, sanctified, blessed, and furnished with all gifts and graces needful for the discharge of his mediatory offices, and for answering of his peoples exigencies.

Q. *What is signified by the breaking of the bread in this sacrament?*

A. It signifies the breaking and wounding of Christ's body, and the bruising of his soul for elect sinners, in order to satisfy God's justice, pacify divine wrath, and purchase salvation for them. And that now the whole work of man's redemption is completed by Christ's death, which is here represented by these elements and signs.

Q. *Is the breaking of bread a necessary or essential action in this sacrament?*

A. Yes; it being instituted by Christ, and practised by his apostles, with design to teach us the necessity of Christ's death, and that an unbroken Christ would not profit sinners, and consequently we may infer, that papists and others, who dispense the sacrament with an unbroken wafer, do egregiously swerve from the institution, and mar their souls profiting by his ordinance.

Q. *What is signified by the fourth sacramental action, viz. Christ's giving the broken bread, and the poured out wine to his disciples; and the minister's doing this after his example?*

A. It signifies these things: 1. God's gracious and free offering of his Son, and Christ's offering of himself to be ours, with all his purchase, upon our believing.

2. God's actual making over, giving, and sealing Christ and all the benefits of the new covenant to the worthy receivers. For as truly as bread and wine are put into their hands, and given them to be their own, and disposed of for their use: so truly is Christ and all the benefits of the covenant made over, given and sealed to them, to be their inheritance and portion, and to be by them freely enjoyed and possessed as their own.

3. It signifies God's offering and giving Christ fully to us. For as he gives us not only the bread, but the wine also, that we may have complete entertainments: so he makes over and gives a full and complete Saviour to believing communicants. He gives Christ and all Christ's to them: and all that is in him, all his offices, all his benefits, and all his promises. There is no promise reserved, no blessing excepted, or kept back; all is theirs, 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22.

4. It signifies God's making a gratuitous donation and a free gift of Christ and all his purchase to believing communicants. For as the sacramental bread and wine are given freely by the minister to the communicant, without requiring any price or good deed for them; so Christ and all his purchase are made over and given to believers in a way of the freest grace without any worth or desert of theirs, or any thing done by them for which they are bestowed, Is. lv. 1. Rev. xxii. 17.

5. The breaking, dividing, and distributing these elements among all the communicants, do signify that Jesus Christ is really though invisibly present, dealing forth the effects and benefits of his death and sufferings to all the worthy communicants, young and old, poor and rich, without exception of any. He is a most knowing and faithful steward in his Father's house, who will not pass by the meanest of the family.

Q. *What is signified by the pouring out of the wine in the cup?*

A. Christ's suffering and pouring out his blood most freely and plentifully to wash and save his people from their sins; even as freely as the wine in the sacrament is poured out to them. Hence it is said, Isa. liii. 12. "He poured out his soul unto death," i. e. he gave his life and soul so freely and willingly for us as we pour out water out of a vessel.

Q. *After what manner are the elements to be given to the communicants? Is the bread to be put into their mouths, or the cup into each of their hands by the ministers?*

A. No; this is not agreeable to Christ's practice in the first institution, nor with the table posture then in use, which he kept with his disciples in time of the actions; speaking to them (at the giving of the elements) in the plu-

ral number, *Take ye, eat ye, drink ye all of it*, which import his giving the elements to those that sat next him, to be handed about from one to another: for had he given them to every particular man, he would have said, *Take thou*. Besides, this practice of our Saviour with his disciples suits best with that familiar way of feasting, common among people that are come to age and the use of their reason. And the communicants taking the elements into their own hands, doth carry some resemblance of the free and deliberate consent of faith, requisite in our receiving of Christ in the sacrament, John i. 12.

Q. *What are the outward sacramental actions, on the part of the communicant?*

A. They are these: 1. Their taking the bread, and the cup into their hands. 2. Their eating the bread, and drinking the wine. 3. Their dividing the elements among themselves and giving to one another.

4. Their doing all this sitting in a feasting posture.

Q. *What is signified by the communicants taking the bread and cup into their hands?*

A. Their cheerful stretching forth of the hand of faith to accept of a crucified Christ for their Saviour, with all his benefits, as offered to them in the gospel: and the soul's hearty compliance with the gracious terms of that offer.

Q. *What is signified by our receiving of both the elements?*

A. Our taking and receiving Christ wholly as he is held forth and offered unto us in the gospel, without making exception of any of his offices or demands. We profess hereby that we are satisfied to take Christ as he is, his person, his offices, his benefits, promises, and all that is in him: that we are content with his laws, as well as his love; his precepts, as well as his promises; and his cross, as well as his crown.

Q. *Have communicants a right to the cup as well as the bread?*

A. Yes, certainly they have, conform to our Saviour's institution and pattern, and his apostles' practice, which we have plainly recorded, Mat. xxvi. 26, 27, 28, 29. 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. And if one of the sacramental signs were wanting, believers would not have a full representation of their Redeemer's sufferings, nor a complete feast for their nourishment and strength.

Q. *Are not papists much to blame then in taking the cup from the people.*

A. Most certainly they are; for as they do a great injury to the people, so they are guilty of the greatest sacrilege before God, and rebellion against his authority, who instituted this sacred ordinance. For, by the institution, the people have as good a right to the cup as to the bread. Nay, our Saviour (as it were) foreseeing the papists' encroachment in this particular, is more express in his injunction concerning the cup, than the bread; in these words, "Drink ye all of it." Also their obedience to this injunction, is more expressly recorded than with respect to the bread, in these words: "and they all drank of it;" compare Mat. xxvi. 27. with Mark xvi. 23.

Q. *What is signified by the communicants eating the bread and drinking the wine?*

A. In general, it signifies our making close and particular application by faith of Christ and all his benefits unto our souls, and their various necessities and exigencies, each of us saying of Christ in a believing manner, with Thomas, John xx. 28. "My Lord, and my God." But, more particularly, these actions of eating and drinking in the sacrament do signify; 1. Our near union with Christ: for as, by eating and drinking, the bread and the wine enter our bodies, become ours, and turn one with us; so we by receiving and applying Christ's broken body and shed blood in the sacrament by faith, Christ is mystically united to us; he is made one with us, and we one with him. All that he hath, his blood, and all the purchase of it, his merits, graces, influences, riches, &c. all are ours.

2dly, They signify the great satisfaction and complacency, which the believer hath in partaking of Christ and his benefits: for as eating and drinking are actions very gratifying and pleasant to the body; so our tasting and partaking of Christ's dainties in the sacrament, is most pleasant to the hungry soul.

3dly, They signify the strength and increase of grace, which the believer receives by this ordinance. For as, by our eating and drinking of earthly food, our bodies are increased and strengthened for labour; so by this spiritual food, our graces are increased, and souls strengthened, for the duties of religion.

Lastly, These sacramental actions denote the mutual giving and taking seasing and infeftment betwixt Christ and the believing communicant. As by the giving and receiving earth and stone among men, infeftment is given or taken of a field or heritage; so, by the giving and receiving of bread and wine in a sacramental way, believers get infeftment of Christ and his purchase as their own inheritance; and also Christ hereby takes infeftment of them, both soul and body, as his people and portion, his servants and soldiers, to obey him and fight for him all the days of their lives. Likewise, by these sacred symbols, he takes possession of their souls and bodies as his temples, solemnly consecrated to him for his service and residence!

Q. *Why should communicants divide the elements among themselves and give to one another?*

A. 1. That they may the more closely imitate the practice of Christ and his disciples, in partaking of the passover and the Lord's supper, Luke xxii. 17. Mat. xxvi. 26, 27.

2dly, That they may testify their mutual Christian love and union among themselves, and their communion and fellowship one with another, 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

Q. *What should be the bodily posture of communicants in time of receiving?*

A. It ought to be a feasting-posture, or such a table-posture as is ordinary at feasts in the place of the world where we live; and that is sitting. And this we have authorised by the example of Christ and his apostles at the first institution, Mat. xxvi. 20, 26. Luke xxii. 14. John xiv. 31. I grant indeed they sat leaning, yet still that posture is termed a sitting, as in the forecited texts. Besides, that was the ordinary table-posture then in use among the Jews; which clearly warrants us to use that posture which is ordinary among us. This also is proper to signify that holy familiarity which Christ allows his people with himself at this ordinance; for it is a blessed love-feast, wherein he treats his people as his friends and intimates.

Q. *But may it not be thought presumption, or want of due reverence in sinful man, to adventure to sit at Christ's holy table?*

A. 1. It is far greater presumption in sinful man to think to amend or alter Christ's wise and holy institution to the better; or to pretend to be wiser, holier or hum-

bler than the apostles and primitive church, who used this posture; or to accuse them of indecency and irreverence.

2dly, It is no presumption in sinful men to receive that honour which their Lord and Saviour put upon them: or to use that holy familiarity with him, which he allows them: for the disciples were sinful men as well as others, and yet they sat with their Lord and master, at the first communion, and continued afterwards so to do.

Q. *Why may not the reverend and humble posture of kneeling be admitted at the Lord's table?*

A. 1. It cannot, because of the reasons above-mentioned; for we must not be wise above what is written, or think to please God by our inventions in his worship.

2dly, It is of a popish original; for Pope Honorius the Second was the first that ordained this posture of kneeling, in the beginning of the thirteenth century; and that as a native consequence of the doctrine of transubstantiation, which had been decreed some time before, by his predecessor Pope Innocent the Third. And we ought not to symbolize with papists in their errors.

3dly, There is too much ground to suspect this practice of idolatry, or having a tendency that way. For, 1. The papists by this posture, do professedly worship the sacramental bread, believing it to be Christ's real body; and plainly say, that if they believed not this, they would neither worship it, nor kneel in receiving it. 2dly, Our kneeling before the elements, and that out of reverence and respect to them, in an act of worshipping God or Christ, seems to say, that we worship God or Christ, in or by the use of them. Now these elements being consecrated creatures, of purpose placed before us, to be an image and representation of Christ to us, it hath too great appearance of evil, to use an outward posture of adoration before them; especially seeing this is not done in the other sacrament, viz. that of baptism.

Q. *Do not many, who use this posture, profess they have no design of worshipping the bread as the papists do, and consequently are not to be suspected of idolatry?*

A. 1. Though they have no such design, yet still they do a thing that hath a dangerous tendency, and an appearance of evil, which we are expressly commanded to shun.

2. A good intention will not excuse an idolatrous action; the Israelites pretended not to worship the golden-calf, but Jehovah before it, and yet that did not excuse their sin.

Concerning the Sacramental Words.

Quest. *Are not the sacramental elements, actions, and words, to be reckoned all three together, as the outward sensible signs in this ordinance, for exhibiting, sealing, and applying Christ and his benefits to worthy communicants?*

A. Yes.

Q. *Is there any difference betwixt them?*

A. Though they all be very significant and instructive to us in partaking, yet they seem to differ in this; that the sacramental elements mainly hold forth the spiritual matter and substance which we partake of; the sacramental actions serve as a rule or example to regulate our practice in it: and the sacramental words point forth the doctrine, uses, and ends of the ordinance.

Q. *What are the sacramental words chiefly to be used in dispensing and distributing the elements in this sacrament?*

A. These words which Christ spoke at the first institution.

Q. *What were the words which Christ spoke?*

A. He spoke something concerning the bread, something concerning the wine, and something concerning the whole sacrament.

Q. *What did Christ speak with respect to the bread?*

A. He said, 1. Something by way of command, viz. "Take, eat, this do in remembrance of me."

2dly, Something by way of explication, viz. "This is my body which is broken for you," 1 Corinthians xi. 24.

Q. *What did Christ speak concerning the wine?*

A. He said likewise, 1. Something by way of command, viz. "Drink ye all of it; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me," Mat. xxvi. 27. 1 Cor. xi. 25.

2dly, Something by way of explication, viz. "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Mat. xxvi. 26, 28. Luke xxii. 20.

Q *What spake Christ with respect to the whole sacrament?*

A. He said, by way of argument to enforce it, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till he come," 1 Cor. xi. 26. He likewise added on this occasion, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Mat. xxvi. 29.

Q. *What is the import of these words concerning the bread, Take, eat?*

A. It is, as if Christ had said, receive and make use of this broken bread, as a sign and seal of my broken body, with all its benefits. As ye take the bread out of my hand, and by eating receive it into your stomachs; so except of a Saviour as he is offered unto you, receive the atonement, approve of it, and consent to it; come up to the gracious terms on which Christ and his benefits are proposed to you, accept of his grace, and submit to his government.

Q. *What should we think upon, when we hear these words?*

A. We should think upon the infinite free love of God in giving his Son, and of Christ in giving himself, to such poor wretches as we are. Yea, we should, in a contemplative and believing way, think we see Christ (as it were personally) at the head of the table, making offer of himself, in the freest manner, saying, "Take me, and the whole purchase of my death and sufferings; take my sealed testament, and all the legacies in it: take a sealed pardon of all your sins, and a sealed right to eternal life.

Q. *In what manner are we to take Christ and his benefits in this sacrament?*

A. We are to take Christ and all the blessings of his covenant in the following manner. 1. Sincerely and honestly, without all dissimulation or hypocrisy, which is a thing most hateful to God.

2dly, Entirely, fully, and without exception of any thing required of you.

3dly, With close and particular application, saying, "My Lord, and my God."

4thly, With thankfulness and praise, stirring up your souls and all that is within you, to bless his holy name. Bless God for such a glorious Surety, such a rich purchase, such a free covenant, and such suitable promises.

5thly, With humility and self-denial, reckoning yourselves unworthy of the least crumb from his table, renoun-

cing all confidence in your preparations, humiliations, or qualifications of any sort, saying, "In the Lord only have I righteousness and strength."

Lastly, We ought to take Christ and his purchase in the sacrament with full assurance of faith; looking on the sacramental bread, as the Lord's seal and pledge of our interest in, and title to, all the blessings of the covenant: and taking this bread as a sure sign and token from Christ, that this body was broken for us; believing that Christ and all the blessings of the covenant, and purchase of his death, are herewith given to us, as really as Christ gives the bread into our hands.

Q. *What is the meaning of these words, This is my body broken for you?*

A. The meaning is, this bread broken is my body spiritually and sacramentally; or, it signifies and represents my body; and is a visible sign and token of my body, its being broken, bruised and crucified; yea, crucified for you, O worthy communicant, even "wounded for your transgressions, and bruised for your iniquities."

Q. *Do we not partake of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament, after a corporal or a carnal manner, or by the mouth of the body?*

A. No; we only do it spiritually by faith, which is the mouth of the soul.

Q. *Is not Christ really present in the sacrament: and are not believers said to be partakers of Christ?*

A. Though Christ is not bodily present, yet he is really and truly present in a spiritual and invisible manner. He is present by his God-head, and by his Spirit. He is present by his power and efficacy, communicating and applying the virtue and benefits of his death: and thus we are really made partakers of Christ in this ordinance. We partake of the sun, when we have its beams of light and heat darted down upon us, although we have not the bulk and body of the sun put into our hands: so we partake of Christ in the sacrament, when we share of his grace, and the blessed fruits of his broken body, though we do not actually eat his flesh with our mouths.

Q. *Are not the bread and wine, by the words of consecration, transubstantiate, and really turned into the body and blood of Christ, as the papists do maintain?*

A. No; the opinion is false and absurd, in regard;

1*st*, It is destructive of the very nature and end of a sacrament, which is to signify and commemorate an absent Christ; for according to this opinion he would be corporally present, and so there would be no difference betwixt the signs and things signified.

2*dly*, It is also destructive of the nature of Christ's body; for, according to this opinion, it would not be a true human body, "in all things like unto his brethren," Heb. ii. 17. if it could neither be seen or felt, or could be contracted into the bounds of a small bit of bread.

3*dly*, It is expressly contrary to the scriptures, which call the elements after their consecration, still bread and wine, as formerly; Matt. xxvi. 29. 1 Cor. x. 16. yea, many times over, 1 Cor. xi 26, 27, 28. Again, the scriptures inform us, that when Christ first administered this sacrament, his body was entire, and his blood in his veins; and that the same body afterwards went forth and swate blood in the garden, was crucified, buried, and rose again, appeared alive to many witnesses, and at length really ascended up into heaven, where he still continues; and his body must remain there till his coming at the last day; and so it neither was, nor can be corporally eaten in the sacrament, Matt. xxvi. 26, 27. 1 Cor. xv. 4, 5, 6. Acts i. 9, 10, 11. Acts iii. 21. 1 Thess. iv. 16. Heb. viii. 4.

4*thly*, It is contrary to sense and reason; for it is most obvious to us, that the bread and wine, after consecration, are the same in substance that they were. We see, feel, taste, and smell them to be real bread and wine still: they retain both their quantities and qualities; they have the length, thickness, breadth, colour, taste, and smell of bread and wine. Reason also tells us that the same body cannot be at the same time both glorified in heaven, and broken and eaten upon the earth. That Christ's body could not be entire, living, sitting at the table, and speaking with his disciples; and yet at the same time broken, dead, lying on the table, and eaten by his disciples; yea, and by himself also.

Besides these, many other monstrous absurdities and contradictions do follow upon the doctrine of transubstantiation.

Q. *What are the other absurdities of this doctrine?*

A. 1. It would follow hence, that either Christ behoved to have many thousand bodies, which would be monstrous; or that the same one whole body of Christ can be in many thousand places at the same time: both whereof are equally absurd.

2*dly*, It destroys the testimony of our senses in all other cases; so that the being or power of God cannot be proven by the works of creation, which is contrary to the apostle's doctrine, Rom. i. 20. Nor can the truth of Christ's resurrection be proven from the testimony of the witnesses, or from their seeing, feeling and hearing, which is contrary to Luke i. 1, 2. 1 Cor. xv. 5, 6, 7. 1 John i. 1. According to this doctrine, there was no strength in the argument which Christ used to prove the verity of his resurrection when he appealed to the senses of his disciples, bidding them "handle him and see, and behold his hands and feet, and thrust their hands into his side," Luke xxiv. 39, 40. John xx. 27. And this would go far to stake the truth of Christianity itself, which depends on the resurrection of Christ.

3*dly*, This doctrine allows a power to a silly mass-priest, which is not granted to all the angels in heaven, viz. to make his maker, and eat his God: for he worships what he makes, and eats what he worships.

4*thly*, According hereunto, Christ's glorious body would yet be liable to sufferings, subject to corruption, and obnoxious to be eaten by wicked men, yea, by dogs, rats, mice, &c

5*thly*, It would follow that a minister could give to a communicant the thing signified, as well as the signs, which is the prerogative of God alone.

6*thly*, That other figurative expressions in scripture should also be understood literally; and so Christ would also be turned really into a door, a vine, a rock, &c. For he doth as expressly call himself by those names as he calls the bread in the sacrament his body.

Q. *Is there no change made at all upon the elements at consecration?*

A. Yes; but it is not a physical, but a moral change; it is only a change as to their use and signification. By consecration they are set apart from common use to a sacred and mystical use. They are no more for ordinary aliment to the body, but become thereby signs of Christ, seals of grace, pledges of justification, and earnests of salvation; which is not done by destruction of their nature,

but by divine designation. As of common wax a valid seal is made to a charter, by putting an authoritative stamp upon it, though it be still the same that it was, as to its substance: so here the consecrated elements, still retain their former nature, and are not Christ's real body and blood, under the accidents of bread and wine; as the papists more absurdly assert.

Q. *How then can Christ's words be true, when he saith expressly of the bread, this is my body?*

A. These words are most true in a sacramental sense, for Christ speaks here in a sacramental dialect, and retains the same stile he had used formerly concerning the passover, Exod. xii. 11. *It is the Lord's passover.* Now this cannot be meant but figuratively; for certainly the lamb, or the eating of it, was not literally the Lord's gracious act of passing over the Israelites' houses, when he came to destroy the Egyptians on every side of them; but a sign or token of his passing over them; and yet he says expressly, *It is the Lord's passover.* Thus also did he speak of the other sacrament, viz. circumcision, when he instituted it, Gen. xvii. 18. *This is my covenant.* Now circumcision was not literally the covenant itself, but only a sign and seal of the covenant. Also in the institution of the Lord's supper, he useth the same sort of figurative speeches; and if the papists will not grant this concerning the bread, when Christ said of it, *this is my body;* yet whether they will or not, they must own it, concerning the wine, when he saith, "this cup is the new testament." For here is a two-fold figure; first, he did not mean this properly or literally of the cup or vessel that contained the wine; for so the cup cannot be the new-testament or covenant of grace, but the wine contained in the cup. Neither, secondly, can the wine be properly called the new-testament or covenant itself, but only a sign or pledge of it. So that we see such metonymical and figurative speeches are the ordinary sacramental language that God in all ages hath made use of, in instituting the seals of his covenant. And can papists give any solid reason, why such speeches as these should be taken in a figurative sense in one place and not in another, when the case is the same, and the necessity plainly equal.

Q. *What is the meaning of Christ's words concerning the cup. Drink ye all of it, this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me?*

A. He means these things; 1. to discover the freeness of his grace, and the ready welcome he gives to all his guests, even the meanest and poorest of them.

2dly, To teach us thirstily and affectionately to receive, (together with the cup) the precious blood of Christ, and by faith apply it to our souls in a particular manner, for the curing of all our diseases, the washing away all our sins, and the supply of all our wants.

3dly, That in the receiving and drinking of this cup, we should entertain and keep up a fresh and thankful remembrance of Christ's sufferings, and of his dying love, in shedding and offering up his blood as a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins. We should remember and think upon, both what he hath done, what he is still doing, and what he is about to do for us.

Q. *Why are we so expressly charged to remember Christ in this ordinance, are we in any hazard of forgetting him?*

A. Yes; our Saviour knows that we have worldly hearts, treacherous memories, and stand in need of all these memorandums, to keep up the lively remembrance of his love.

Q. *What is implied in remembering of Christ?*

A. It hath in it, 1. The knowledge of Christ and the method of redemption through his blood.

2dly, Some precious acquaintance with him, by a work of grace on the heart, and closing with him by faith.

3dly, A believing contemplation of his death and sufferings.

4thly, Such a remembrance as makes deep and suitable impressions on our souls.

Q. *What obligations lie upon us to keep up the remembrance of Christ?*

A. 1. Because he is our most loving Friend; a friend that remembered us in our low estate, and that hath done more for us than all the friends of the world could or would have done.

2dly, Because he is an absent Friend; yea, absent on our account, and still negotiating our affairs at the court of heaven. He constantly remembers his people, and hath them still on his heart, and in his eye.

3dly, Because he is a Friend quickly about to return. He is still meditating on it, and fast preparing for it. He is hasting to come again in the clouds to meet his people, take them home to his palace, and put them in possession of all his purchase.

Q. *What kind of remembrance of Christ ought we to have, in receiving the sacrament?*

A. Not a bare historical remembrance, for so Judas. Pilate, and the devils in hell, may remember how they betrayed and crucified Christ on earth; but it is a remembrance with suitable impresings on our souls.

1. We must have an awful and reverential remembrance, adoring the justice and holiness of God, displayed in the sufferings of Christ his dear Son. O how vehemently did he hate sin, that he would not spare him when he cried, and was but surety for another! May not we cry with the Bethshemites, 1 Sam. vi. 20. "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?"

2dly, It must be a mournful and heart-breaking remembrance, looking on a slain Christ in the elements, as one pierced through and crucified by our sins; and our eye should affect our hearts with grief and sorrow for those sins that nailed and killed the Lord of life.

3dly, We must have a sin-loathing remembrance, abhorring, with the utmost detestation, our cursed sins, that made a strong and mighty Redeemer to sweat blood, and groan under their weight; yea, never parted with him till they brought him to a bitter death.

4thly, It must be an affectionate remembrance. The unparalleled love of Christ discovered in the sacrament, must not be thought on without love. Our hearts should even burn with affection to him, when we remember the great floods of wrath that brake in upon Christ's soul, and yet could not drown his love to us.

5thly, It must be a thankful remembrance, saying, "O what shall I render to Christ for undertaking my deliverance, and wading through hell to save me from perishing there for ever! O if men and angels would help me to extol his free grace and wondrous love!"

6thly, It must be a fiducial remembrance, laying the whole stress of our soul's justification and salvation upon the death of Christ; pleading it with God, for answering all the accusations of Satan, the indictments of the law, and challenges of our own consciences.

Q. *What is the import of these words of Christ, concern-*

ing the cup: this cup is the New Testament in my blood, shed for many for the remissions of sins?

A. It is a figurative speech, as I shewed before, and the plain literal sense of it is, the wine in this cup, as representing the shedding of my blood for your sins, is a sure sign and token to you, cf God's making and confirming the New Testament, or covenant of grace, with you; and of his sealing all the blessings of it unto you; or, this cup is a visible pledge to you of that rich covenant with its blessings, which is brought about and ratified to you by the shedding of my blood for sin.

Q. *What are the sweet instructions and meditations which these words of Christ do afford us?*

A. They are many, such as these; 1. The covenant of grace is Christ's testament, wherein all manner of precious legacies are freely bequeathed unto his people.

2dly, That this testament is sure, and of undoubted force, being confirmed by the death of testator, and sealed with his blood.

3dly, That Christ puts a sealed copy of his testament into every worthy communicant's hand, at the Lord's table.

4thly, That the covenant of grace, with all its blessings, is purchased by Jesus Christ to believers, by the price of his blood.

5thly, That pardon of sin is one of the choicest legacies in Christ's testament, and to be highly valued.

6thly, That without the shedding of blood (even the precious blood of Christ, which is the blood of atonement) there is no remission of sin.

7thly, The blood of Christ cannot be effectual to any unless it be received and applied by the hand of faith.

8thly, That in order to make a good title to covenant blessings, it is absolutely needful that every man for himself do take hold of the covenant, as tendered in the gospel-ordinances.

9thly, That the news of a covenant ratified, and pardon sealed by the blood of Christ, is most reviving and refreshing to the guilty soul; as wine that makes glad the heart.

Q. *What are the legacies and blessings contained in the Testament given, and sealed to believers in the Lord's supper?*

A. There is the holy Spirit to teach, guide, and comfort them; there is pardon of sin and peace with God; in a word, there is wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, grace, and glory. All which, with many more, were mentioned before, among the promises of the covenant of grace.

Q. *How shall we know if we have any part in Christ's Testament, or if our names be in it?*

A. By these two things, *1st*, If we do heartily take hold of it, embrace its promise, and acquiesce in the method of salvation contained in it.

2dly, If we can prove ourselves to be among Christ's poor relations, or claim any sibness to him by faith and regeneration: all these being children and heirs, have an interest in Christ's Testament, Isa. lvi. 4, 5. John i. 12. 2 Cor. vi. 16, 17, 18. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26. Rom. viii. 17.

Q. *What are the marks of those who are children of Christ's family and heirs of his Testament?*

A. They are such as are begotten by the word to a lively hope, transplanted from nature's garden to grace, and become plants of his right hand's planting.

2dly. They know something of the Spirit of adoption, and his operations in their souls; particularly in discovering sin, exciting to prayer, conquering lusts and sanctifying the heart, Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iv. 6. Eph. iv. 23, 24.

3dly, They have childrens frames and dispositions of heart, *viz.* A filial fear, and reverence of God, a filial love and affection to Christ, and a deep hatred of every thing that is offensive or dishonourable to him. Also they have a great concern for their mother the church, and a love to their brethren the saints. They love their Father's presence, and desire to be much about his hand, Mal. i. 6. John viii. 42. Psalm cxix. 136. Psalm cxxxvii. 6.

4thly, They have childrens appetites for their food; they earnestly desire the ordinances, and communion with Christ in them, Psalm lxxxiv. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 2.

Q. *How are we assured that Christ's testament is firm and unalterable?*

A. From these three things; 1. The faithfulness and immutability of the Testator, Heb. x. 23. Heb. xiii. 8. Rev. i. 5.

2dly, It is become of unalterable force by the Testator's death, and is confirmed by his blood, Heb. ix. 16, 17. Mat. xxvi. 28.

3dly, He hath appended the two great seals of heaven to it, baptism and the Lord's supper, of purpose to declare the validity and fulness of his testament.

Q. *But how are we certain that this testament will be duly executed, conform to the Testator's will?*

A. Because, 1. He hath left it in a sure and faithful hand, even that of the holy Spirit, who is the executor thereof, to apply it, and bestow the legacies it bequeathes, upon those who are named in it, John xiv. 16, 26.

Yea, *2dly*, The blessed Testator is risen from the dead, and lives for ever, to see the execution of his own testament himself, Rev. i. 18. Heb. vii. 25.

Q. *When will all these legacies be bestowed on the heirs of this testament? It is just now?*

A. They are just now infeft, and vested therein, by the word and sacraments; whereby their right is sufficiently secured to the great estate which Christ hath left them by his latter-will. And, in the mean time, they have out of it a sufficient maintenance, to continue till the time appointed come, when they shall enter into the full possession of the whole. Believers, while here, are but Minors, and not fit to be entrusted with the management of their estate, so that it is secured for them in good hands, till they arrive at full age.

Q. *What is the meaning of the words which Christ spoke with respect to the whole sacrament,* "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come?"

A. It is as if he had said, see that ye make conscience of coming to this holy table, and of coming frequently; for every time you do it in a right manner, you keep up the memorial of your Lord and Saviour's death, in a way that is pleasant to him; seeing he hath appointed this as a standing ordinance in the church to continue till his second coming to judgment; when he will call his whole servants to account concerning their observing his injunctions, and this among the rest.

Q. *What obligations lie upon us to come and partake of this ordinance?*

A. All the professors of Christ are obliged to it on many accounts; 1. In point of duty. 2. In point of interest. 3. In point of gratitude. 4. In point of safety.

Q. *How are we obliged in point of duty?*

A. Because Christ our Lord and law-giver hath peremptorily commanded it; nay, for the more security, he repeats the command twice, 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. "This do ye, this do ye;" and surely all of us owe obedience to his authority, without reserve.

Q. *How are we obliged to partake in point of interest?*

A. Because of the great advantages which are to be got by it, seeing Christ and all the benefits of the new covenant, are here sealed and applied.

Q. *How are we obliged to partake in point of gratitude?*

A. 1. Because the command enjoining this duty, was among the last words of our dying friend and Saviour, who did more for us than all the world could have done.

2dly, Because the design of the ordinance is to keep up the memorial of the love which our dying Saviour expressed at the first institution of it, in suffering death, and offering up himself a sacrifice to divine justice, in our stead.

3dly, Because he seeks no greater return for his love, than a thankful remembrance of it.

4thly, Because he puts us to no greater charge to express it, than by eating and drinking at his table.

Q. *How are we obliged to partake in point of safety?*

A. Because the slighting, or wilful neglecting of this ordinance, is a great sin before God, and very provoking to him, as well as dangerous to ourselves.

Q. *Wherein lies the sin of neglecting this ordinance?*

A. In respect it is no less than contempt of the words of our dying Saviour, disobedience to his command, ingratitude to our greatest benefactor, a base slighting of God's love, Christ's sufferings, and all the great preparations he hath made for us: a wronging of our own souls, and despising of our choicest mercies and privileges.

Q. *What is the danger of neglecting this duty?*

A. It draws on the wrath and vengeance of God, nay, of Christ the Mediator; which must be very terrible. As God threatened to cut off those that neglected the passover of old; so he threatened severe wrath against those who should neglect the gospel-feasts, Numb. ix. 13. Zech. xiv. 16, 17, 18 And these threatenings are renewed, Mat. xxii. 7. Luke xiv. 24.

Q. *Is it a good excuse for neglecting this ordinance, for the people to say, they are not prepared, have quarrels with their neighbours, or cannot get such particular sins left?*

A. No; for the want of preparation is our sin, and one sin can never excuse or answer for another. It is a fearful thing to live in a sinful course against light, and then to make sin an excuse for the neglect of commanded duty.

Q. *Is it not enough that we partake of the Lord's supper once in our lives, as we do of the other sacrament, baptism?*

A. No; for baptism being the sacrament of initiation, is not to be repeated; but the Lord's supper being for nutrition, is often to be received.

Q. *What obligations lie on us to partake often?*

A. We are obliged to it; 1. By our Saviour's words at the first institution, 1 Cor. xi. 25, 26. "As often as ye do this;" which have the virtue of a command to frequency in communicating.

2dly, By the examples of the apostles and primitive Christians, whose practice it was to communicate frequently, nay, for ordinary, every Lord's day, Acts ii. 42, 46. Acts xx. 7.

3dly, Our souls necessities do call for frequency in partaking; for we are oft ready to forget Christ, and therefore we oft need this ordinance to bring him to our remembrance. We are oft subject to spiritual deadness, weakness of faith, and decays of grace; and therefore have frequent need of this ordinance, for strength and quickening.

Q. *Are we as much obliged to frequent communicating, as the apostles and primitive Christians were?*

A. Though they were in a much better frame for it, as having had more recent and warm impressions of the love and death of their Redeemer constantly upon their spirits, than we have; yet certainly we are under as strong obligations to frequent partaking, as the first Christians were. For we have the same Lord and Saviour that they had, and are under the same obligations of love and gratitude to him. We have the same need of the application of Christ's blood, and a confirmed interest in his meritorious death that they had; and consequently the same need of this memorial feast and sealing ordinance.

Q. *Is not frequency apt to breed formality in this duty?*

A. 1. The same things may be alleged with respect to other duties, which yet is no good argument for the unfrequent practice of them.

2dly, This fault is noways chargeable upon the holy ordinance and institution of Christ, but upon the corruption and carelessness of our hearts; which we ought diligently to watch and strive against; endeavouring in Christ's strength, as often as we partake, so often to prepare for it, with all due care and solemnity.

Q. *What is meant by shewing forth the Lord's death in the sacrament, which seems to be laid down as our main business in this ordinance?*

A. We may be said to represent, show forth and annunciate the death of Christ in this sacrament, three ways; 1. With respect to ourselves. *2dly*, With respect to the world. *3dly*, With respect to God.

Q. *How are we to show forth the death of Christ with respect to ourselves?*

A. As the external elements and signs, in the Lord's supper, do give a plain representation of the death and sufferings of Christ to the eye of the body; so, in partaking of these elements, we ought to set the things represented by them (viz. the death of Christ, with the matchless love he therein expressed) before the eyes of our minds and understandings, in order to beget a fresh remembrance of that dying love, and to raise our faith and hope in a crucified Saviour.

Q. *How are we to show forth Christ's death in the sacrament with respect to the world?*

A. By owning hereby, in the most public manner, that we are the disciples of a crucified Jesus; not ashamed of our Master, or his ignominious death, but declaring before all that we glory in him, and rely upon the merits of his death here showed forth, as the only hope of our salvation; and that we have no Saviour besides him.

Q. *How are we to show forth Christ's death in the sacrament with respect to God?*

A. Two ways; 1. We are to shew it forth to a loving and merciful God, in a way of thanksgiving and praise; ascribing all glory to him for such a noble ransom and sacrifice, as he hath found out and provided for us.

2dly, We are also to show forth Christ's death in the sacrament to a just and sin-revenging God, in a way of faith and prayer; pleading this sacrifice with God, as a skreen and defence against the sword of justice, and curse of the law; and presenting it as the ground of all our hopes and expectations.

Q. *Is the Lord's supper to be reckoned a sacrifice to God, as the papists have turned it, in their mass, into a proper atoning sacrifice for the sins both of the dead and living?*

A. Not at all; for that is nothing but an abominable corruption of this blessed ordinance. For though the Lord's supper be a representation and memorial of the sacrifice of Christ's death and sufferings, which he offered to God upon the cross for our sins; and, in partaking thereof, we may by faith plead this sacrifice with God: yet the sacramental bread and wine are no such sacrifice to God themselves; but only a sign and seal thereof, given by God to us for strengthening our faith in his mercy promised unto us through Christ's death

Q. *What are the absurdities of the papists doctrine and practice in this matter?*

A. 1. The *popish mass-priests* do usurp Christ's priesthood and office, pretending really to offer up Christ a sacrifice to God, which none but himself could do.

2dly, This highly reflects upon the perfection of Christ's sacrifice, that he once offered up on the cross which we are assured, by the word of God, was acceptable to God, perfect, and never needing to be again repeated, Heb. ix. 25, 26, 27, 28. Heb. x. 12, 14.

3dly, This is bottomed on their absurd doctrine of transubstantiation, which teacheth that the bread in the sacrament is turned into Christ's real and true body, which is most false; as I proved before.

Q. *What is the import of shewing forth the Lord's death till he come?*

A. *Till he come*, imports. *1st*, That this sacrament is to endure till Christ's second coming, and no longer.

2dly, That, in communicating we should have the lively faith of Christ's coming at the great day, to judge of our sincerity and faithfulness in covenanting with him; as also to fulfil all his promises to worthy communicants.

3dly, That communicants should always live in the hope and expectation of the coming of Christ, and of everlasting glory, Tit. ii. 13. Jude ver. 21.

Q. *Why cannot this sacrament continue after Christ's coming?*

A. Because in heaven there is no need of sacrament. Here we hold communion with Christ by signs and symbols, in regard of our darkness, distance and imperfection; but above believers will see *him as he is*, and enjoy him perfectly. Faith shall be turned into vision, and hope into fruition. "The day will then break, and all the shadows will flee away," Cant ii. 17. Rev. xxi. 22, 23.

Q. *What is the meaning of these words of Christ at the first institution*, Henceforth I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom?

A. Christ designs hereby to teach his disciples several things; *1st*, That now he was taking his leave of sacraments and ordinances here below; and that there is no use for such above.

2dly, That the Lord's supper here is an emblem of the marriage-supper of the lamb hereafter: or a representation of that heavenly communion above, which the saints for ever will partake of with the Lord Jesus, which is held forth by the pleasures of a banquet of wine.

3dly, That the pleasures of that communion, which they should entertain with him in heaven, will never wax old, but always continue fresh and new.

4thly, That in this world they were no more to have communion with him in his bodily presence, as they had formerly enjoyed; but they must henceforth feed on him by faith, till their happy meeting together in heaven; where faith will be swallowed up in vision.

5thly, That notwithstanding of the want of his bodily presence, they should still keep up communion with him in the use of this ordinance, patiently waiting and looking for the full accomplishment of it, in that glorious eternal feast above.

Q. *Is there not a great difference betwixt the communion here, and the communion above; or betwixt our drinking the fruit of the vine here, and our drinking it new with Christ in his Father's kingdom?*

A. Yes, the odds are very great: For *1st*, The communion, which Christ allows his people here, is but the foretaste or first-fruits of the promised land, given to wean their hearts from this world, and sharpen their appetites and desires after the Canaan above, where these first-fruits do grow and are fully ripe.

2dly, The comforts of the lower table are but small, and of short continuance for ordinary: but these of the higher table are full, satisfying, and everlasting.

3dly, Here we feed on an absent Christ by signs and symbols, and have but bad appetites for our food: but the communicants above will enjoy Christ's bodily presence, see him as he is, and have vast and never failing appetites for that heavenly feast.

4thly, Here communicants meet in parcels, and in sundry places: but above, the church of the first-born shall meet together in one general assembly; and be all set together with Christ, as it were at one table.

5thly, Here many traitors and unworthy communicants do thrust themselves in among the children, and many things happen to marr the childrens comfort: but above, no Judas or unfurnished guest can come, nor any thing fall out to impair the glory of that feast.

6thly, The lower table is placed in temples made with hands, with earthly men attending; but hereafter the glorious heavens will be the rooms, and the heavenly hosts the attendants.

7thly, Here the communicants are entertained with the singing of psalms: but above there will be the multitude of the heavenly host, singing "Hallelujah to the Lamb that sits upon the throne, and glory to God in the highest."

Q. *What are the great ends and uses of the Lord's supper?*

A. 1. To keep up the solemn and lively remembrance of Christ's death, and dying love to lost sinners among men, while the world stands.

2dly, Solemnly to make over, apply, and seal Christ, his purchase, and all the benefits of the new covenant unto true believers.

3dly, That hereby we may have occasion to make public profession of our owning and receiving a crucified Jesus, as our only Saviour and Master.

4thly, That we may testify our thankfulness to God, for giving his Son to die for our redemption; and to the Son, for laying down his life so willingly for us.

5thly, That we might get a pledge and seal of our union and communion with Christ, and our faith in his promises strengthened and confirmed.

6thly, That we may renew and seal our covenant with God in Christ, personally ratify our baptismal vows, and

solemnly bind ourselves to take God for our God, and give up ourselves to be the Lord's people, and to walk with him in the ways of gospel obedience.

7thly, It is appointed as a sign and bond of believers union and communion among themselves; their mutual love to and fellowship one with another.

Lastly, It is designed as a spiritual meal, for strengthening of the Lord's people in the inward man, for nourishing their graces, chearing their hearts, removing their fears and faintings, and giving them a pledge of heaven, and a fore taste of the eternal communion above. For all which, see Mat. xxvi. 26, 27. 1 Cor. xi. 20, 25, 35, 36 Gal. iii. 1. 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. Heb. ix. 15, 16, 17.

Q. *Is it not to be feared that many have not right ends in coming to the Lord's supper?*

A. There is too much ground for it; and peoples ends are surely wrong; 1. When they come to the Lord's table to make atonement for their sins, or purchase and ensure heaven to them; as some ignorant persons think they do in this action.

2dly, When they come, thinking hereby to hide or cloke some sin or wicked practice, they are presently living in.

3dly, When they come only to comply with the custom and fashions of the places where they live, or to prevent peoples having bad thoughts of them, or some worldly inconveniences to themselves.

4thly, When they come to please ministers and friends, or to gain applause and a good name in the world.

5thly, When they come in order to qualify or put themselves in a capacity for obtaining or keeping lucrative posts or places of preferment in the world.

6thly, When people come to this ordinance, thinking to be converted by it, and brought into Christ.

Q. *May not people be converted by this sacrament?*

A. This is not a converting, but a confirming ordinance in its own nature, which doth suppose that those who come to it, are converted, and in Christ before. Yet we must own that this ordinance hath been the occasion of converting many thousands, by reason of the word preached or dropt at the dispension of it, which God hath signally blessed to them. But though sovereign grace may do so, this is no warrant for unconverted persons to come and partake of this holy feast, which the maker of it hath not instituted for them, but for his people.

Q. *To whom is the Lord's supper to be administred?*

A. Only to these who have a gospel right to it, and gospel-preparation for it.

Q. *Who are those who have a gospel right to this ordinance?*

A. There is a two-fold gospel right: 1. An external right, with respect to the church. 2. An internal right with respect to God.

Q. *Who have an external right with respect to the church?*

A. Those who, being baptised, have a competent measure of Christian knowledge, profess their faith in Christ, and live religious and blameless lives before men. These have so far a right to this table in the sight of men, that they cannot be justly debarred from it by the office-bearers of Christ's house, Acts viii. 36, 37, 38. Phil. i. 27.

Q. *Who are those that have not this right, and are to be kept back from this holy table?*

A. All who are grossly ignorant, or openly profane.

Q. *Who are to be reckoned grossly ignorant?*

A. All those who know not God in his nature, persons and attributes; who know not their misery by nature and the way of their recovery by Christ; who know not the nature of regeneration or conversion; nor the ends and uses of the Lord's supper.

Q. *Why should such ignorant persons be kept back from this ordinance?*

A. Because they are not capable to examine themselves in order to prepare for coming, nor rightly to discern the Lord's body in the sacrament when they do come; and so they would provoke God, and get no benefit by their coming, but much hurt, 1 Cor. xi. 28, 29. 1. Tim. v. 22.

Q. *Who are so be reckoned openly profane?*

A. All such as live in the open and known commission of sin, and omission of duty, without repentance, or serious resolution to reform their lives.

Q. *Why are such to be kept back?*

A. Because such do but mock God, when they pretend to seal a covenant with him; they dishonour God, and prophane the ordinance, when, with unholy hands, they presume to meddle with such holy things: Yea, they contract the guilt of Christ's blood, and *eat and drink judgment to themselves*, 1 Cor. xi. 27, 29. Matt. vii. 6. Numb. ix. 6, 11.

Q. *Are all those who have knowledge in their heads, or morality in their lives, to be thought worthy communicants?*

A. Though such have a right to this ordinance before men; yet many such may want grace in their hearts, and so have no right before God; and consequently unworthy communicants.

Q. *Who are those who have an eternal and true right to the Lord's table in the sight of God?*

A. All such who are truly in covenant with God: believe in Christ with their hearts, obey him in their lives, and make suitable preparation for this holy ordinance.

Q *Doth not God call and invite all the professors of Christ to come to his table, and consequently have they not all a right?*

A. Very true, all professors, nay, the greatest sinners, are called to come; but surely God doth not call them to come to his table in their sins, but to come in due order, first to quit their sins, close with Christ, and then to come to this table: we are first to prepare, and then come. And though many unprepared persons may have allowance from men, who know not their hearts or secret actions; yet, none but the prepared (notwithstanding of the general call) have God's allowance to come to his table, or can expect benefit or welcome from him, Isa. lv. 7. Mat. xxii. 11, 12.

Q. *Why have none God's allowance and welcome to his table, but believers in Christ?*

A. Because this is a seal of God's covenant with his people, which supposeth that it should be made and consented to on our part before-hand, otherwise we annex the great seal of heaven to a blank; which is a mocking of God. So that this ordinance is instituted to confirm believers who are in the covenant; and not to convert unbelievers; and consequently none but believers have a right before God.

Q. *Are all believers still welcome guests to his table: or can they never be guilty of unworthy communicating?*

A. There is more requisite to worthy communicating, than being in a good state; we must also be in a good frame: there must not only be faith in a habit, but faith in the lively acts. So that if a believer neglect to examine himself, fail in his preparation, or want grace in exercise, he even communicates unworthily: yet neither this, nor any other of his sins, will bring him unto condemnation, though it brings on chastisement, 1 Cor xi. 28, 30, 31, 32. Mat. xxv. 5. Rom. viii. 1. Psal. lxxxix. 32.

Q. *What is it to communicate unworthily?*

A. It is for a man to partake in an unworthy state, an unsuitable frame, or with wrong ends. Or, more particularly, it is for a person to approach ignorantly, without suitable knowledge: or, to approach formally, without a suitable reverence and awe of God; or to come without due preparation, without the exercise of faith, love, repentance, spiritual hunger, thankfulness to God, covenanting with him, and resolutions against sin. Or to come, entertaining some known sin in the life, whether of omission or commission, or harbouring some secret lust in the heart, such as pride, malice, or revenge.

Q. *Is not unworthy communicating, both highly sinful and dangerous?*

A. Yes; for 1*st*, The sin of it is no less than murdering the son of God, and being accessary to the guilt of shedding his innocent blood. 2*dly*, The danger of it is both temporal strokes and eternal damnation: for this heinous sin, God is provoked to throw the bodies of many into the grave, and the souls of many into hell, 1 Cor. xi. 27, 29, 30.

Q. *Why should this sin be reckoned so very heinous?*

A. For these reasons; 1*st*, It argues a low esteem and an undervaluing of Christ, his precious blood, and redeeming love.

2*dly*, It is a solemn affront to Christ; as it is to a king, to throw his picture or great seal into a puddle.

3*dly*, It was a horrid mocking of Christ, as it is a pretence of love to him, and hatred of sin, while, in the mean time, sin is hugged and Christ despised.

4*thly*, It is a plain accession to the guilt of the Jews and Romans, who embrewed their hands in Christ's blood; for he is reckoned accessary to a murder who consents to it, aids or abetts the murderers, and this unworthy communicants are guilty of.

Q *Is not the guilt of unworthy communicants in some respect more heinous than that of the Jews?*

A. Yes; for the Jews, when they pierced him and shed his blood, they did it ignorantly; they did it to one they reckoned a criminal and a blasphemer; they did it to him when he was in the frame of a servant, in a state of humiliation. But unworthy communicants do this wittingly against him; they own him to be their innocent Saviour, now gloriously exalted at the right hand of God; and at a time when he is displaying his love, and making a rich feast to them; which makes the crime horrid and monstrous. Which consideration should make us all tremble, and cry with David, Psal. li. 14. "Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God.

Q. *Who are those that may be reckoned worthy communicants?*

A. Those who are in a worthy state, viz. a state of grace; who have a worthy frame of spirit, viz. the lively exercise of grace; and who have worthy ends and designs, viz. to show forth Christ's death, and renew covenant with God.

Q. *Are there any worthy communicants in a legal sense?*

A. No; for the best saint hath no worth or merit before God; he hath nothing in himself to found his claim or plea for any of these good things which God bestows in the sacrament. There are still many sins and imperfections in the best, so that after we have done all, we must acknowledge ourselves to be most, "unworthy and unprofitable servants," Gen. xxxii. 10. Luke xvii. 10.

A. What is meant then by the worthiness which some communicants are said to have?

A. Nothing, but a gospel suitableness and meetness of our soul's state and frame in this holy ordinance: for worthiness is often taken in this sense in scripture, Mat. xxii. 8. Luke iii. 8. Col. i. 10. Rev. iii. 5.

Q. *Is perfect holiness a strong faith, or a very great measure of knowledge in religion, or sensible joy and comfort at the Lord's table, essentially necessary to worthy communicating?*

A. No; for there may be worthy communicants in a gospel sense, graciously owned and accepted of God, who yet may have many sins and doubts, much darkness and confusion: but where there is any measure of true faith in Christ, though weak, the Lord marks not iniquity, but looks on the soul as white, through the imputed righteousness of Christ, Numbers xxiii. 21. Psal. cxxx. 3, 4.

Q. *What is it then to communicate worthily; and wherein lies the nature of this work and duty?*

A. It is a complex act, and a very great work; and it lies shortly in our receiving Christ and his benefits with the hand of faith, and making particular application of them for our souls' necessities; as we receive the elements with our bodily hand, and make use of them for our bodies. Or, it is, to cast our guilty souls into the open arms of a crucified Saviour for mercy, and, in the mean time, to embrace and clasp about this bleeding high priest, with the arms of faith, as our Saviour and Lord; saying with Thomas, *my Lord, and my God.* It is a flying into his wounds for shelter, and applying his blood for pardon and cleansing. It is a taking Christ's body and blood to save us, and a giving up our souls and bodies to be saved, taught and ruled by him. Or, in a word, to communicate worthily, is to eat and drink at Christ's table, with a believing and thankful remembrance of his love, resting on his merits, mourning for sin that pierced him, and solemnly resolving to pierce him no more.

Q. *What are the advantages of worthy communicating?*

A. They are very many, and very great; hereby Christ and his benefits are received, the soul's diseases and plagues are cured, our sins and lusts weakened and killed, and our graces strenthened and increased. Hereby the hard heart is softened, and the cold heart inflamed, the dead soul quickened, the palsy hand cured, and feeble knees strengthened. Hereby the straitened soul is enlarged, the wandering heart fixed, the creeping desires elevated, the fainting heart supported, the cloudy mind brightened, the uneasy conscience satisfied, and doubting souls resolved; many times hath Christ made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread; herein he hath allowed them the smiles of his face, the comforts of his Spirit, and seal of their pardon, and a sight of the king in his beauty, and a Pisgah view of Canaan. O worthy communicant, is there any meal in the world so profitable as this? A meal that proves life to your souls, and death to your sins, a cordial to your hearts, and balm to your wounds, strength to your graces, and poison to your lusts.

Q. *What are the disadvantages of unworthy communicating?*

A. It draws down judicial strokes from God upon the soul, diseases and untimely death on the body, and eternal wrath upon both. It brings on desertion from God, and the rebukes of his anger, darkness on the mind, deadness and impenitency on the heart, barrenness and leanness on

the soul, decay and withering on the graces, formality and lifelessness in duties, fearfulness, and sometimes horror on the conscience: yea, it lets loose Satan against the soul. And some of these plagues have even believers themselves smarted under, for their careless communicating, 1 Cor xi. 29, 30.

Q. *What is the meaning of these words*, 1 Cor. xi. 29. He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body? *Is this sin so damnable that there is no pardon for it?*

A. Though the sin be heinous, yet it is not unpardonable: that is not the meaning of the words; the word *damnation*, in the original is *Krima*, which properly signifies *judgment*, as well as *damnation*, and therefore our *assembly divines* use this word upon this subject, "They eat and drink judgment to themselves," *i. e.* they make themselves liable to temporal, spiritual, and eternal judgments: temporal and spiritual judgments will follow them in this world, and, without a timely repentance, these will end in eternal damnation in the other. This is pardonable, as well as all others, through "the blood of Christ, which cleanseth from all sin." For as the virtue of this precious blood saved and cleansed many, who actually shed it at Jerusalem; so it can save and cleanse those who spill and trample it under foot in the sacrament, upon their application to it, Luke xxiv. 46, 47. Acts ii. 36, 38, 41. 1 John i. 7.

Q. *Doth the presence of a wicked man pollute the sacrament to worthy receivers who sit at the table with him?*

A. No; for it is said, *he eateth and drinketh judgment to himself* only, not to another that receives with him: otherwise Christ and his apostles had been defiled by the company of Judas; for at the sacrament of the passover he certainly was.

Q. *Why is the guilt of this damning sin laid upon the unworthy communicant's not discerning the Lord's body?*

A. Because he doth not distinguish betwixt common bread and the sacrament bread, which represents the Lord's body; but useth it with as little preparation and regard, or as carelessly, as he useth the other; which infers dreadful guilt before God.

Q. *Where is the sacrament to be administered?*

A. Only in the congregations and assemblies of God's people. For, 1. Christ gave it to his disciples when met together, and not to any of them apart, Matt. xxvi. 20, 26.

2*dly*, It was the practice of the primitive and apostolical churches to administrate and partake of this sacrament publicly, when the congregation or church was assembled together in one place; which is ratified by the apostle, 1 Cor. xi. 20.

3*dly*, Because it is one great design in this ordinance, to testify union or communion of Christians one with another, 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. "For we being many, are one bread." Now this union of man cannot be expressed where there are not many convened together to do it.

Q. *Wherefore may not the sacrament be administered to the sick, or persons on a death-bed.*

A. It ought not, because of the foresaid reasons; and also in regard of these following; 1. We have neither precept nor example for this practice, in the word of God; and so it cannot be done in faith, Rom. xiv. 23.

2*dly*, It derogates much from the awfulness and solemnity of this great and august ordinance, to administrate it so privately, and with so little deliberation and preparation, as often it is done, where this practice is allowed.

3*dly*, Few sick or dying persons are privileged with such stayedness of mind, calmness of thought, free exercise of reason, and undisturbed use of the faculties, as is necessary for a man's examining himself before he partake, and so exerting the several acts of faith, and the other graces which are requisite in partaking. And to administrate the sacrament to those who are tossed with sickness, distracted with pain or incapable of any freedom or distinctness of thought (as most sick people are) is to profane the ordinance, and to do the sick person more harm than good.

4*thly*, This were to symbolize with papists and idolaters in their superstitious practices, and to homologate their errors: for papists believe that the sacraments do of themselves confer grace, and that all is well, if they at last partake of this sacrament. From all which errors, idolatries and superstitious customs, we ought to keep a due distance in obedience to God's command, Exod. xxiii. 24. Levit. xviii. 3. Deut. xii. 30. 1 Cor. x. 6. Rev. xviii. 4.

Q. *Seeing it is our indispensible duty to communicate, and that frequently; and it is so highly dangerous to communicate unworthily: what course shall we take, in order to our being worthy communicants?*

A. We must with all earnestness seek after that gospel fitness and preparation, which God requires of those that approach to this holy ordinance.

CONCERNING OUR PREPARATION FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Quest. *What sort of preparation is it, that God requires of such as come to his table?*

A. It is not a slack or careless preparation, to be put by in a hasty and superficial manner, as some do, who never set about it till Saturday or the Lord's day morning before they communicate. No, it must be timeous and deliberate, conscientious and impartial, diligent and fervent in the use of all appointed means, depending upon God for the gracious preparation of the heart, according to his promise, Psal. x. 17. Prov. xvi. 1.

Q. *What is the necessity of such solemn preparation for the Lord's table?*

A. For these reasons; 1. God requires it, 1 Cor. xi. 28. 2*dly*, There was also a great preparation required for the passover, Exod. xii. Num. ix. And this was not put by in a short time; for the trumpet was blown in Jerusalem to make intimation of its approach fifteen days before; and every family was to have the lamb in their houses four days before the eating of it, Ps. lxxxi. 3. Exod. xii. 3, 6. Also their house was to be prepared and narrowly searched for leaven, and that with candles; Christ, before eating it, caused bespeak and make ready an upper room, furnished, swept and garnished for that purpose: all this serves to teach us what preparation we should make for the Lord's supper, that now is come in room of the passover.

3*dly*, The soul makes a near approach to an infinitely holy God in this ordinance; yea, transacts and renews covenant with him, which doth call for our making solemn preparation, as it was the saints practice of old on such occasions, Gen. xxxv. 2, 3. Josh. iii. 5. 1 Sam. vii. 3. 1 Sam. xvi. 5. Psal. xxvi. 6.

4*thly*, There is need for it, because we are naturally unfit and unprepared; we have carnal hearts, dead affections, and unholy souls; and therefore they must be renewed, quickened, and purified, before we can hold communion with a holy God at his table.

5*thly*, God makes great preparations for us in this ordinance; he hath made all things ready on his part; a rich feast, a complete Saviour, a full covenant, a sufficient ransom, a perfect righteousness, suitable promises, sovereign remedies, a glorious purchase, and everlasting inheritance. And are not we bound in duty and gratitude to prepare for receiving those great things, Prov. ix. 2. Mat. xxii. 4.

6*thly*, There is great danger in coming unpreparedly, even of eating and drinking damnation: of which I have spoken before. We must not think that we can escape the eye of a jealous and all-seeing God at this feast; for he narrowly views all the guests, and will spy out every unprepared communicant. As he did the man that wanted the wedding-garment, Mat. xx. 11. about whom he gave most fearful orders, ver. 13.

Q. *What are the parts of preparation required of us in order to our approach to God's table?*

A. There are generally two, but very comprehensive, viz. self-examination, and exciting of the graces.

Q. *What is the nature of this work of self-examination?*

A. It lies in a free communing with our own hearts, and bringing our souls before the tribunal of conscience, and there judging them according to God's word. And in this process there must be an awakening summons given, and impartial enquiry made, plain accusations tabled against us, and a just sentence pronounced upon us, concerning our state. And if the sentence be bad, there must be the poor pannel's earnest cries for mercy, and a fleeing quickly to our Surety for repealing of the sentence of the law. All this I include in self examination, as necessary for preparing us to come to the Lord's table.

Q. *Is there an absolute necessity for self-examination before communicating?*

A. Yes; 1. Because without it we cannot know how it is with us as to our state, and whether we have a right to approach or not. 2. Without it we cannot know our wants and miseries; see our need of Christ, or esteem him precious. 3. Without it we cannot have a full discovery of our sins, and so cannot reform from them. 4. Without it we cannot know the deficiency or weakness of the sacramental graces in us, and so cannot excite them. 5. Without a particular knowledge of our plagues and distempers, we cannot make particular application of the remedy provided for us in the sacrament.

Q. *What are the properties of this duty?*

A. 1. It is absolutely necessary: for it is the first step to our conversion.

2. It is a duty much neglected by the most part of the world, they have no acquaintance with themselves.

3. It is very difficult and displeasing to nature. We are most unwilling to turn accusers of themselves; it being against self-love, which always inclines us to flatter ourselves.

4. It is a duty we soon tire of, and are ready to flinch from, after we begin it. It is no easy matter to keep the mind close at this work for any considerable time together.

5. It requires a constant dependence on, and looking to God for his Spirit's assistance and light, without which we cannot make right discoveries of ourselves, Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24.

Q. *What are these things we ought to examine ourselves about, before we approach to the Lord's table?*

A. Concerning these five things: 1. Our state and condition. 2. Our sins and short comings. 3. Our wants and necessities. 4. Our ends and designs. 5. Our graces and qualifications.

Q. *Is it possible to know the spiritual state and condition of our souls, if it be bad?*

A. Yes; by marks and evidences laid down in scripture: particularly our state is bad, if we love the world more than God; if we mind our bodies more than God; if we mind our bodies more than our souls. If we be insensible of the necessity and usefulness of Christ to our souls. If we make religion only our by-work, and give God no more service than what the world and the flesh can spare. If we live vain and careless lives, and allow ourselves in known sin, 1 John ii. 15. 2 Tim. iii. 4. John v. 40. Rom. viii. 5. Rom. x. 3. Mat. x. 37 Psal. lxxiii. 27.

Q. *How may we know if our spiritual state be good?*

A. By such evidences as these: if we be heartily concerned about our souls and eternity, and carefully seek the favour of God through Christ: if we place our happiness in the enjoying of communion with God, and not in the world's comforts: if Christ the Mediator, his ordinances, people, and all that belongs to him, be precious to us; if indwelling sin be our burden, and we sincerely strive against sin both in heart and life; if we make conscience of our words and ways, and have a respect to all God's commandments. These are marks of our state being good, Psal. lxxiii. 25. Rom. viii. 5. 1 Pet. ii. 7. 1 John iii. 9, 14. Gal. v. 24. Rom. vii. 24. Psalm cxix. 6, 128.

Q. *What is that good state we must necessarily be in if we would be worthy communicants?*

A. We must be in covenant with God through faith in Jesus Christ; and acquainted with a saving change of our hearts and natures by a work of regeneration.

Q. *Who are those that are in covenant with God?*

A. Those who have actually taken hold of the covenant of grace, and have cordially consented to its gracious offers and terms by faith; particularly, those who have been thoroughly convinced of their misery under a covenant of works, and have betaken themselves to the new covenant; have heartily acquiesced in the way and method of salvation through Christ and his righteousness; have cordially accepted of Christ in all his offices and promises; and in him have made choice of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as their God and portion; have also given up themselves, soul and body, and all they have, to be the Lord's, to be for him, and not for another: and in Christ's strength have engaged to live for God, and walk with him in newness of life; as becomes his covenanted people: and this is what we call our personal-covenanting with God, which ought to be solemnly gone about, by all that would seal a covenant with God at his table, Psal. xvi. 2 Psal. l. 5. Isa. xliv. 5. Jer. l. 5. Psal. cxix. 57. 2 Chron. xxx. 8. 2 Cor. viii. 5. Rom. vi. 4, 13. 2 Cor. v. 15.

Q. *Is not personal-covenanting with God, the same thing with faith?*

A. Yes; only it imports a very solemn, implicit, and distinct exerting of the several acts of faith, and lies mainly in these two, acceptation and dedication.

Q. *Is our accepting of Christ as a Lord and Sovereign*

that act of faith which entitles us to the covenant and its blessings; or that it is a mean and instrument of our justification before God?

A. No; for though it be essentially requisite to our entering into the covenant, and necessarily connected with our justification; yet it is not, itself, that very act of faith, whereby we are entitled to the covenant and justified before God.

Q. *What is the precise act of justifying faith, then, whereby that is done?*

A. The act of faith, whereby we are absolved, reconciled and justified before God, and intitled to the covenant, and all Christ's purchase therein offered, is precisely the soul's embracing Christ as a bleeding high-priest, offering up himself a sacrifice to divine justice, for expiating our guilt, and acting the part of a cautioner in paying our debt: so that the proper object of that faith which is justifying, is Christ crucified and his righteousness, and upon this alone doth the believing soul rely for pardon and salvation. Yet, as I said before, with this act of faith, which accepts of Christ as a high-priest and surety, is inseparably connected that other act, viz. the accepting of Christ as a King and Lord, to rule and govern us all the days of our life; which is absolutely requisite to our covenanting with God. And hence it is that there is a distinction made betwixt justifying faith and saving faith. So that we see personal covenanting is also one with faith; only it comprehends more of its act than that which is precisely justifying, Deut. xxvi. 17.

Q. *Since the first act in personal covenanting is acceptation; what are those things we must accept of?*

A. We must first accept of Jesus Christ as our peace-maker and Mediator with God, seeing it is only by him we have access to God, and all the promises come to us in him. Then we must accept of all the covenant blessings, even a whole God-head, as our portion; God the Father, as our father in Christ; God the Son as our Redeemer, our prophet to teach us; our priest to atone for us, and our king to govern us; God the Holy Ghost as the applier of Christ's purchase, by his renewing us, sanctifying, comforting and guiding us to glory. We must accept of all the divine attributes and perfections; God's wisdom for our direction, his power for our protection, his mercy for our pardon, and his faithfulness for making good all the promises to us. We must accept of all the gifts and graces of the Spirit, faith, repentance, love, hope, fear, patience, &c. as our portion in Christ. We must accept of all the divine precepts as our rule; all his ordinances and providences as our helps to heaven: his covenant as the treasure of our supplies and comforts: his rod to reclaim and spur us on to duty: his people as our companions in travel: and his heaven as our home and eternal dwelling place.

Q. *Seeing dedication is the other act in personal covenanting, what is it we are to dedicate to God?*

A. As God gives himself wholly to us, so we must dedicate and give ourselves wholly and unreservedly to him; our souls with all their powers and faculties; our understandings to embrace God's truth's; our wills to comply with his will; our consciences to receive his orders; our memories to lay up his counsels; and our affections and desires to be centered upon him, as the object of our happiness. Also we must devote and give up our bodies, with all their senses and members, to be for his service: our eyes to read his word and behold his works: our ears to hear his calls: our feet to walk in his ways pleasing to him: our hands to supply his people in distress; and our tongues to pray, and speak the language of Canaan. Again, we must give up our enjoyments to him, our time and talents, our estates and substance, our relations and friends, our gifts and graces, our power and interest, to be employed for God and his honour, and to be entirely disposed of for his service and glory. Likewise, we must dedicate our service and endeavours to God, with all the actions and performances of our lives; aiming at his glory in all we do, resolving and engaging, in Christ's strength, to live wholly to God, perform every duty he commands, suffer patiently what he lays on us, watch against every sin he forbids, and renounce all his enemies. In a word, we must give up and resign our whole man to God, and all that we have, to be guided by his Spirit, ruled by his laws, and disposed of by his providence. And in these things lies our personal covenanting with God, which certainly is the communicant's best token, to warrant him to approach to the Lord's table.

Q. *Is not the gracious covenant, which believers are brought into by their clothing with Christ, called God's covenant, and a covenant which he makes with us? How then can we be said to make a covenant with him?*

A. I grant that it is God's covenant, and that ordinarily he is said to make the covenant with his people, and for this good reason, that God is the blessed author and deviser of this covenant and revealer and proposer of it to us; and he that affords us grace and strength to consent to it, and do our part of the covenant. But the covenant of grace being a marriage covenant, it necessarily imports in its nature a bargain that is mutual, and requires the consent of both parties, in order to the making and concluding of it. So that we are to be active in, and not wholly passive in this transaction; something must be done on our part, when we enter into this covenant; not that we have this principle of activity in and from ourselves; no, it is the fruit of Christ's purchase, and his spirit's operation, freely promised and given us by God, Jer xxix. 13. But seeing this activity is put forth and exerted by our faculties, it becomes the act and deed of the gracious soul. That this covenant is mutual, and doth require activity on our part, is plain from scripture, and the several ways that faith is expressed therein. Our entering into this covenant is held forth by the sinners yielding himself to the Lord, or giving his hand to the Lord, as in the original, 2 Chron xxx. viii. by our taking hold of the covenant, Isa. lvi. 4. our making a covenant with God, Psa. l. 5. 2 Chron. xxix. 10. Jer. xxxiv. 18. so that we are said to make it with God, as well as he is said to make it with us. Also it is held forth by our joining ourselves to the Lord in a covenant, Jer. l. 5. Our avouching the Lord to be our God, Deut. xxvi. 17. Our swearing to the Lord, 2 Chron. xv. 14. Our being married to the Lord, Jer. iii. 14. Hos. ii. 19. 20. Our subscribing with the hand unto the Lord, and saying, "I am the Lord's," Isa. xliv. 5. Our souls saying to the Lord, "Thou art my Lord, thou art my God, and my portion, Psal. xvi. 2. Psal. xxxi. 10. Hos. ii. 24. Lam. iii. 24. Likewise in the New Testament our covenanting with God is held forth by our coming unto God by Christ, Heb vi. 25. laying hold upon the hope set before us, Heb. vi. 18. embracing of the promises, Heb. xi. 13. Receiving Christ, and being married to him, John i. 12. Mat. xxii. Rom. vii. 4. All which expressions import our activity in

covenanting with God. I grant, indeed, that it is God that works in us, and that it is he that is the first mover in this blessed bargain; he courts us before we consent; he chuses us before we chuse him, Hos. ii. 23. Zech. xiii. 8, 9. so that this covenant is all free grace; for though God puts a condition in it on our part, yet he graciously works it in us, and promises it to us, saying, "Ye shall be my people," Jer. xxiv. 7. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, 28. Phil. ii. 12, 13.

Q. *In what manner must we go about this work of personal covenanting with God?*

A. 1. We must have our hearts prepared and put in a suitable frame for it; they must be spiritual, humble, and panting after God in Christ.

2dly, We must be deliberate in managing this weighty transaction, and labour to have a clear view of the nature and frame of the covenant of grace: what God offers and promises to us, and what he requires of us; and endeavour by grace to get our hearts wrought up to a stedfast resolution to comply therewith.

3dly, We must still bring Christ alongst with us in our covenanting with God; we must bring the sacrifice of his merits to atone for the breach of the first covenant, and his suretyship to answer for our faithfulness in the second, ere we can expect to be taken into covenant with God, and owned as his people.

4thly, We must give up and engage ourselves to God in a most humble and self-denied manner, narrowly watching against a selfish and legal frame of spirit in this work (which we are most ready to decline unto) and guarding with all care against any secret relying upon our own engagements and doings, or letting them come in the room of Christ, who alone is *the Lord our Righteousness*. Therefore, in managing this work, let us rely wholly upon Christ's righteousness to procure us access to God, and acceptance with him; and upon his strength and grace both in making and performing our promises and engagements to him; let these scripture-texts be still in our view, Psal. l. 5. Jer. xxiii. 6. Isa. xlv. 24. 1 Cor. i. 30. Phil. iii. 8, 9.

5thly, We should set about this work of personal covenanting timeously and speedily, without delay or loss of time; and particularly, let it be done in the season of youth; or when persons first get their eyes opened to see their lostness by nature, and their need of Christ.

And then, *lastly*, it ought to be undertaken and gone about in an humble dependence upon divine grace, and conducted with all secrecy and retiredness, seriousness, and holy awe; and yet in the most solemn and explicit manner, with the express words of the mouth, as well as the fixed purpose of the heart; yea, subscribing it with the hand, and calling heaven and earth to witness our sincerity in this grand affair. An example whereof I have subjoined in the appendix of this catechism.

Q. *What is the necessity of our personal covenanting with God?*

A. 1. Because God requires it of us, and promises great happiness to them who did it in sincerity, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. Psal. l. 5. Isa. lvi. 4, 5, 6, 7.

2. The nature of faith (which is required of every man) implies covenanting with God: for faith is the uniting grace, and carries in it not only an assent of the understanding, but also the consent of the will to embrace God's offers of salvation through Christ, and accept of Christ on his own terms, both as our Saviour and ruler, Mat. xi. 28, 29. Matth. xvi. 24. He is a High-priest on the throne, Zech. vi. 13.

3. Our baptism obligeth us to personal covenanting with God. For the whole of the covenant of grace is contained in baptism, and every man's consent to it is implied in these words, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," i. e. I sprinkle thee with water, which represents God's bequeathing and making over to thee all Christ's purchase, in sign and testimony that thou dost own God the Father for thy Father in Christ, God the Son for thy Redeemer, and God the Holy Ghost for thy Sanctifier: now it is certainly requisite that we should, when we come to age, personally renew our baptismal covenant, and ratify our parents' deed, that we may be Christians by our own free choice and consent, as well as by our parents' dedication. And this every individual man and woman that would be saved, must do for themselves, by their own particular consent and personal coming into the bond of this covenant, Ezek. xx. 37. The which, if we neglect to do, our baptism will not profit us, for God will rank and punish us with the uncircumcised, Jer. ix. 25, 26.

4. This was the practice of God's people of old, Deut. xxvi. 17. 2 Kings xxiii 3. 2 Chron. xxix. 10. Neh. ix. 38. Psalm l. 4. Jer. xxxiv. 18 Jer. l. 5. Isa. lvi. 4, 6. Nay, it is the practice of all the New Testament believers, 2 Cor. viii. 5. 2 Cor. xi. 2. For our giving ourselves to the Lord, in marriage-transaction, doth plainly import our personal covenanting with God.

Q. *But what warrant have we for such an express verbal way of covenanting with God, as before-mentioned?*

A. I do not say that such an explicit or formal transaction is absolutely necessary to salvation, seeing a man's state is safe, if he with his heart close with God's offer of salvation, through Christ: but yet this express verbal transacting is very necessary on several accounts.

1. Because it is a matter of the greatest moment and concern to our souls to be in a covenant with God, and we can never be at too much pains to make it sure. Shall we be so very express, plain, and peremptory in other bargains of lesser moment, and yet be content to be overly in this, upon which our eternal concerns do depend?

2. It is necessary, that so the impressions of our consent and engagements to the Lord may be fixed the deeper in our minds and memories; and so may be the more abiding with us.

3. It is necessary for the strengthening of faith, and preventing many groundless fears and jealousies about our souls' estate. There is nothing so liable to be questioned and brought into debate, as our interest in Christ, and our being in covenant with God through him; and therefore we should do all we can for maintaining a comfortable sense of it upon our spirits, that we may be the more cheerful in our obedience to God. And this way of solemn verbal transacting with God is a proper means for that end; it being, as it were, a formal instrument taken and put in record, of what passeth betwixt God and the soul.

4. This practice is very advantageous and supporting to God's people in the day of trouble and distress, or when they are in the view of death. How comfortable is it then, to call to mind former experiences of the souls' communion with God, and particularly for them to remember how, at such a time and place, they joined themselves to the Lord in a personal and perpetual covenant: then and there God spake with them, sealed their pardon, and owned them as

his covenanted people. The soul was helped, solemnly and expressly, to say unto the Lord, "Thou art my God;" and God graciously answered the soul, "I am thy salvation." This was very comfortable to the royal Psalmist in the time of his greatest straits, and when in prospect of eternity, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Psal. xlii. 6, 11. Psal. lxxvii. 10, 11, 12, 13. Psal. cxliii. 5, 6.

5. Express transacting with God hath been the usual practice of the best and holiest of God's people; and still is most frequent in those times and places, where the power and life of religion do most abound: this practice of God's people hath been visibly owned by God; by this method many of them have attained to the comfortable assurance of their interest in Christ and the blessings of the new covenant, which hath been very steadable to them through the whole course of their lives. And, to the neglect of this ancient and useful practice, many think the great decay of religion in our day is to be imputed.

6. There is solid foundation and warrant given for express verbal transacting with God, from his word, and the practice of his saints therein recorded. For the covenant betwixt God and his people is there represented by a marriage covenant betwixt husband and wife, Hos. ii. 19, 20. 2 Cor. xi. 2. And we know it is necessary that the wife give express and explicit consent to the husband, as well as the husband to the wife. And, therefore, the Lord saith to his people, "Thou shalt call me Ishi;" *i. e.* my husband, "and thou shalt not be for another, so also will I be for thee," Hos. ii. 16. Hos. iii. 3. Such a consent gave the spouse, Cant. vi. 3. "I am my Beloved's and my Beloved is mine." Likewise our joining ourselves to the Lord in this covenant, is called a "giving the hand to the Lord," which imports a most positive and express way of transacting, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. Again he saith, "One shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord," Isa. xliv. 5. These and many other scriptures, that might be cited, import a most express and formal consent in this covenant, to be necessary and warrantable on our part, Jer. iii. 4, 19. Isa. xiv. 24. Zech. xiii. 9. Which also we have exemplified in the practices of Jacob, David, Hezekiah, Nehemiah, Thomas, and other saints, Gen. xxviii. 20, 21. Psal. xvi. 2. 2 Chron. xix. 10. Neh. ix. 38. John xx. 28. Psal. cxl. 6.

Q. *What are the proper seasons for express covenanting with God?*

A. 1. In time of youth, when the heart is most tender and melting: and especially when persons are first brought under convictions, and are about to renew their baptismal engagements, and approach to the Lord's table for receiving the second seal of God's covenant, Ps. lxxi. 5. 17. Jer. ii. 2. Jer. iii. 4.

2. This practice is to be renewed upon some special occasions. As, 1. In time of great backsliding and deep humiliation for the same, Neh. ix. 29. *2dly*, In time of great straits and imminent dangers, Gen. xxxii. 9, 26. Psal. xxxi. 14. Psal. lvii. 1, 2. *3dly*, When persons are undertaking some great and difficult work, as Joshua, when Israel was to settle in Canaan in the midst of snares, Josh. xxiv. 23, 24, 25. And Jacob, when going to Padan-aram, Gen. xxviii. 20, 21. *4thly*, When believers are under desertion, and in the dark about their case, and, through temptations, brought to question if ever they really covenanted with God: then it is proper to essay the matter of new, and do what we can to put it out of doubt, by saying expressly to God, "Thou art my God, and my portion, Psal. xxxi. 14. Psal. cxlii. 5." So the spouse, when deserted, professed and avowed Christ as her beloved, Cant. v. 4. and vi. 3. *5thly*, Some have repeated this practice with comfort at the beginning of every year. I grant, indeed, there is hazard left people, by frequent express covenanting with God, turn too formal in it: and therefore it may be as fit, on some occasions, to declare, in the sight of God, our adherence to the covenant formerly made. Formality and overliness in this work, should be especially guarded against; for our express verbal covenanting is of no worth, unless heart-covenanting be joined with it. It is a mocking of God, to draw nigh to him with the lips, when the heart is away.

Q. *What shall we think of those, who apprehend that they once covenanted with God in Christ: but by their sins they have broke their engagements, and so are no more to be reckoned God's covenanted people?*

A. 1. All such have cause to be humbled deeply for their sins, whereby they have broken covenant with God: and if they be not humbled on this account, they have indeed ground to suspect themselves, that they were never truly God's covenanted people.

2dly, We ought to remember that the covenant of works and the covenant of grace differ vastly in their nature: for the first could be violated by the least sin, but the second cannot be dissolved by any sin of the covenanted. For though we break the engagement we come under when we enter into this covenant; yet God will not break the promises he makes on his part. God's gracious covenant with his people stands firm and undissolved, notwithstanding of many breaches and failures on their part; because there is a Surety in this covenant, from whom he receives satisfaction for the sins of the covenanted; and upon this account, it is provided as a special article of this covenant, that God will forgive the sins and breaches of his covenanted people, when they confess them, and sue for pardon for their surety's sake: and hence it is, that the covenant of grace is perpetual and indissolvable, and those who are once in covenant with God, are still in it, Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. Psalm lxxxix. 31, 34. Isa. liv. 8. 1 John i. 9. 1 John ii. 1.

3dly, All sensible backsliders, covenant-breakers, and treacherous dealers of any sort, are graciously invited and encouraged by God to return to him, and renew their covenant again, Jer. iii. 1, 12, 13, 14, 16, 20, 21, 22. Hos. xiv. 1, 2, 3, 4.

Q. *But what if we should just break over again. Is it not better not to engage, than come under new obligations, which would but aggravate our guilt?*

A. 1. It would be a fearful aggravation of sin indeed, to come under new engagements to God, without having a sincere design of keeping them.

2dly, We are peremptorily obliged by God's command to renew covenant with him, and not left to our freedom to come under new engagements or not as we think fit.

3dly, It is good to be jealous of ourselves in taking on new engagements; for the weaker we be in our own eyes, and the more we distrust our own strength, the stronger and safer we really are, 2 Cor. xii. 10.

4thly, If we covenant honestly with God through Christ our Surety, we may expect sufficient covenanted grace and strength, for breaking the power of sin in us, and enabling us to wrestle against it. And likewise we will have our

Surety engaged to answer for all our failures; and though we be weak, to be sure he is sufficient able and sponsible for us.

Q. *Is not this doctrine, concerning the perpetuity of the covenant, and Christ's suretyship for us, an encouragement to people to turn licentious in their walks?*

A. Not at all; for, on the contrary, believers are hereby laid under the stricter obligations to love God and Christ, which love will surely and sweetly constrain them to an holy and obedient walk. And whoever they be that improve this doctrine as an encouragement to sin, they are none of God's covenanted people; for it is the character of the ungodly, "To turn the grace of God into lasciviousness:" and though they should do so, yet the foresaid doctrine is true, and necessary to be published, to prevent dejected souls being sunk with discouragement, or driven into despair, Rom. vi. 1. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. Gal. vi. 1. Jude ver. 4.

Q. *But what shall be said to those, who are so discouraged with a sense of their own unworthiness to enter into covenant with God, that they suspect God is not willing to accept of them?*

A. 1. God never refused to enter into covenant with any upon the account of unworthiness. Who more vile than Manasseh, and yet God excluded him not upon his humble application? Who more unworthy than the prodigal, that forsook his father, and took on to serve the devil and his swinish lusts, and yet upon his return, the father takes him in his arms, rejoices in him as his dear child, and calls heaven and earth to rejoice with him too, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13. Luke xv. 13, 15.

2dly, God never took any into covenant with him but the unworthy: for God's covenanting with any of the sinful posterity of Adam (who are all of them utterly unworthy of this privilege) is an act of pure grace, and free condescending love, which all his people will have reason to admire and glorify to all the ages of eternity.

3dly, The more sensible we are of our unworthiness, and humbled for it, the more fit we are for covenanting with God; for it is such he hath promised to accept, Psalm x. 17. Isa. lxvi. 2. Matt. v. 3.

4thly, Though we be altogether unworthy, in ourselves, of being taken into covenant with God; yet worthy is the Lamb our Surety, who hath merited this privilege to unworthy sinners, and it is only his worthiness that we must plead.

5thly, We have the plainest calls, and most pressing invitations from God to the unworthiest of sinners to come and enter into covenant with him, and many arguments made use of to engage them to it, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. Isa. li. 4. Isa. lv. 3, 7. Ezek. xviii. 30, 32. 2 Cor. v. 20. Now for any to doubt in God's willingness to enter into covenant with him, after these plain proofs which he has given us of it, is no less than to suspect God's sincerity and ingenuity in his offers and declarations, which must be no small crime.

Q. *But what shall be said of those, who have many times refused God's gracious offers, and hence are afraid that he will not accept of them now?*

A. 1. They ought to be deeply humbled for the former refusals they have given. *2dly*, Bless God that the treaty is not yet broke off, and that his gracious offers are still sounding in their ears. *3dly*, the longer they have formerly refused, the more haste ought they now to come and take hold of God's covenant, that they may not provoke him by refusing or delaying any longer.

Q. *But have we strength of ourselves to take hold of this covenant and transact with God?*

A. 1. I grant we have not, but yet it is not here that the bargain sticks; it is not so much for want of power, as want of will, that this transaction is not made; for if once we were willing, strength would not be wanting: yea, it is our unwillingness that ruins us, John v. 40. *2dly*, We ought to be deeply humbled, under a sense of our impotency before God, lie groaning in his way, plead earnestly for pity, and flee to God's power, Christ's grace, and the Spirit's assistance, to enable us for this work, begging importunately, that, according to his promise, for Christ's sake, he would put a principle of life and activity in us, that we may covenant with God, and close a bargain with him through Christ. *3dly*, As we ought to be looking and seeking for this principle of activity from God; so we must not lay aside our own endeavours and efforts (weak as they are) till we know that we have this principle of the Spirit's concurrence with us; for commonly the spirit's work in the soul is not discernable at first: But (seeing the duty is ours, though the work be the Spirit's) we ought in a humble dependence on Christ and his spirit for strength, to be aiming and minting to close with God in Christ, take hold of his covenant, and consent to the gospel method of salvation, as we can: and if by any means we can get a grip of this covenant, let us take it, and say, with our souls, to the Lord, Thou art my God. For it pleaseth God to see us minting our duty, and he useth to join weak endeavours, and work in and by our own activity and weak mints, gradually influencing and inclining our hearts and wills to spiritual things, and holy duties, Luke xi. 13. Isa. lxiv. 5. Jer. xxx. 21, 22. Jer. xxxi. 18. Hos. xiv. 2, 3, 4. Faith ordinarily comes at first to Christ with a weak and trembling hand, minting to take hold of God's covenant and the offers of grace, but knows not if these mints shall be any way available: faith even adventures on a *may be*, "It may be the Lord will be gracious: who knows but he will return," Amos v. 15. Joel ii. 14.

Q. *What shall we say of those who refuse to enter into covenant with God, because they suspect they are none of God's elect, and so have no right to God's covenant?*

A. We are to look on this suspicion as a temptation of Satan, designed by him to hinder sinners from Christ, or to drive them to desperation, and therefore ought to be resisted: for, 1. It is great madness to open our ears to the suggestions of the devil, who is a "liar and murderer from the beginning," and stop them from hearing the voice of the God of mercy and truth speaking to us in the scripture, and calling us to take hold of his covenant.

2. It is high presumption to intrude ourselves into the secret decrees of God, which he hath forbid us to pry into, and to reject those plain duties which he hath commanded: for "secret things belong unto God, but revealed things unto us," Deut. xxix. 29.

3. The way to know our election is to make sure our effectual calling, which must be by entering into covenant with God through Jesus Christ, and turning our back upon sin; which, if our hearts be determined to do, we may surely conclude we are elect vessels; for turning to God in Christ is a fruit and certain proof of election, 2 Pet. i. 10.

4. This way of acting in soul-matters must be altogether against reason, seeing it is so in things respecting the body.

We would reckon him a self-murderer that would take no food, nor use any means for preserving his natural life, because of an apprehension he hath that he is appointed to die in a short time. So they murder their souls, who will not use the means of spiritual life, because they fear they are not elected. Again, if we have but a probability of gaining some temporal advantage, though not a certainty, we will venture and run some hazard for it: and do we think heaven and eternal glory such small things, that we will not venture and essay to take hold of God's covenant in order to obtain them?

Q. *What shall we say of those who fear it is now out of time for them to attempt this, because they suspect their day of grace is past, and the door is shut?*

A. 1. I grant there are not a few who provoke God to shut the door and give up with them, because of their long grieving and quenching the Spirit of God, and living securely in known wickedness, under the most searching and lively sermons; upon which account he withdraws his Spirit, and plagues many with judicial obduration, so that no means can do them any good. Wherefore if we in any measure be guilty of the foresaid sins, it should be matter of great mourning and humiliation to us.

2. Closing with Christ in the gospel offers, can never be too late, nor out of time: for God hath said, "Whosoever believeth in Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting life;" but saith not, if they do not believe against such a time, they shall be excluded: No! the offer is made to all sinners whatsomever, and late believers or repenters are not excepted from the benefit of it more than others.

3. They that can say, they sincerely desire God's favour and heart holiness, the death of sin, and true love to God, more than all the glory of the world; or, that they sigh and groan after Christ, and would fain have him for their Lord and Saviour; it is a sign their day of grace is not over, for these very desires are some degrees of grace, and a certain evidence that God still continues to deal with their hearts.

Q. *What are the marks of those, who are truly God's covenanted people?*

A. They are a willing people, humble and self-denying people: they are an holy people, zealous of good works; they are a thankful and God-exalting people. Jesus Christ the Mediator and Surety of the covenant, is very precious to them. The free grace of the covenant is the matter of their wonder and admiration. They are inclined to perform covenant-duties, and that in a covenant way, relying on covenant-strength, from a principle of love and gratitude to their covenanted God, and with an eye to glorify his name, Psal. cx. 3. Ezek. xvi. 62, 63. Tit. ii. 14. Isa. lv. 1. Psal. cxv. 1. Isa. xiv. 24. Isa. lvi. 4, 5, 6.

Q. *Are all those that are truly in covenant with God, acquainted with the new birth and a work of regeneration?*

A. Yes; for these two, being in covenant with God by faith in Jesus Christ, and being renewed or born again, are inseparably connected, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27, 28. 1 Cor. v. 17.

Q. *What is it that you understand by the new birth or a work of regeneration?*

A. These words, the new birth, new creature, regeneration, renovation, conversion, and effectual calling, are commonly used to denote the same thing; and they signify, that gracious and saving change which is wrought upon the whole man, both inwardly and outwardly, by the almighty power and grace of the Spirit of God, by the means of his word: whereby the soul, being awakened to see its misery and danger in a natural state, is humbled for sin, and powerfully drawn and determined to come to Jesus Christ for remedy: the mind is savingly enlightened, the will is made pliable, the heart is melted and made new, the seeds of grace are sown therein, sin's power is broken, the outward life is reformed, and the whole man is turned from sin to Jesus Christ and his ways, firmly resolving, through his strength, to walk with him constantly in the practice of holiness and duties of religion, Eph. i. 18, 19. Tit. iii. 4, 5. Acts xxvi. 18. Ezek. xxxvi. 27, 29. Rom. vi. 6. Eph. iv. 23, 24. 1 John iii. 9.

Q. *What are the signs of a person that is unregenerate and in a state of nature?*

A. They are such, 1. Who love the world and the things of it more than God, 1 John ii. 15. James iv. 4.

2. Who against light live in the practice of secret wickedness, or regard iniquity in their hearts, Col. iii. 5, 6. Isa. 1, 13, 14, 15. Jer. 44, 16.

3. Who believe not the report of the gospel concerning Jesus Christ, John iii. 36. John viii. 24.

4. Who go about to establish their own righteousness, not submitting to the righteousness of Christ, Rom x. 3.

5. Who are haters of the people of God, 1 John ii. 9. John iii 10.

Q. *Have such who, upon self-examination, find themselves in that state, any cause to despair of mercy?*

A. Though they may despair of help from themselves, or of help from God, while they resolve to continue in sin; yet they are to believe there is a door of mercy and hope opened to the greatest sinners in the gospel through Christ, seeing he is willing to accept of all who are sensible of sin and misery, and come to him for help; and to despair of mercy in Christ is the greatest slight and dishonour that can be done to him and his most efficacious blood, Mat. xi. 28. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. 1 John i. 7. Lam. iii. 26.

Q. *What course shall these sinners take, who are convinced of their bad estate, in order to be brought out of it?*

A. 1. They ought to cherish convictions, and labour for a deep and thorough sense of sin and misery, Mat. ix. 12. Luke iv. 18.

2. They are to be diligent in attending upon the word, and in the use of prayer and meditation, John v. 25. 1 Pet. i. 23. Acts ix. 11.

3. They are to believe, though neither faith nor repentance be in their power, yet they are both purchased by Christ, and graciously promised to sinners in the gospel, Phil. i. 29. Acts 5. 31. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.

4. They ought, in the firm persuasion of Christ's ability and willingness to help, to be looking to him for righteousness and strength; and in the painful use of all the ordinary means, to be much in pressing their own hearts to believe and close with Christ in the gospel-offers; earnestly crying to God with Ephraim, "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God," Jer. xxxi. 18.

Q. *But may we not delay this affair till afterwards?*

A. No; we must presently set about it. For, 1. Our lives are most uncertain, and many thousands go suddenly into eternity before they be aware; and none knoweth how short while the days of God's patience, and the offers of grace, may last, James iv. 14. Heb. iii. 15. Luke xii. 20.

2dly, A state of sin is so dangerous, that we should not willingly adventure to live and lie down another night in it.

3dly, The longer we delay conversion-work, the more

unwilling we will be to set about it; the heart will be the more hardened, and the habits of sin be more streng'hened: our guilt will be the more increased, and our souls the more unwilling to be called to account.

4thly, There are many thousands in hell already who have perished through delays.

5thly, If we refuse to hearken to God in the time of youth and prosperity; he may justly refuse to hearken to us in the time of our need, Prov. i. 26, 28. Zech. vii. 13.

Q. *By what marks may we know if the saving change by regeneration be wrought upon us, and that we are new born, and in a state of grace?*

A. By these; 1. If we have got our eyes opened, and new discoveries of sin, Christ, and holiness; if sin appear to us most vile, Christ most necessary, and holiness most beautiful, Acts xxvi. 18. Rom. vii. 12, 13.

2dly, If we have got new cares and concernments of soul, not about "what we shall eat, drink," &c. but "what shall we do to be saved," get the favour of God, our interest in Christ secured, and our souls made meet for glory, Mat. vi. 31, 32, 33. Acts xvi. 30. Job. xxiii. 3.

3dly, If we have got a new heart, and a new principle of spiritual life, and be endued with new resolutions to strive against sin, and walk with God in newness of life. Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Rom. vi. 4, 12. Gal. v. 16, 17.

4thly, If we have got new desires after the word of God, and the means of spiritual nourishment, 1 Pet. ii. 2.

5thly, If we have earnest desires after God's presence in ordinances, and particularly after converse with God, in secret prayer, Psal. lxxiii. 1, 2. Psal. lxiii. 28 Acts ix. 11.

6thly, If we hunger and thirst after righteousness both imputed and inherent, Mat. v. 6.

7thly, If indwelling sin and remaining corruption in our hearts, be our greatest grief and trouble, Rom. vii. 24.

8thly, If we have a sincere love to all the people of God, 1 John iii. 14.

Lastly, If we come to the light, and be willing to be searched, and have matters put to a trial, John iii. 20, 21. Psal. cxxxix. 23, 24.

Q *What are the marks and properties of a new heart?*

A. The new heart is a sincere and single heart; it is a soft and tender heart, trembling at God's word, and is affected with frowns; it is grieved for inward sins and heart-plagues; it is afraid of temptations to sin and the appearances of evil; it is concerned for the honour of God, and affected with the dishonours that are done to him; it desires and delights to do the will of God, and chuseth the things that please him. Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Psal. xviii. 23. Isa. lvi. 2. Psal. xxx. 7. Psal. cxxxix. 21. Gen. xxxix. 9. Rom. vii. 22, 24 Acts xiii. 22. Isa. lvi. 4.

Q. *What shall these poor exercised souls do, who, after the most diligent search, still doubt of their being in a gracious state: for when some times they attempt to lay claim to some of the foresaid marks, they are presently beat off again, and all is darkened to them, so that they cannot say they have any true grace or faith at all?*

A. These trembling and doubting souls, who are labouring by all means to attain to clearness about their souls' condition, and yet cannot win at it, are very much to be pitied: for though they be still using the means for light, yet they can get no solid ground to build any confidence upon: and hence they are often tempted to renounce their hope, and give over all further endeavours.

But such ought to consider, 1. That all seasons, and particularly a deserted condition, is not a very proper time for believers to examine and find out the marks of this gracious state; for ordinarily, then, satan raises many fogs and mists to obscure their grace, and the saving change the Spirit of God hath wrought in their souls, that they cannot possibly discover it; so that they must wait a fitter opportunity for this work.

2dly, We ought not to overlook the lowest marks of grace, but be thankful if we can at least say, our souls desire grace and an interest in Christ above all things: and that we are much troubled and cast down for want of clear evidences thereof; and though we cannot say we have true love to Christ, yet it is our greatest grief that we cannot get our wretched hearts to love him: and though we cannot say we believe in Christ, yet we resolve never to rely on our own righteousness, nor seek another Saviour, but to cast our souls down at his feet, and look up to him, and none other for help: and though we cannot say he will have mercy upon us; yet nothing in all the world would so please our hearts, as one ray or love-blink of his countenance. And though we cannot say we have true repentance, or any gracious change wrought in us: yet we resolve never to give over duty, nor give way to any known sin: we will find thirst for Christ as our Saviour, and for heaven as our home. Then, I say, we ought to be thankful. For these, though often overlooked, are some degrees of faith, and evidences of the spirit's work in the heart; for the least degree of grace is grace, as well as that which is stronger: as the least spark of a diamond is truly a diamond, as well as bigger stones; and the least drop of dew is water, as well as the river. We read of faith "like a grain of mustard seed," which nevertheless is true faith, as well as that which is stronger; and we must not "despise the day of small things," Mat. viii. 26. Mat. xvii. 20. Zech. iv. 10. Mark viii. 24. Mark ix. 24. Job xiii. 15. Mat. v. 6. Mat. xii. 20.

3dly, If we cannot attain to clearness, by poring on the marks of a gracious change, or of saving faith in us (as indeed some times believers cannot, since there is no mark can be given, but a scrupulous conscience will find an evasion or back door). then let us try to act faith in a direct manner upon Jesus Christ; for often believers come sooner to clearness about their interest in him, by the direct acts of faith, than by the reflex acts. Therefore let us flee to Christ for refuge, and lay hold upon the offer and promises of life through him, as if we had never done it before. Let us go and transact a covenant with God in Christ, as if we had never essayed any thing like it before: and possibly our fears will soon evanish, and light break in, Psal. xcvii. 11.

Q. *But can we never conclude that we are renewed and in a gracious state, till we feel the pangs of the new birth, be acquainted with a law work, and deep humiliation for sin: do not these necessarily go before our closing with Christ?*

A. 1. I grant indeed that the operation of the spirit of conviction by the law or the spirit of bondage, doth ordinarily go before the spirit of adoption, and the intimations of pardon by Christ: and that all who come to Christ must come in the due sense of their sins and misery by nature: and that some have had a great measure of conviction, sorrow, and humiliation for sin, Rom. viii. 15. Mat. ix. 12. Acts ii. 37. Psal. xxxviii. 11.

2dly, God is a sovereign free agent, and is not tied to one way of working in those he brings home to himself.

Some he brings in very early in their childhood, so that they do not remember the working of God's Spirit in them, which they have truly felt: and these he brings in, in riper years, he deals variously with them: in some the work of humiliation is very great and discernible; but in others not, as in Zaccheus and Lydia: in some humiliation work is deep and short as was in the jailor, and the three thousand converted by Peter's sermon, who were convinced and pricked in their hearts, repented and closed with Christ by faith, were converted and baptised all in a few hours, Acts ii. 37, 41. Acts xvi. 30, 33, 34. In others again, this work is not so deep but of longer continuance: some God calls not home till they have run a long race in a course of open sin, and rebellion against God, and these he useth to humble more deeply, and for a longer time; so that they can better observe the steps of the Spirit's working in them, than others. Paul was three days under deep conviction and humiliation, Acts vi. Others again, are in the time of their youth restrained from gross sins, and have had always some liking to religion and the people of God, yet without saving grace: when God brings these in, usually their humiliation is not so deep as others. Nay some are drawn to Christ by the sweet cords of love, and scarce know any thing of those Mount Sinai-thunderings, or the legal shakings and terrors that others are sorely broken and exercised with. They are called in by the still and calm voice of the gospel, which convinces them in a kindly manner, melts their hearts for wounding of Christ, and warms their souls with the gracious discoveries of his free love and matchless excellencies, which makes them to stand and wonder, and readily to yield themselves his captives. Zaccheus was soon surprized with the love-offers Christ made to his soul, so that he came down in haste, and received him joyfully.

3dly, I grant, that those who are brought in without a discernible law-work, are ordinarily more in the dark afterwards about their souls' estate than others; because their change was not so remarkable. Satan oft makes more successful attacks upon them to drive them to doubting and despondency, than on those who are gained by the law-terrors; and hence they are frequently tempted to raze the foundation.

4thly, As God doth not limit himself to one way of working, so none can prescribe what time or degree of humiliation is sufficient or necessary for the souls' conversion and closing with Christ. Only if we have as much of it as is necessary to let us see our need of Christ, and determine us to pass through all difficulties to come at him for salvation; and cause us to loath ourselves in dust and ashes, and to hate every sin, and break off from it: I say, if this be obtained, which is the true end of humiliation, we have no ground to despond for want of such particular degrees and measures of it. Who can tell what measure of it Zaccheus, the Ethiopian eunuch, Lydia, and others had, whose heart the Lord suddenly opened by his word, to Christ: they had so much as made them break through all oppositions to Christ, and willingly to close with him on his own terms, and to reckon him more lovely than heaven and earth, and all their idols and enjoyments in a world, and say, none but Christ: which if we can win to, we need not be troubled, though we have not been so long in the depths, and in the dark as others; for Christ did never put any away from him upon that account; he saith not, the man that comes to me convinced and humbled, in such a measure, I will receive; but "him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Our coming to Christ is a certain proof of our having seen our misery, and the worth of Christ, which is the main thing required of us.

5thly, Our keeping off from Christ, till we attain such a measure of sorrow and humiliation, savours too much of the covenant of works (which all Adam's children naturally incline to be justified by) for herein we are prone to affect making some sort of expiation or atonement for sin of our own, or to seek a price to bring in our hands to Christ, whereby we might purchase his blood, or some way deserve him and his righteousness; which is a dangerous practical error.

6thly, Our not being humbled enough for sin, should not make us linger in flying to Christ; but rather hasten our flight to him, who "is exalted as a Prince and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, as well as forgiveness of sin." Let us then be sensible of the hardness of our hearts, and humbled so much the more, that we are not humbled as we ought to be, for offending God; and so let us run in to Christ, that may give us a better measure of humiliation and repentance, Acts v. 31.

Q. *What shall we think of those exercised persons, who doubt of their conversion, because they know not the time when it was?*

A. There are several things said upon the former question, which may help to resolve this.

To which I add, 1. That the conversion of some is so remarkable, that it is no hard matter for them to be particular as to the time of it; and it is very comfortable to such as can be so.

But, *2dly*, There are others, who are brought in by the calm gospel-way, in whom faith, repentance, and a holy life, have been gradually wrought, and grown somewhat insensibly with the growing knowledge of the gospel and the will of God revealed therein, of whom it may be truly said, the "kingdom of God cometh not with observation;" so that they cannot particularise the time of their conversion, Mark iv. 26. 27. Luke xvii. 20.

3dly, We ought to look into our hearts and examine if Christ's Spirit be dwelling there; and if we find that he is, we need not trouble ourselves though we know not the particular time and manner of his entrance; let us try if we value Christ above the world, and desire nearness to him, rather than the best things in the world; if we would rather displease all the world than displease him. And also, if we be acquainted with the illuminating work of his Spirit, making new discoveries of things to us, which we had not before; and though we cannot tell exactly the time, manner, and steps of the change, yet if we can say with that blind man, John ix. 25. "One thing I know, that whereas I was once blind, now I see." Once I saw little evil in sin, but now I see it exceeding sinful and damnable; once I saw little evil in my nature, but now I see my nature corrupt and my heart deceitful and desperately wicked, swarming full of vile lusts. Once I thought something of my own performances, but now I see them all to be loss and dung. Once I saw little need of Christ, but now I see him to be more necessary to my soul than food to my body. Once I thought I might perform duty well enough in my own strength, but now I see I can do nothing without Christ. Once I saw little beauty in Christ, but now I see he is the rose of Sharon, and the chiefest among ten thousand; nay, among all the thousands in heaven and earth. Well, if this be our case, we need not be anxious to know what day,

month or year, the holy spirit wrought these things in us; for to be sure, the happy change is wrought, for though once "we were in darkness, yet now we are light in the Lord," v. 8. Phil. iii. 3, 8, 9. Cant. v. 9, 10. 1 Pet. ii. 7.

Q. *But how shall exercised souls do, who after all pains and searchings, still doubt of their being in covenant with God, and in a gracious state? can such doubting souls adventure to the Lord's table?*

A. There are many exercised persons, who doubt much of their being in a gracious state, and yet are really in it, though they cannot attain the assurance of it. Many have great fears and perplexities because of the weakness of their faith, and yet their weak faith is truly faith. Wherefore, if such doubting souls be truly concerned and affected for the weakness of faith and want of suitable preparation for covenanting with God, and if they can say they have unfeigned desires to be found in Christ, and to be in covenant with God, and to part with every known sin, and also willing to be at all pains to prepare for this ordinance, in the use of the means of God's appointment, then they may adventure to come to it: for sincere desires to believe and close with Christ, are some degrees of faith; and this sacrament is appointed for the relief, strengthening and establishment of weak and doubting believers, who bewail their unbelief, and look to Christ for help, Isa. l. 10. Isa. xl. 11, 29, 31. Mark ix. 24, 25. Psal. x. 17. Psal. lxiii. 2, 5. Matt. xi. 28. Matt. xii. 29.

Q. *What then is the meaning of that scripture*, Rom. xiv. 23. He that doubteth is damned if he eat?

A. The apostle there is dissuading from eating of flesh that was sacrificed or dedicated to idols, for fear of giving offence: and his meaning is, he that doubts of that meat, whether it be lawful or not, and yet ventures on that, whereof he is not persuaded of its lawfulness, he wrongs his own conscience and offends God; which indeed is damnable in itself, as being against his light. The apostle is not speaking there of the Lord's supper, which is itself plainly a commanded duty, and the neglect whereof is infallibly sinful; but of eating flesh that had been dedicated to idols, which was doubtful in itself, and became plainly sinful, as it gave offence to weak brethren.

CONCERNING THE EXAMINATION OF OUR SINS.

Quest. *SEEING the next thing to be examined after our state, is our sins and short-comings; how are we to examine these before our coming to the Lord's table?*

A. We ought to set time apart, and convene our souls before God and conscience, and compare our hearts and lives with the rule of God's commandments. And for this end we must pray for the light and assistance of God's Spirit, look into our hearts, look back to our former ways, and take a full and particular view of all our sins, so far as we can remember, sins both original and actual, sins of youth and riper age, sins of heart and of life, sins of purpose and of practice, sins of omission and of commission, sins secret and open, sins in thoughts, words, and deeds. We are to consider our sins both against the first and second table of the law; how we have injured God, our neighbours, ourselves, with all the heinous circumstances and aggravations of our sins. And in order to get a full discovery of our manifold transgressions and sins against every one of God's commandments, let us seriously read over the questions in our *Larger Catechism*, concerning the duties required, and the sins forbidden in each of the ten commandments, and also concerning these aggravations (therein mentioned), which make some sins more heinous than others, with the scriptures there adduced for proving these things: and there we may get (through the blessing of God) a most surprising and humbling sight of our guilt and innumerable transgressions before God, both of omission and commission, of heart and life, secret and open, that may cause us, with bitter lamentation, cry out with the Psalmist, in prayer to God, Psal. xix. 12. "Who can understand his errors, cleanse thou me from secret faults." And, in a special manner, we ought to search for our predominant sins and idols, and particularly to examine into those defilements and that guilt, which we have contracted, whether by the lusts of our hearts, or the out-breakings of our lives, since the last approach we made to the Lord's table.

Q. *What are those lusts and plagues of the heart that we should be most concerned about, in self-examination?*

A. They can scarcely be numbered, and therefore, referring to the *Larger Catechism*, as afore cited, for a more particular view of them, I only add this word, that we ought, with deep concernment of soul, to enquire into these grievous heart-plagues, viz. our atheism, unbelief, worldly-mindedness, pride, impenitency, forgetfulness of God, slighting of Christ offered in the gospel, our aversion to duty, ingratitude for mercies, security and formality, unmindfulness of death and eternity; our heart backslidings, wanderings, and wearying in duty, resting upon duties, forgetfulness of solemn vows, or malice, passion, envy, discontent, &c.

Q. *What shall we think or say of those, who, upon examination, complain that they find these heart-plagues upon the growing hand in them, and hence are ready to conclude themselves hypocrites or unbelievers?*

A. 1. If these heart-evils be strong or prevailing in them, and they not concerned or exercised upon that account, it it is a very bad sign indeed. But if they be truly concerned, they ought to remember that the best of God's people have also complained of prevailing sins and heart-plagues, Psalm. lxv. 3. Rom vii. 21, 23, 24.

2. Let us examine whether the power and prevalency of sin in us be such, as may be consistent with a gracious state, or not; 1. Are these lusts and heart-plagues our daily grief and burden? Are they matter of exercise and trouble to us? Do we groan under them, pray and strive against them? Would we reckon it the greatest happiness in the world to be freed from them? And do the hopes of being delivered from them at last, sweeten the thoughts of death and heaven to us? Then it is a good sign, Psal. lxvi. 18. Rom. vi. 24. Phil. i. 23. 2. Do we carefully set ourselves to oppose and watch against the out-breakings of these lusts, whether in words or deeds; and sincerely desire and breathe after universal holiness? Then it is a good mark, Psal. xviii. 23. Psal. cix. 5, 6.

3. When any sin prevails or breaks out, are we humbled for it? Do we lay the whole blame on ourselves, and heartily approve God's law? saying, with Paul, "The law is spiritual:" yea, it is "holy, just, and good, but (wretched I) am carnal, and sold under sin." O for a perfective conformity to that holy and excellent law? Rom. vii. 13, 14, 22.

4. Are we restless till we flee to the blood of Christ for

pardon of, and cleansing from, any such prevailing sin? and never in our element till we get the upper hand of it, and be in God's way again? Rom. vii. 24, 25.

5. Are we resolved in Christ's strength never to submit to, or to make peace with our lusts, but all our days to wage war against them, and cleave close to the captain of our salvation, looking to him for sanctifying grace, furniture and spiritual weapons for this warfare? Then it is a sign we are no hypocrites, but grace is in the heart, and faith will have the day at last, Acts xv. 9. Heb. xi. 33, 34. 1 John v. 4.

Q. *But what shall be said of those, who, after search, do find the woful prevalency of the sad heart plague of backwardness and unwillingness to duty, and especially secret duties; is there any comfort for such?*

A. 1. Where this is found, and the heart is backward, particularly to secret prayer, it appears that corruption is in some strength, and gives ground for great searchings and thoughts of heart, and should be matter of deep humiliation in the sight of God.

2. They ought not hence to despair, if we consider that in the best of God's people, there is a mixture of willingness and unwillingness; they are composed of spirit and flesh, which act contrary to one another; so that many times "they cannot do the good which they would," Gal. v. 17. Rom. vii. 19. And hence it was that Christ made apology for his disciples, when they omitted watching and prayer, and fell asleep again and again, after warning and excitation thereto: "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak:" there was a weakness, weariness, and unwillingness in their flesh, though there was still a willingness in their spirit, and renewed part, Mat. xxvi. 41.

3. Let us examine if we can say, that our weariness and unwillingness is our greatest burden and affliction; that we are weary of it, resolve never to give way to it, but always to struggle against it, and keep up duty as we can. Then there is ground of hope, seeing our unwillingness is not yielded to; for if that were the case, we would turn our back on duty altogether. Let us not, in this case, wholly cast away our confidence, but wait and pray in hope, for a time of reviving, and a day of the mediator's power.

Q. *What shall these do, who, upon trial, find themselves guilty of great unthankfulness for mercies, yea, of backslidings and breach of solemn vows made at sacrament occasions? How can such adventure to approach again to the Lord's table?*

A. 1. These things should be matter of great sadness and sorrow of heart to us; as certainly they will be to every sincere soul.

2dly, We ought not to sorrow as those who have no hope, but, in a humbling sense of these God-provoking evils, return to him, whom we have grieved, with shame and blushing of face; and rightly, "consider what an evil and bitter thing it is to forsake the Lord," Ezra, ix. 5, 6. Jer. ii. 19.

3dly, Let us do all this with expedition; for not to be speedy in our return is, upon the matter, to approve and vindicate our former backsliding; which will still be more provoking.

4thly, We ought to consider and believe, that in our covenanted Redeemer, there is sufficient fund for stocking and setting up poor bankrupt sinners of new; "for in him dwells all fulness," for his people's emptiness, and may be had too at a very cheap rate, Col. i. 19. Isa. lv. 1.

5thly, For our encouragement, let us take a view of his kindly and engaging invitations to bankrupt and backsliding souls to return to him again, with his free promises of pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace to them upon their so doing, Jer. iii. 1, 12, 13, 14, 22. Hos. xiv. 1, 2, 3, 4. One would think a serious consideration of these many charming and alluring calls, might overcome and melt the most backsliding heart in the world! Can we but wonder, and say! "Certainly a merciful God is most earnest with us to return, when he doubles and triples his invitation in the same chapter, Return, return, return, O backsliding children;" when he saith so to those who have most deeply revolted; Isa xxxi. 6. Surely an ingenuous heart will melt into tears, and cry out, as Saul to David, though he was a man of a very hard heart and rugged nature, 1 Sam. xxiv. 16, 17. Yet he wept and lift up his voice, "Thou art more righteous than I, thou hast rewarded me good," &c. It affects the most hard hearted person, and makes a very rugged nature to relent, to think we have been injurious to the most kind and obliging friend. But much more it will affect a believer's heart to think, "have I done all this against a gracious Father that still pities and provides for me? All this against the special offers of his love, and the precious blood of his dear son? All this against the yearning bowels of his mercy, and yet my heart so little moved;" "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee: I am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants." Let us take this course, and we may expect our father's heart will melt, the fatted calf will be killed, and the best robe brought out, and unworthy we made welcome again to his table.

Q. *But how shall those return, or have any confidence to come to this table again, who have sinned against light and conscience, relapsed into the same sins after vows, sinned with deliberation, &c. Surely these are not the spots of God's children?*

A. 1 These indeed are very heinous aggravations of sin, and call for great mourning and humiliation before God.

2dly, I know no sin that believer's are absolutely secured against falling into, except that which is unto death.

3dly, It is not a way to pay our debt; or get free of heinous sins, to sink and despond without casting our eyes about us, and enquiring for a fund from whence they may be answered.

4thly, We are assured, by the faithful word of God, that there is a remedy provided for all sin, the greatest as well as the smallest; and that never any was put back, that came to it for relief, 1 John i. 7. Isa. lv. 1 John vi. 37.

5thly, Let us see, if we can say, that our repentance, resolutions, and carefulness, do gradually increase, as our guilt is renewed or heightened. It is not so with unrenewed men; for as their sin increaseth, their conviction and repentance decreaseth.

6thly, The greater our debts be, they lay greater obligation upon us to hasten to the rich treasure of God's pardoning grace, and put a special argument in our mouths to plead for it, Psal. xxv. 11. "Pardon mine iniquity, for it is great."

Q. *But is there any hope of pardon for wilful sinning, when it is expressly said,* Heb. x. 26. *If we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin?*

A. 1. That place is not to be understood of every wilful sin; but of a total renouncing and rejecting Christ by infidelity and apostacy, after we have known his truth, and

been convinced that he is the only Saviour; which wilful sinning includes in it despite and malice against Christ, and is attended with final impenitency.

2dly, Though every degree of wilfulness, and crossing of light, be a grievous aggravation of sinning, and calls us to be humbled to the dust; yet we ought not to despond as if there was no hope: for none sin more against light, than sometimes the godly have done, such as David, Solomon, and Peter (who were clearly illuminated, and knew more of the evil of sin, and more of the will of God, than others about them) and yet they obtained pardon for their sins so heinously aggravated: and the same may we firmly expect for ours, if we be humbled for them, and flee speedily to the blood of sprinkling, resolving, in Christ's strength, against these and all other sins for the future.

Q. *What is incumbent upon communicants, after they have discovered their sins, with their several aggravations by self-examination?*

A. They ought to draw up a catalogue of them, as it were, and go humbly therewith to God in Christ, with ropes about their necks, sorrow in their hearts, tears in their eyes, and confessions in their mouths, and ingenuously spread it out before him, crying for mercy, and looking for pardon through the "blood of Christ, that cleanseth from all sin." They ought to lay hold on Christ and the promises, by faith, renew covenant with God in him, and turn from all their sins to the ways of holiness, Isa. lv. 7. Joel ii. 12. Mat. xi. 28. Isa. lvi. 4.

CONCERNING THE EXAMINATION OF OUR WANTS AND NECESSITIES.

Quest. *HOW are we to examine our wants and necessities, before our approaching to the Lord's table?*

A. We ought seriously to consider and enquire into all the defects and needs of our souls, and labour to have a lively and particular sense of them upon our spirits, and come to Christ in this ordinance, as our head of influences, fountain of supplies, and treasure of grace, for the supply of all our wants, the redress of all our grievances, and answering all our complaints.

Q. *What are these particular wants and needs of our souls, that we are specially to enquire into, at such a time?*

A. As they are many, so we must be at great pains to find them out, and therefore we are to inquire particularly into the maladies of our souls, and the defects of our graces; and what are the reinforcements and supplies we mainly stand in need of. Let us ask ourselves: do we need more faith, wisdom, sincerity, self denial, meekness, patience, humility, and brokenness of heart? Do we need a reviving to our languishing repentance, declining love, weak faith, staggering hope, and faint desires? Do we need food for our hungry souls, white raiment for our nakedness, eye-salve for our blindness, enlargement for our straitnings, loosing for our bonds, ease for our burdens, resolving to our doubts, peace to our troubled conscience, cordials for our faintings, comfort against our fears, strength for our feeble knees to enable us for our spiritual journey, and plaisters for our manifold sores? Do we need cures for our darkness and ignorance, our hardness and impenitency, our unbelief and hypocrisy, our deadness and formality, our inconstancy and backslidings, our heart-wanderings and wearying in duty? Do we need a sight of our interest in Christ, a seal of our pardon, clear evidences of grace, a view of the king's face and of the promised land? Do we want returns to our prayers, supply of bodily necessities, relief under bodily distresses, support under heavy afflictions, patience and submission under losses, strength to resist temptations, preparation for sufferings and trials, grace to vanquish lust, or deliverence from atheistical and blasphemous thoughts? These and many others of our wants, griefs, and burdens, we ought particulary to examine and enquire into, before we approach to the Lord's supper.

Q. *What is the necessity of our examining our wants and necessities so particularly, before such an ordinance?*

A. Because it is the duty and interest of communicants, to come with all their grievances to Christ in this ordinance; seeing here they have freely offered and exhibited to them all needful and suitable supplies treasured up in Christ's fulness. In this ordinance Christ sets himself upon a throne of grace, with a sceptre of mercy in his hand, and graciously waits to hear his peoples complaints and petitions, saying to the believer, as Ahasuerus to Esther at the banquet of wine, "What is thy petition, and what is thy request; and it shall be granted to thee?" Esth. v. 6. And as he said to the blind men, "What will ye that I should do unto you?" Matt. xx. 32. Now without a due sense of our wants and necessities, we cannot make particular requests to Christ, nor can we look for any benefit from this feast, which is only provided for the hungry and sensible soul, Luke iv. 53. Psalm ix. 18. Isa. xliv. 3. Mat. ix. 12.

CONCERNING THE EXAMINATION OF OUR ENDS AND DESIGNS.

Quest. *HOW are we to examine our ends and designs, in approaching to the Lord's table?*

A. I have before showed particularly, what are the ends and uses of the Lord's supper; we ought then to consider them before our approach, and ask our consciences, in the sight of God, if these indeed be the ends which we purpose and set before us in this solemn work; and see if we can appeal to the searcher of hearts that it is not to please men, or to get ourselves a name, or for any such by-end, that we go to this holy table; but to obey the charge of our dying Saviour, to shew forth his death; renew and seal our covenant with God in him, get nearness and communion with him, nourishment to our souls, and supply to our manifold wants.

Q. *Why should we so particulary examine our ends and designs, before we come to the Lord's table?*

A. 1. Because an all-seeing God looks especially to our ends and designs in our spiritual performances, and so must we. He noticeth peoples ends in fasting, Zech. vii. 5. "Did ye at all fast unto me, even unto me?" Christ inquired into the people's ends in going out to hear John, Matt. xi. 7. "What went ye out for to see?" And more especially will he notice our ends in going to his holy table, about which he hath given us such strict charge, 1 Cor. xi. 28, 29.

2. Because wrong ends will make the best actions abominable in the sight of God. Hence it was that he abhorred Jehu's zeal, the Jews sacrifice, and the Pharisees alms deeds, and good works, Hos. i. 4. Isa. i. 13. Mat. vi. 1, 2. Mat. xxiii. 5.

3. Because right and pure ends in this ordinance will ex-

cite us to preparation for it, beget reverence in us when we attend it, and awaken desires after the blessings which are here offered and exhibited.

Concerning the Examination of our Graces and Qualifications.

Quest. *OUGHT all who come to the Lord's table to have saving grace, as necessary to qualify them for it?*

A. Yes; for without saving grace in the heart, we are incapable of holding communion with God, or of putting forth those acts of faith, love and repentance, which are necessary in partaking of this sacrament, Mat. vii. 16, 17, 18.

Q. *What is saving grace?*

A. It is a principle of spiritual life, purchased by Christ, and wrought in the souls of God's elect by the holy Spirit, and ordinarily by the ministry of the word: whereby they are inclined and strengthened sincerely to think, act, and to do those things which God requires, and are well-pleasing to him, Eph. iv. 18. Heb. xiii. 12. Rom. xv. 16. John xvii. 17. Heb. xii. 28.

Q. *By what evidences may we know if we have saving grace?*

A. By those formerly given, concerning a saving change and the new heart, which may briefly be summed up in these two: 1. Saving grace turns the heart not only from sin, but against sin: so that the soul doth sincerely hate it and seek its destruction, both in heart and life, Ezek. xviii. 30, 31. Psal. cxix. 104. Gal. v. 24.

2. Saving grace turns the heart to God and godliness, and makes the soul willing and inclinable to do these things that are acceptable to God, cheerfully to obey the will of his precepts, and patiently to submit to the will of his providences, Isa. lv. 7. Psal. cxix. 112. Isa. lvi. 4. Job i. 21. Acts xxi. 13, 14.

Q. *Can no hypocrite attain to saving grace?*

A. No; for though some hypocrites have reformed their lives, and gone a great length in religious performances, and have attained to several qualifications which resemble true grace; yet none but believers attain to real and saving grace.

Q. *How far may some hypocrites go in religion, and yet fall short of grace?*

A. 1. They may attain to great gifts and knowledge in divine things; so did Balaam and Judas.

2. They may have a great profession and outward show of godliness; so had the foolish virgins, and the people of Sardis.

3. Their consciences may be awakened for sin, and they may tremble for fear of God's wrath; so was it with Judas and Felix.

4. They may confess sin, and express much sorrow for it; so did Ahab, Judas, and many of the Israelites, Exod. xxxiii. 4. Numb. xiv. 39, 43. 1 Sam. vii. 3, 6.

5. They may leave off gross sins, and set about a great reformation of their lives; so did Herod and the Pharisees.

6. They may believe the truths and doctrine of Christ; so did Agrippa, and many of the Jews, John i. 23. Acts xxvi. 27.

7. They may shew much zeal for these truths, both by promoting them and suffering for them; so did Judas and many others, 1 Cor. xiii. 3. Phil. i. 15, 16, 18.

8. They may show much love to ministers, and the ordinances dispensed by them; so did Herod with respect to John, and the Jews with respect to Ezekiel, Mark vi. 20. Ezek. xxxiii. 31, 32.

Nay, there is no grace or quality in true believers, but hypocrites may attain to something like it. They may have a sort of faith, repentance, love, delight, joy, desire, zeal, fear, mortification, contempt of the world, &c.

Q. *How may we distinguish betwixt true grace in believers, and the counterfeit grace that may be in hypocrites?*

A. 1. In believers, the nature and heart is renewed; but in hypocrites, nature is but refined, for the old heart still remains.

2. True grace is situated mainly in the heart and affections; but the hypocrites goodness is mainly in their external actions and deportment.

3. True grace is an immortal principle that abides constantly in the soul; but the hypocrites goodness is like the "morning cloud and early dew, that evanesheth away."

4. True grace carries the believer a further length in religion, than the hypocrites goodness can do, even to renounce self, love God above all things, and hate every thing that is contrary to him.

Q. *What are these attainments in graces and religion that hypocrites cannot arrive to?*

A. Whatever length they may go in religion, or change be made upon them; yet they can never attain to these things that are peculiar to the truly gracious.

As 1. Hypocrites can never attain to pure ends in their actings and performances; they never aim singly at God's glory, Christ's honour, and the good of souls; but still they desire to be seen of men. Their chief end is to get a reward either from God or man, or to evite trouble, either in their bodies or consciences here or hereafter.

2. They can never apprehend Christ altogether lovely, and the only satisfying good in the world, and be willing to part with all for him. For there is still something with them that they love better and prefer before Jesus Christ.

3. Hypocrites can never win the length to be truly grieved for indwelling sin, heart plagues, and those secret evils that would never turn to their shame before the world.

4. They can never win to have an universal respect to all God's known commands, and to be as zealous for secret duties, as for those that are public.

5. They never attain to renounce all their own doings, as filthy rags, and go beyond all things in themselves to Christ and his righteousness, desiring only to be found in him.

6. Hypocrites go not the length of being restless and unsatisfied, if they find not God's presence, and communion with him in duties. They are easy, if they acquit themselves therein to the approbation of men or a natural conscience, although they want the approbation and countenance of God.

Q. *Is it not an essential property of true grace, where it is, for to grow?*

A. Yes; because Grace is the "Seed of God," 1 John iii. 9. and it is natural for seed to grow.

2. Because of the union of the gracious soul with Christ the head. All believers are branches ingrafted into this true vine, and therefore must grow, John xv. 5.

3. Because God hath appointed it, that hereby believers by degrees may be made meet for heaven, and ripened to be transplanted to the new Jerusalem, Col. i. 12. Prov. iv. 18.

Q. *How may we know whether we grow in grace or not?*

A. By these marks our growth may be discerned:

1. If we be growing downward in humility, and be still more vile in our own eyes, 1 Pet. v. 5.

2. If we be growing upward in heavenly mindedness, and the world still have the less room in our hearts, Heb. xi. 13.

3. If our appetites after spiritual food be increasing. 1 Pet. ii. 2.

4. If our consciences be growing more tender and watchful against sin; and if we notice the first rising of sin in the heart, and avoid all temptations to it, Gen. xxxix. 9, 10.

5. If we take more delight in spiritual exercises, prayer, praise, and meditation; or in these duties that are displeasing to the flesh, such as mortification, self-examination, mourning for sin, self-denial, &c.

6. If we be more concerned for the glory of God, the interest of Christ's kingdom, and the good of precious souls. If we can trust in God when outward and visible helps do fail, Heb. ii. 17, 18.

Q. *Shall we conclude those to have no true grace who complain that grace is so far from growing in them, that they are sensible of a sad decay in it?*

A. No; for, 1. Believers do not grow at all times; they have not only their spring time, but also their winter seasons, when their leaves do wither through some prevailing temptation, and they seem to be on the decaying hand: for we see the church of Ephesus is charged with "falling from her first love," and yet a golden candlestick still, Rev. ii. 5.

2. Believers may mistake about their growth; they may judge their grace grown weaker, when really it is not, when only the sense of their corruptions is grown stronger, their temptations increase, or comforts are withdrawn; and yet in the mean time, grace may be in its vigour. Also the earnest thirstings of some after grace may occasion them not to notice what they have.

3. It is with the growth of grace as with the motion of the sun or the growth of plants, which we perceive better a while afterwards, than in the mean time of it, Mark iv. 26, 27.

Q. *What are these sacramental graces or qualifications which we should especially enquire after and examine into, before our partaking of the Lord's supper.*

A. There are these eight, viz. Knowledge, Faith, Repentance, Fear, Love, Thankfulness, Holy Desires, and New Obedience; all of them necessary to fit us for a worthy partaking of this ordinance.

I. Concerning Knowledge.

Quest. *WHY is knowledge so necessary for worthy partaking?*

A. 1. Because without knowledge we cannot "discern the Lord's body," which is absolutely necessary to be done, in order to escape God's judgments; which are denounced against those who do it not, 1 Cor. xi. 29.

2. Without knowledge we are not capable to examine ourselves, which is indispensibly requisite before partaking, 1 Cor. xi. 28.

3. Without it we cannot repent; for how can we repent of sin, till we know the evil and dangerous consequences of it?

4. Without knowledge we cannot receive Christ in the sacrament; for how can we close with Christ till we know our wants and our need of Christ, together with Christ's fulness and fitness for us?

5. This is a feast appointed for believers, the friends of Christ; but ignorant persons are unbelievers, and enemies to Christ; they are under the power of Satan, and held by him in the chains of darkness; they are under the power of reigning sin; for ignorance itself is a great sin, and and the root of many others, Eph. iv. 18, 19. Hos. iv. 1, 2. 1 Pet. i. 14.

Q. *What is to be understood by* Discerning the Lord's body *in the sacrament?*

A. 1. Our putting a difference betwixt the consecrated elements and common bread and wine: looking upon them as a sacred representation of Christ's body and blood, and a seal of the covenant of grace to all worthy partakers.

2 Our making a solemn difference betwixt the body and blood of Christ, and that of a mere man; for it is the body of the Lord, even of him who is Jehovah.

3. Our looking through the elements to a bleeding Saviour, as offering up himself a sacrifice to atone divine justice for us; and discerning him as really present in the sacrament, exhibiting, offering, and actually bestowing himself, with the benefits of his death, to worthy communicants.

4. Our having some distinct views of Christ's sufferings, in the cause of them, the greatness of them, the necessity, value, and sufficiency of them; together with their great and glorious effects.

5. Our beholding a dying Saviour with suitable affections. We must discern him in the sacrament, so as to prize and esteem him highly: we must discern him, so as to wonder at his free love, and admire his condescendency: we must discern him, so as to look to him only for pardon and salvation, yield our hearts to him, hate and abandon sin that pierced him, and follow the Lamb wherever he goes.

Q. *What is that knowledge which is needful and competent for worthy communicants?*

A. 1. We must know God in his nature and essential perfections, and especially these attributes that shine most brightly in the sufferings of Christ, such as the wisdom, goodness, holiness, and justice of God. Also we must know God in his persons, that there is one God in three distinct persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and these three are one, and the same in essence. And that this God created the world by his power, and ruleth it by his providence.

2. We must know the fall of Adam, with the sad fruits of it on all his posterity. We must know what an happy state man was in before the fall, and what a sinful and miserable condition he is in now, of which I spoke before.

3. We must know where our help and remedy is to be found, viz. in Jesus Christ our only Saviour. We must know what Christ is in his two natures, God and man; in his three offices of prophet, priest, and king. We must know Christ in his commission, that he was sent of God; in his design in coming to the world, which was to redeem the elect: in the manner of his effecting our redemption, by his obedience and sufferings; the manner of applying it, by his intercession in heaven, and his spirit on earth. We

must know the nature and necessity of faith in order to our getting an interest in what Christ hath done and suffered: and the necessity of regeneration and a saving change, in order to our being happy. We must know the value and merits of Christ's sufferings, and the efficacy of his blood; that there is no justification but by his righteousness, and no sanctification but by his spirit.

4. We must know the nature, ends, and uses, of the Lord's supper, what is represented by the bread and wine, and what we are to do at the communion-table.

Q. *What kind of knowledge is it that communicants ought to have of these things?*

A. 1. Not a literal or head knowledge only, not such a knowledge as a parrot hath, that may be taught to repeat the creed, without reason or sense to understand or believe one word it speaketh. But, 2*dly*, It must be a rational, heart-affecting, and saving knowledge, that we must have of divine truths.

Q. *What are the marks of this saving knowledge?*

A. The saving knowledge, which believers have, and no hypocrites nor natural men can attain to, hath these characters.

1. It is a convincing and experimental knowledge; the soul firmly assents to, and feels the truth of what it knoweth, and saith of our Saviour's coming, with Paul, "this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation," &c. 1 Tim. i. 15. There is as great a difference betwixt a natural man's and a believer's knowledge, as betwixt the knowledge in a naturalist and an Israelite, concerning Manna: The one, by reading and study, knows more of the nature and effects of it; but the other, by tasting and feeding on it, knew it more feelingly and satisfyingly. So believers know Christ and his truths, convincingly and experimentally, Psal. xxxiv. 8. 1 Pet. ii. 3.

2. It is a Christ exalting and self-abasing knowledge: it makes the soul to value Christ at a high rate, and count all the glory of the world as loss and dung besides him. It lets us see that Christ is glorious, but we are vile: that Christ is full, but we are empty: that he is rich, but we are poor and naked, Phil. iii. 8, 9.

3. It is a fiducial knowledge, it induceth the heart to trust in God's mercy and power, and to accept of his Son Jesus Christ, as the only way to the father, Psal. ix. 10. John vi. 40, 45.

4. It is a quickening and efficacious knowledge, warms the heart, transforms the soul, and reforms the life. As light and heat are inseparable, so divine light in the mind conveys a heat into the affections. It inflames the heart with love to Christ, and a desire to be like him; it determines the will to comply with duty, to avoid sin; it spurs on the soul to live up to its light, to be active in God's service, and run the ways of his commands, 2 Cor. iii. 18. James iii. 17.

Q. *Whence is it that believers get this saving knowledge?*

A. From Jesus Christ, the great Prophet and teacher of his church, who instructs them by his spirit, as well as by his word: there is none that teacheth like him, for he both gives light, and eyes to see the light; he not only opens the scriptures to his people, but he also opens their understandings to receive the truth, Job xxxvi. 22. Isa. xlii. 6, 7. Luke xxiv. 32, 45. Jer. xxiv. 7.

Q. *Have not communicants, who are taught this saving knowledge, other thoughts and uptakings of divine things than natural men have?*

A. Yes; their thoughts and uptakings of those things are far different, 1 Cor. ii. 14. 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

Q. *What thoughts and uptakings have they of the covenant of grace, which is sealed in this sacrament?*

A. That it is everlasting, well ordered in all things, and sure; and therefore they do cheerfully consent to it, and venture their souls upon it, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

Q. *What do they think of Christ crucified, who is here set before their eyes?*

A. That he is a most glorious, well qualified, and all-sufficient Saviour, "able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him," Heb. vii. 25.

Q. *What thoughts have they of sin that pierced him?*

A. That it is the murderer of Christ, and the worst of evils, which therefore they will constantly abhor, Zech. xii. 10. Rom. xii. 9.

Q. *What do they think of Christ's way*, viz. holiness?

A. That it is both pleasant and advantageous, and therefore they will love it, and walk in it, Prov. iii. 17. Psalm xix. 11. Psalm cxix. 47, 48.

Q. *What thoughts have they of Christ's people?*

A. That they are the excellent ones of the earth, and the most desirable company in it, however they be despised by the world, Psalm xvi. 3. Psalm. cxix. 63.

Q. *What do they think of Christ's day?*

A. That it is the choicest day of the week, holy, honourable, blessed, and enriching, being Christ's weekly market-day for our souls, Isa. lviii. 13, 14.

Q. *What do they think of his word and ordinances?*

A. That they are food to their souls, cordials to their hearts, a lamp to their feet, and a light to their paths, Psalm cxix. 50, 103, 105.

Q. *What do they think of the Lord's Supper?*

A. That it is Christ's banqueting house, and a rare feast for the soul, which he hath in love provided for his people in the wilderness, Cant. ii. 4. Isa. xxv. 6. 1 Cor. v. 8.

Q. *What do they think of this world?*

A. That it is a strange country, the place of their pilgrimage, and that all in it is vanity, and vexation of spirit, Heb. xi. 13. Psalm. cxix. 54. Eccles. i. 14.

Q. *What do they think of the other world above?*

A. That it is their country and their home, and the things of it are real, great, eternal, and very near, Heb. xi. 16. 2 Cor. v. 1. 1 Cor. ii. 9. 2 Cor. iv. 18.

II. Concerning Faith.

Quest. *WHAT sort of faith is it, that worthy communicants ought to have?*

A. Not a temporary faith, or a faith of miracles, nor a historical faith only, but a saving and justifying faith.

Q. *What is the historical faith?*

A. It is the assent of the understanding upon the truths of Christ revealed in the gospel, whereby a man believes and gives credit to these truths as certain and true. This is not saving faith itself, but it is absolutely necessary to it, as the foundation to the superstructure, and an excellent help to promote it; for the stronger our assent is to divine truth, the more lively will our saving faith be. The more strongly we believe in Christ's ability and sufficiency for the office of mediator, the more are we helped to rely on him as our mediator. Now, though saving faith can never be without this assent, or historical faith; yet historical

faith may be, where saving faith is not, as is plain from John ii. 23. Acts viii. 13. James ii. 19.

Q. *What is saving faith?*

[illegible] is a grace, or special gift of God to his elect, [illegible] their hearts by the Spirit and word of God: [illegible]ey, being convinced of sin and misery, and of [illegible]inability to recover themselves out of their lost [illegible] not only assent to the truth of God's records concerning [illegible]hrist in his word, but also receive and rest upon Christ and his righteousness, for pardon of sin and salvation, according as he is offered in the gospel, Eph i. 19. Eph. ii. 8. Acts xvi. 30. 1 John v. 10, 11. John i. 12. Eph. i 12, 13. Acts x. 43. Phil. iii. 9.

Q. *What is the particular act of faith that is the mean of our justification before God?*

A. It is not our knowledge, nor the mere assent of the understanding to scripture truths, that justifies us; but it is the receiving and resting upon Christ as a priest, offering up himself a sacrifice to justice and making satisfaction for our sins.

Q. *What are the words and phrases whereby the Holy Ghost in the scripture doth express justifying faith?*

A. It is sometimes expressed, 1. By coming unto Christ, John vi. 35.

2. By flying to Christ for refuge, Heb. vi. 18.
3. By casting our burdens on him, Psalm lv. 22.
4. By leaning on him, Canticles viii. 5.
5. By staying ourselves on him Isaiah l. 10.
6. By looking unto Christ Isaiah xiv. 22.
7. By taking hold of Christ, Isaiah xxvii. 5.
8. By receiving of Christ, John i. 12.
9. By cleaving to him, Acts xi. 23.
10. By putting on Christ, Romans xiii. 14.
11. By hungering and thirsting after him, Mat. v. 6.
12. By eating and drinking, John vi. 53.
13 By embracing the promises, Hebrews xi. 13.
14. By trusting in Christ, Ephesians i. 12, 13.
15. By seeking of Christ, Isaiah lv. 6.
16. By running after Christ, Canticles i. 4. and running to Christ, Isaiah lv. 5.

Q. *Why is faith so necessary to worthy communicating?*

A. It is impossible to please God in any duty without faith, and far less in this, where it is so highly necessary, and so much to be exercised. What can we do at the Lord's table without faith? seeing faith is the soul's eye that sees Christ in this ordinance. It is the hand that takes hold of Christ, and the arm that embraces him. It is the spiritual mouth and stomach that feeds on Christ. It is the bond of our union with Christ; it brings us into Christ's family, and makes us his children. And, *lastly*, it is the spring that moves all the other graces, and sets them on work: and therefore it is highly necessary at this ordinance, Heb. xi. 6. John xvi. 31. Heb. x. 22.

Q. *What is implied in that saving act of faith, the soul's receiving and resting on Christ as exhibited in the sacrament?*

A. It imports these things; 1. A lively sense of the soul's misery and danger without Christ.

2. A rejecting all other dependencies and supports besides Christ, Hos. xv. 3.

3. A fixed resolution to look still to Christ, wait on him, and humbly submit to any thing for mercy; like Job and the woman of Canaan, Job xiii. 15. Mat. xv. 23, 25, 27.

4. A hearty consent of the soul to the covenant of grace and God's offer of salvation through Christ, with a cordial approbation of the gospel-way of salvation and the soul's acquiescing in it, as most excellent and suitable.

5. Our actual adventuring ourselves and our salvation upon a crucified Christ and his righteousness; casting our perishing souls into the bleeding arms of our high priest and surety for shelter and mercy; saying, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?" I am well content with thy person and thy offices, with thy righteousness and purchase, priesthood and kingdom, laws and love, cross and crown. Though the receiving of Christ as a King, be not the first and primary act of faith, yet it is consequential to it, and inseparable from it. The believer must cheerfully accept of Christ as a Prince on the throne, as a Priest upon the cross, Zech. vi. 13. John i. 12. Hebrews ii. 17. Isaiah lv. 4, 5. Isaiah xxxiii. 22. Acts v. 31. Mat. xi. 28, 29.

Q. *Why is faith so acceptable and well pleasing to God, particularly in the act of communicating?*

A. 1. Because it is a grace that humbleth the creature, strips it of its own worth, and excludes all boasting in the business of our salvation, Romans iii. 27.

2. It doth highly exalt free grace, and send us out of ourselves to look for all our comfort and happiness in the mercy of God through a Mediator, Romans iv. 16. Eph. iii. 7, 8.

3. It puts the highest honour on God's beloved Son, approves his glorious undertaking, free love, and excellent offices: it makes Christ the alone ground of our justification and acceptance with God, and gives him all the glory of our salvation: which is most acceptable to God, 1 Pet. ii. 7. Mat. xvii. 5. 1 John iii. 23.

4. It is the grace that unites the soul to Christ, makes it one with him, and clothes it with the white robe of his righteousness; upon which account God delights in believers, and sees no iniquity in them, Phil. iii. 9. John xvi. 27. Num. xxii. 21.

5. Faith is the spring and *primum mobile* of all the rest of the sacramental graces, love, repentance, thankfulness, holy desires, and new obedience. It doth excite them, afford matter to them, and set them all a-work, Lam. v. 2, 3, 4. 2 Pet. i. 5.

Q. *How is saving faith wrought in the soul?*

A. By the Spirit of God, who doth it by these two means:

1. He prepares the soul for faith by the ministry of the law, for thereby he discovers the evil and guilt of sin, and the dreadful wrath that is due for it. He humbles the soul for sin, makes it despair of relief, from the creature, and convinceth it of its need of a Mediator, John xvi. 8. Rom. iii. 20. Acts iv. 12. Mat. ix. 12.

2. The holy Spirit works faith in the soul by the ministry of the gospel. For thereby he discovers the ability and fulness of an offered Saviour, and the necessity and excellency of faith. He begets in the soul an high esteem of Christ, thirsting desires for him, and some hope of relief by him. He takes the soul wholly off from depending on its own righteousness, and makes it resolve to use all means to find Christ, fall down at his feet, and lay the whole stress of its salvation upon him alone, 1 Tim. i. 15. John iii. 16. 1 John iii. 23. Cant. iii. 2. Cant. v. 10. Phil. iii. 9.

Q. *By what marks may we examine ourselves if we have true saving faith?*

A. By the description, which is given before, of its nature, and the manner how it is wrought. Besides which, we may take these other marks.

1. True faith makes Christ exceeding precious to the soul in all his offices, as a prophet, priest, and king, and determines the soul to embrace him wholly and undividedly, and set him up as an absolute Lord over all its interests and concerns whatsomever, 1 Pet. ii. 7. Isa. lv. 4, 5.

2. It is attended with true repentance; for it softens the heart, and makes it bleed for sin that pierced Christ: and engages the soul to crucify sin, pursue it as Christ's enemy, and part with every beloved lust, Acts xx. 21. Mark i. 15. Zech. xii. 10. Isa. liii. 5, 6.

3. It makes a man very humble, and denied to his own will, wisdom, credit, ease, and worldly enjoyments, and especially to self-righteousness. It makes the soul content, and willing to be saved by Christ in his own way, without joining any thing with him to rob him of the glory of its salvation, Mat. xvi. 24. Phil. iii. 9. 1 Cor. i. 30, 31.

4. It inclines us to aim at Christ's honour in all our actions, whether we pray, read, or communicate; yea, even when we eat, drink, buy, or sell, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. 1 Cor. x. 31.

5. It is attended with obedience to the will of God, and fruitfulness in good works, and makes the soul willing to serve Christ, as well as to be saved by him, Rom. xvi. 26. James ii. 17, 18. Col. iii. 24.

6. It works by love, and makes the believer do all duties from a principle of love, and carries out the heart to love God for sending Christ into the world, and to love every thing that bears Christ's image. And so sincere is his love, that it prompts him to duty and keeps him back from sin, much more than the law, or fear of hell, doth, Gal. v. 6.

7. It not only reforms the life from the practice of sin, but purifies the heart from the love of sin, by arguing against it from the word, and applying the blood of Christ to the soul, Acts xv. 9. John xvii. 17. Zech. xiii. 1.

8. True faith inclines and encourages the soul to draw near unto God in prayer, for the accomplishment of those things it relies on Christ for, Heb. iv. 16. Rom. x. 12, 13, 14. Psal. cxviii. 25, 26.

Q. *What shall these poor discouraged souls do, who have been examining their faith, but are not able to lay claim to these marks, and still fear they have no true faith; can such adventure to come to this ordinance, where faith is so absolutely necessary?*

A. I. Faith indeed is absolutely necessary at the Lord's table, but it is not absolutely necessary that we should know it. Assurance is not essential to faith, for there may be true faith wrought in the souls of some, who yet do not perceive it. The mists of guilt, satan's temptations, and their own fear, may so rise up and obscure their knowing faculty, that they cannot see "the things that are freely given to them of God," 1 Cor. 2, 12.

II. There is some faith so weak and small, that it can scarcely be discerned by us, which yet may be real, sincere, and acceptable before God. And this is expressed in the lesser degrees and workings of faith, which yet are true faith; such as these,

1. A total renouncing of our own righteousness; with a resolution never to depend upon any thing in ourselves, or any other, besides Christ, Hos. xiv. 3.

2. A good opinion, and esteem of Christ, with a persuasion of his power, fulness and suitableness to our miserable circumstances. This was all that the leper, and woman with the bloody issue had, when they first came to Christ, Mat. viii. 2. Mat. ix. 21.

3. An earnest desire, or a hunger and thirst after Christ and his righteousness, Psalm xliii. 1. Mat. v. 6.

4. A willingness to be the Lord's, and wholly resigned to him, to be managed and disposed of as he pleaseth, Psalm cxix. 94.

5. A deep and heart-affecting sense of that grievous clog, unbelief, that hinders the soul's motion towards Christ, Mark ix. 24.

6. A serious resolve and mint of the soul to go out to Christ, throw itself at his feet, and die at his door, though he should not have mercy. Now these desires, motions, and workings of the heart, in a sensible sinner, are some degrees of true faith which God will not despise, Nehemiah i. 11. Mark ix. 24, 25. John xiii. 15. Matthew xii. 20.

III. Seeing Christ is a most tender-hearted and compassionate Saviour, that will not "break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoaking flax;" but is content to accept of those that come to him with a weak and trembling hand: such weak and doubting believers ought certainly to come to Christ in the sacrament, where he seats himself on a throne of mercy to wait for needy sinners, and hath graciously appointed this ordinance for strengthening and increasing weak faith.

IV. Such weak and discouraged souls should narrowly watch the seasons of God's near approaches in the ordinances, and these special golden minutes when the Spirit strives, the Father draws, bowels of mercy yearn, and heaven's gales do blow; and presently take hold of, strike in with, and improve them: as Benhadad's servants watched for the word brother from the king of Israel's mouth, and hastily catched it, 1 Kings xx. 33.

Q. *Are we not utterly unworthy to receive such a glorious Saviour in the arms of faith? How can we expect that he will match with such vile wretches as we are?*

A. I answered this objection before, when treating of covenanting with God, to which the reader is referred. I only add these things,

1. That seeing this glorious Redeemer freely offers himself to the most unworthy, he ought readily and without hesitation to be entertained by us: for though we be most unworthy of receiving Christ, yet he is most worthy of our acceptation, 1 Tim. i. 15.

2. This exalted Saviour thinks it no disparagement to suit his worthiness to our unworthiness, his riches to our poverty, his eye-salve to our blindness, his white raiment to our nakedness, and his fulness to our emptiness: for he saith to the unworthiest sinner that comes to him, "All thy wants be on me;" and though thou hast no beauty of thine own, yet "I will make thy beauty perfect through my comliness put upon thee; and so the king will greatly desire thy beauty, Ezekiel vi. 14. Psalm xlv. 10, 11.

3. Though there be a great shew of humility in this objection, yet there is often no small pride at the root of it. For if there be ground of objecting against us upon the score of unworthiness, it becomes us to let it come from Christ's side; but so wedded are we to the old covenant of works, that we would be at giving as good as we get, or at least some thing in lieu of it: but our money and qualifications will perish with us, if we think to buy such a prize as glorious Christ. If we be not content to accept of Christ on the score of infinite free grace and matchless condescending love, we can never expect to enjoy him, Isaiah lv. 1, 9. Romans xi. 33. Ephesians iii. 18, 19. Free grace is an ocean of such a depth and breadth, that it never

yet hath been sounded or measured by men or angels: nay, to all eternity it will be acknowledged it hath neither bank nor bottom.

III. Concerning Repentance.

Quest. *SEEING repentance is another sacramental grace, which we must necessarily examine ourselves about; what is that repentance which worthy partakers must have?*

A. True repentance, or repentance unto life, is a saving grace, or a special gift of God to elect sinners, wrought in their hearts by his Spirit and word, whereby, upon a due sight and sense of the danger, guilt, and odiousness of their sins; and upon a discovery and belief of the mercy of God in Christ to such as are penitent; they mourn for, and hate their sins, confessing them to God with shame and grief, and turn from them all to God, and the ways of holiness, both in heart and life, Zech. xii. 10. Acts xi. 18 21. Ezek. xviii. 30. Ezek. xxxvi. 31. Joel ii. 12, 13. Jer. xxxi. 18, 19. 2 Cor. vii. 11. Prov. xxviii. 13. 2 Kings xxiii. 25.

Q. *What are the parts of true repentance?*

A. There are these parts in it; 1. Conviction. 2. Discovery of God's mercy in Christ. 3. Humiliation. 4. Confession. 5. Hatred of sin. 6. Turning from sin. 7. Turning to God and his ways.

Q. *Wherein consists true conviction of sin?*

A. In a right uptaking of the nature and evil of sin, and a sense of the wrath of God, that is due to it.

Q. *What is it in sin, that the soul must be convinced of?*

A. We must be convinced of sin; 1. In respect of its source and fountain, from whence all our actual sins do proceed, and that is, corrupt nature and wicked heart, Psalm li. 5. Jer. xvii. 9. Mat. xv. 18, 19.

2. In respect of its intrinsic evil and malignity, that it is enmity and rebellion against God, Rom viii. 7.

3. In respect of its pollution and deformity, that it renders us vile and loathsome in the sight of God, Zech. xi. 8.

4. In respect of the number of our sins, that they are more than our hairs, Psalm xl. 12.

5. In respect of the aggravation from the heinous circumstances attending the commission of them.

6. In respect of the guilt and demerit of them, that we have thereby forfeited all our mercies, and do deserve everlasting wrath.

Q. *What is the difference betwixt the convictions of natural men, and those of true penitents?*

A. 1. Natural mens convictions proceed only from a natural conscience, awakened upon some occasion: but those of a true penitent are the special work of the Spirit of God, Exod. ix. 27. John xvi. 8.

2. Natural mens convictions are most unwelcome and burdensome to them: but the true penitent is desirous of them, Acts xxiv. 25. Job xiii. 23. Job xxxiv. 3.

3. The natural man's convictions are mainly for gross sins, and the out-breakings of the life; but the true penitent is also sensible of the corruption of the nature, plague of the heart, and sins most secret, Mat. xxvii. 4. Psalm li. 5. Rom. vii. 24. Psalm xix. 12.

4. Natural mens convictions proceed from the fear of hell or temporal judgments; but those of the true penitent arise mainly from a view of sin's evil, God's goodness, his patience, or Christ's sufferings, Psalm lxxviii. 34. Luke xv. 18. Zech. xii. 10.

5. The one is only of short continuance, but the other is abiding and durable, Hos. vi. 4. Psalm li. 3.

6. The one is cured by natural means, but the other only by the blood of Christ, Acts xvi. 30, 31.

Q. *Why is the discovery of God's mercy in Christ a necessary ingredient to true repentance?*

A. 1. Because God out of Christ is a consuming fire: and so, without a sight of his mercy in Christ, we would never turn from sin to him, but would be ready to sink with Judas, under tormenting despair, Heb. x. 31. Heb. xii. 29.

2. Because the apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, is a great encouragement to us to leave sin, and a mean to effect our heart with kindly grief and godly sorrow for sin, Psalm cxxx. 4. Rom. iii. 4.

Q. *Wherein consists true humiliation for sin?*

A. In these things; 1. In a real inward sorrow and bleeding of heart for sin, and the dishonour done thereby to God, Psalm li. 3, 4. Zech. xii. 10.

2. In a holy shame and blushing of soul for sin in the sight of God, Ezra ix. 6.

3. In the soul's loathing and abhoring itself for its unworthy carriage towards so gracious a God, Job xlii. 6.

4. In outward mourning for sin, and bewailing it before the Lord, Psalm xxxviii. 18.

Q. *What is the difference betwixt the humiliation of a natural man, such as* Ahab, *and that of a true penitent?*

A. There is such a difference, as betwixt the convictions of natural men, and true penitents, of which I spoke before. I only add this; that a natural or unrenewed man's sorrow and humiliation for sin, is not so much for sin itself, as for the effects and consequences of it, as it exposes him to temporal or eternal judgments, as it deprives him of outward mercies, blasts his reputation, breaks his employment, brings on corporal punishment here, or makes him obnoxious to hell-fire hereafter. But the true penitent mourns for sin, as it displeases and dishonours God, wounds Christ, grieves his Spirit, and gratifies the devil. Also he grieves for it, as it defiles the soul, indisposes for holy duties, and debars from communion with Christ.

Q. *What sort of confession of sin is requisite to true repentance?*

A. 1. It must be cordial and sincere: not superficial and overly, Job xlii. 6.

2. It must be free and voluntary, and not extorted by judgments or the fear of hell, Mat xxvii. 4. Luke xv. 18.

3. It must be particular and distinct, so far as we can remember our bypast sins; and not rest in generals, Judg. x. 10. Psalm li. 4, 14. 1 Tim. i. 13.

4. It must be humble and mournful, and attended with holy shame and self-condemnation, Dan. 9, 8. Luke 18, 13. Psalm xxxiv. 4, 18.

5. It must be attended with present forsaking of sin, Prov. xxviii. 13.

Q. *What sort of hatred of sin is it, that is an ingredient of true repentance?*

A. It hath these properties: 1. It is a sincere and well-grounded hatred: unrewned men may hate sin because of its effects; but a true penitent hates it, because it is vile and loathsome in the eyes of God, the murderer of Christ, and an enemy to his own soul.

2. It is a deep and implacable hatred; a natural man can have no such hatred of sin; it is only a slight or transient quarrel he may have with sin upon some particular

occasion, and hence he may proceed to lop off some of the branches of sin, but he strikes not at the root, the corruption of the heart; he seeks not to put the old man to death: but the true penitent hates sin implacably; he seeks its ruin, aims at his life, and would have it utterly extirpated; and longs for the time when he shall be wholly delivered from it, Rom. vii. 24. 2 Cor. v. 4.

3. It is an universal hatred: a natural man may hate some odious gross sins, or sins that are neither pleasant nor profitable to him: but the true penitent hates sin, as sin, and so hates every sin, whether secret or open, pleasant or profitable, in himself or in others, Psalm cxix. 128.

Q. *What sort of turning from sin, is requisite to true repentance?*

A. 1. A turning that proceeds from right principles, not from the dictates of a natural conscience only, or respect to human laws, or from fear of God's judgment: but from a sense of the intrinsic evil of sin, the holiness and goodness of God, or a view of Christ's sufferings.

2. It must be a present turning from sin, without delaying one moment longer, Psalm cxix. 59, 60.

3. A final and everlasting turning, without ever looking back to Sodom again, or entertaining a favourable thought of sin, that killed the Lord of Life, Hosea xiv. 8.

4. An universal turning from all sin, both in heart and life; no Agag must be spared, nor any darling lust reserved, Isa. lv. 5. Ezek. xviii. 30, 31.

5. It must be attended with turning to God, and all commanded duties; for we must not only cease to do evil, but learn to do well, Isa. i. 16, 17. Isa. lv. 7.

6. This turning ought to be with all the heart, and with fasting, weeping and mourning, Joel ii. 12.

Q. *What is this turning to God, which is included in true repentance?*

A. It implies these things: 1. A sight and sense of our undone condition, while we live and continue at a distance from God; and the great happiness of nearness to him, Psalm lxxiii. 27, 28.

2. The outgoings of the soul to God in spiritual breathings and desires, Isa. xxvi. 8. Job xxiii. 3.

3. The humble application of the soul to God in Christ, for mercy and pardon, Psalm li. 1.

4. The soul's making choice of God for its God and portion, Jeremiah iii. 22.

5. Our resigning and giving up both inward and outward man, to God's service and obedience. We must turn both our hearts and feet to God's testimonies, Psal. cxix. 57, 58, 59.

Q. *Why is fasting necessary to be joined with our repentance and turning unto God?*

A. Because God hath enjoined it as a good mean to wean the heart from the world, quicken prayer, and kindle zeal. And it carries in it somewhat of a holy revenge upon the flesh or body for its former excesses, which is very acceptable to God; though it cannot in the least make satisfaction to justice for sin, 2 Corinthians vii. 11.

Q. *Are tears absolutely necessary to true repentance?*

A. They are very desirable expressions of our grief for sin, God noticeth the tears of true penitents, and puts them up in a bottle, Psalm lvi. 8. Yet some times there may be a tender heart, where are few tears to be seen, because the bodily constitution may be dry, and not qualified for producing tears. But if we can command tears for other things, such as wordly losses and crosses, and can find none to shed for sin, there is too much ground to suspect that our repentance is not true.

Q. *But what shall those do who find their hearts so hard that they can neither get tears, nor any true grief for sin?*

A. 1. This has been the complaint of many of God's people, that their hearts are hardened from God's fear, Isa. lxiii. 17.

2. Let us consider if our hard-heartedness be our great burden and trouble. Can we say, That it is our daily complaint to God, and that we would give all we have in the world to have our hearts brought to tenderness, and even live beggers upon this condition; then surely there is some life and tenderness in the soul.

3. Let us go to Christ, and plead for the blessed Spirit of grace, which he hath both purchased and promised, to take off the vail of darkness from our hearts, and the scales of blindness from our eyes; that we may see sin in its blackness and deformity: let us cry to him with Job iii. 23 "Make me to know my transgression and my sin." And let us plead his free promise, Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

4. Let us oft be aiming to apply the softning blood of Christ to our hard hearts. And oft be viewing sin in the bright looking glass of his sufferings. Oh! can we see our sins binding a heavy cross on Christ's back, driving big nails into the most sensible parts of his body, and piercing his heart with sorrow, and yet our hearts remain unpierced? Shall the rocks rent, and the earth shake, the sun draw in its light, and the heavens mourn in black, when Christ suffered for our sins, and yet we stand unconcerned! Surely there is not such a heart-affecting sight either in earth or hell, as the death of our innocent Redeemer.

Q. *Why is repentance and sorrow for sin so necessary to right communicating?*

A. 1. Because it is necessary for our access to, and communion with God in any duty. It is to such that God hath promised to look, and with such that he is pleased to dwell. It is only humble and penitent addresses that he will accept; and thence he preferred a broken heart to all sacrifices, Psalm li 16, 17. Psalm x. 17. Psalm xxxiv. 18. Isa. lvii. 15. Isa. lxvi. 1. But impenitent persons are hateful to God, and can have no communion with him, Psalm. v. 5 Psalm xlviii. 11.

2. Because in this sacrament, we enter into, and renew covenant with God; and penitent mourning for long distance and estrangement, to many sins and backslidings, is previously requisite thereunto, Jer. l. 4, 5.

3. Because here we are to receive the seal of the pardon of our sins, and it is only a soft heart that can receive the impression of this seal, Luke viii. 44, 48. Luke xxiv. 47.

4. Because nothing suits a broken Christ, so well as a broken heart. In this ordinance we behold God punishing his Son for sin, and Christ breathing out his dying groans for it; and surely it is most fit that our hearts should bleed for it; if Christ wash our souls with his blood, in gratitude we should wash his feet with our tears, Zech. xii. 10. Luke vii. 38, 47.

5. Because, without repentance we cannot prize the great blessings and comforts exhibited to us in this ordinance. None but the sensible sinner and humble penitent will value the blood of Christ, the pardon of sin, and favour of God, which are here offered, Mat. ix. 12. Luke i. 53. Prov. xxvii. 7.

Because repentance is absolutely necessary for killing of sin, and reforming the life, which is one great end in this

ordinance. As God here lets us see his love to Christ, so he discovers the bitterness of sin, that we may hate and forsake it; now it is by repentance, that we taste of sin's bitterness, and the necessity hereof at this ordinance was prefigured by the bitter herbs with which the children of Israel were appointed to eat the passover. Exod. xii. 8.

Q. *Hath not repentance many counterfeits?*

A. Yes; for, 1. Some confess their sin, who never forsake it; as those, Numb. xiv. 40. 1 Sam. xv. 24. That was but a counterfeit repentance.

2. Some may have slight, superficial sorrow, and outward expressions of mourning, where the heart is not touched for sin, 1 Kings xxi. 27.

3. Some may have the heart rent with legal convictions and terrors, as Judas and Felix had, and yet never broken or melted for sin.

4. Some may have a natural softness and tenderness of spirit, whereby they are apt to relent and shed tears at the hearing of any tragical story, or seeing any moving object, and yet, never truly weep, to see their own sin. The story of Joseph in the pit will affect them as soon as that of Christ upon the cross.

5. Some have several good motions, and pangs of sorrow, at hearing of a sermon, or when they are under the rod, which yet soon evanish, Hosea vi. 4. Mark vi. 28.

6. Some come under express vows and resolutions against sin, in time of sickness and distress, or when conscience is awakened: who yet are never true penitents for sin, Numb. xxii. 17. Jer. ii. 20. 1 Sam. xxvi. 21.

7. Some may not only leave off gross sins themselves, but express great zeal against the sins of others, as Jehu did, against the worship of Baal, and Judas did, against prodigality, and yet be strangers to true repentance, 2 Kings x. 16, 28, 29. Mat. xxvi. 8. compared with John xii. 4, 5. All these then are but counterfeited repentance.

Q. *By what marks, then, shall we examine our repentance, if it be true, and not counterfeited?*

A. By these already mentioned, in the parts and description of repentance before given. To which I add these;

1. A true penitent is more grieved for the evil of sin, than for the evil of affliction; and more troubled for abusing the goodness of a father, than for drawing down the wrath of a judge, Luke xv. 18.

2. The true penitent lays the ax of repentance to the root of sin, *viz.* the corrupt heart; he pants for deliverance from it, and for more heart purity and renovation, Psalm li. 10. Rom. vii. 24.

3. The true penitent is highly concerned and careful to apply to the blood of Christ both for pardon from the guilt of sin, and sanctification from the pollution of sin; for true repentance and saving faith are inseparable, Psalm li. 1, 7. Acts ii. 38. Acts xx. 21. Mark i, 15.

4. Let us examine our repentance, by these adjuncts and fruits of it, recorded in 2 Cor. vii. 11. If it works in us, 1. Carefulness, to avoid sin and preserve ourselves from it. 2. Clearing of ourselves, by self-examination, and applying to Christ our surety, 3. Indignation against sin, as the enemy of God, the murderer of Christ, and destroyer of our souls. 4. Fear of being defiled again with sin, which excites to watch against temptations and inlets to it. 5. Vehement desires after a total deliverance from it, and after Christ our deliverer, and his righteousness. 6. Zeal, for God's honour, by new obedience, and bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. 7. Revenge upon sin, by mortification, because it crucified Christ. 8. There is a holy shame upon the remembrance of sin; not that of a thief, because of the punishment and disgrace, but that of a son, because of the ingratitude and loathsomeness of of sin, Ezek. xvi. 63.

IV. Concerning Holy Fear.

Quest. *WHAT is this fear that is requisite to worthy communicating?*

A. It is a holy awe and reverence of God, wrought in the renewed heart by the holy spirit, whereby the soul, out of a deep sense of God's majesty and goodness, is inclined to draw nigh to God in Christ, stand in awe to offend him, avoid sin as the greatest evil, and study the things that are pleasing to God, Jer. xxxii. 40. Jer. v. 22. Psalm cxxx. 4. Heb. 11. Gen. xxxix. 9. Job i. 1, 7. Acts x. 35.

Q. *What is the necessity of this holy fear at the Lord's table?*

A. Because when we go to the Lord's table, we solemnly sist ourselves in the presence of the great Jehovah, who is our judge, the searcher of our hearts, and the all-seeing observer of our actions; and a God that is very jealous of his honour, and "will be sanctified of all that draw nigh to him," Lev. v. 3. Heb. xii. 28, 29.

2. Because, at the Lord's table, we have a most awful discovery of the holiness and justice of God in the sufferings of Christ there represented. How vehemently did he hate sin, that he would not spare his dear son when he cried, nor abate one farthing of the debt he owed justice as our Surety, but exacted full satisfaction, and punished sin to the uttermost? The heavens darkened, and the earth shook, when God punished Christ for sin, and ought not we, the guilty sinners, to tremble and adore his justice, saying with the Bethshemites, "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?" 1 Sam. vi. 20.

3. Because this holy fear is an excellent preservative against wandering thoughts, a spur to mind our work, and excite the graces of liveliness, and do every thing as in the sight of an all seeing God, Psalm lvi. 8. Gen. xxxix. 9. Neh. i. 11.

4. Because of the importance of the work of communicating, and the danger of miscarrying in it. We have ground to fear and be jealous of ourselves, least we be found unwelcome guests; and want the wedding garment, when the king comes in to see his guests. We have cause to fear, lest we miss Christ's presence and the seal of our pardon: yea, lest we be guilty of wounding Christ, and eating and drinking judgment to ourselves, by unworthy communicating; but a holy fear is a good mean to prevent this hazard.

Q. *How may we know whether we be actuated by a holy or a slavish fear, in this and other religious duties?*

A. 1. A holy filial fear of God is always joined with love to him; but a slavish fear is attended with some degree of enmity and hatred against God, Hos. iii. 5. Rom. viii. 7.

2. Slavish fear dreads God, because of his power and justice; but filial fear also, because of his goodness and loving kindness, Hos. iii. 5.

3. Slavish fear is attended with a shyness of God's presence; but filial fear puts the soul on to seek nearness with God, Genesis iii. 10. Psalm lxxxiii. 27, 28. Hosea iii. 5.

4. Slavish fear dreads nothing but hell and the punishment of sin; but filial fear dreads sin itself, as the greatest evil of the two, Psalm vi. 4. Acts xxiv. 25. Psalm iv. 4.

5. Slavish fear makes men averse from the light of the word and a faithful ministry; but filial fear makes us suspicious of ourselves, and willing to be tried, John iii. 20, 21. 1 Kings xxii. 8.

6. Slavish fear restrains only from the external acts of sin, and puts men on to external performances in duty only; but godly fear makes a man guard even against inward and secret sins, and study to please God inwardly as well as outwardly, and give him the heart as well as the life, Isa. viii. 13.

V. Concerning Love.

Quest. *WHAT is that love which a worthy communicant ought to have?*

A. There is a three-fold love necessary: 1. Love to God and godliness. 2. Love to the people of God. 3. Love to our enemies.

Q. *What is true love to God?*

A. It is a special affection or saving grace, wrought by God's spirit in the hearts of his people, whereby, from a special discovery of the glory and excellency of God, their souls are determined to have a high and superlative esteem of him, their desires are carried out after him, and their delights are centered on him, as their chief good and portion, Romans v. 5. Psalm lxxiii. 25. Psalm xlii. 1, 2. Psalm xvi. 5, 6.

Q. *Why is love to God and Christ, so necessary to worthy communicating?*

A. 1. Because this sacrament is a love feast, appointed for expressing the mutual love and affection of Christ and his people to one another, and therefore it is designed only for his friends and disciples. Now how contrary is it to the nature of this ordnance, for people to approach to it without love? Or to sit down to his love-feast with enmity in their hearts at the master of it? Canticles v. 1. Matthew xxvi. 27.

2. Because we have here the highest representation of divine love that ever was given. Here we may see both the arms and heart of the Son of God open on a cross to us, with his affections streaming out to us in blood: and we may hear the dying groans of the Lamb of God just expiring under the burden of wrath that was due to us. And what a monstrous thing would it be for us to want love to him at such a time? Gal. ii. 20. Eph. v. 2. Rev. i. 5.

3. Because other graces which are to be exercised in this ordnance, do much depend upon love; without it we cannot be heavenly-minded in this duty, we cannot have high thoughts of Christ, we cannot delight in him, nor have any hungering desires after him. Without love to Christ we cannot hate sin, nor be grieved for it; nay, we may see the print of the nails, and put our fingers into his wounds, without any remorse for sin, that made them. Mary's tears were most free when her love was most hot, Luke vii. 37, 38. Isaiah liii. 2, 3.

4. Without love to Christ we can have no benefit by the sacraments, for we can have no communion with God, nor any manifestations of his favour without it, seeing these are only promised to such as love him, John. xiv. 21. 23.

5. Because the want of this love brings men under the severest curse, 1 Cor. 16, 22.

Q. *Must not our love to God at the sacrament be directed to all the persons of the glorious Trinity?*

A. Yes; we must love God the Father as our Father; God the Son as our Mediator and Redeemer; and God the Holy Ghost as our Sanctifier and Comforter.

Q. *How may we know if we love God the Father as our Father?*

A. By our filial respect and dutiful carriage to him; if we fear him, and stand in awe to offend him, if we be tender of his honour, troubled at his frowns, desirous of his presence, and careful to please him. If we depend on him for what we want; love to address him; imitate him in his holiness, and obey his injunctions, Malachi i. 6. Psalm cxxxix. 20, 21. Psalm. xxx. 7. Isaiah lvi. 4, 5. Romans viii. 15. 1 Peter v. 7. Ephesians v. 1. 1 Peter i. 14, 15.

Q. *How may we know if we love God the Son, as our Mediator and Redeemer?*

A. By our accepting of him, and improving him in all his mediatory offices: learning of him as our prophet, relying on him as our priest, and obeying him as our king: and by our renouncing of all other Lords and Saviours besides him, Mat xi. 28, 29. Isa. xvi. 13. Heb. v. 9. Eph. i. 12, 13.

Q *How may we know if we love the Holy Ghost, as our Sanctifier and Comforter?*

A. By our hearkening to his calls, seeking his assistance in duties, laying ourselves open to his influences, cherishing his motions, and delighting in those duties and ordinances where his operations are to be expected, and desiring to be directed and guided by him in all our ways, Psalm xxvii. 8. 1 Thess. v. 19. Eph. iii. 16. Psalm lxiii. 2. Psalm clxiii. 10, 11. Rom. viii. 14.

Q. *Seeing love to Christ, our crucified Saviour, is especially requisite at the Lord's table; by what marks may we examine our love to him, if it be true and not counterfeit?*

A. By these: 1. Let us see if we can give any reason for our love to him; if we love him not only for what he hath done for elect sinners in general, but for what he hath done for us in particular, in hearing our cry, and helping us when we were brought low under a burden of guilt and fears, Psalm cxvi. 1, 6, 8.

2. If we love him also, because of his own intrinsic beauty, matchless worth, and personal excellencies, that render him altogether lovely in himself, as well as a suitable Saviour to us, Cant. v. 10—16.

3. If our hearts and thoughts be frequently going out towards him, and our meditation of him be sweet; for surely, if Christ be our treasure, our hearts will be with him, Psalm civ. 34. Mat. vi. 21.

4. If we be earnestly desirous of his gracious presence in duties and ordinances, and languish for him when he withdraws, Psalm lxxxiv. 1, 2. Cant. iii. 1, 2, 3. Cant. v. 8.

5. If we have common friends and common enemies; love what Christ loves, and hate what he hates; if we rejoice when his name his great, and his interest flourisheth, and grieve when any wrong or dishonour is done to him, either by ourselves or others, 1 John v. 1, 2. Psalm cxxxix. 21, 22. Psalm xcvii. 10. John xiv. 28. Psalm cxxii. 9.

6. If we love Christ and his interest in all states and conditions: own him under persecution and reproach,

and highly esteem a crucified, as well as a glorious Christ, a condemned as well as an adored Christ, Cant. viii. 6, 9.

7. If we love Christ wholly, and all that is in him; love him in all his offices, in his death as a sacrifice, and in his life as a pattern; love him as a prince on the throne, as well as a priest on the cross; love him for purity, as well as pardon; for sanctification, as well as satisfaction. No lover of Christ will desire a disjunction of Christ's priestly and princely offices, for he sees them sweetly linked together; and hence it is that Christ is stiled "a Priest upon a throne," Zech. vi. 13. And therefore he will love his laws to obey them, his ordinances to attend them, his sabbaths to sanctify them, and his people to associate with them, John xiv. 21. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. 1 John v. 1, 2, 3. Psalm. cxix. 63.

8. If we love Christ above our relations, enjoyments, and dearest things we have in the world, yea, even life itself, Mat. x. 37. Acts xxxi. 13. Rev. xii. 11.

9. If we be breathing after fresh intimations of Christ's love to us, and seeking still more assurance and evidences of it, Cant i. 2 3. Cant. viii. 6.

Q. *What shall these exercised souls do, that suspect their love to Christ not superlative; that they love him not above their relations and dearest enjoyments in the world? By what marks do we know if we do?*

A. By these: 1. If no affection to any creature can draw us willingly or wittingly to do that which is displeasing to Christ.

2. If we value Christ's friendship and favour more than that of any creature, and would chuse rather to displease all the world than offend him.

3. If the loss of Christ's countenance, or any injury done to him, affect our hearts more than any worldly loss or damage.

4. If it be our greatest grief, that we cannot get more love to Christ. And, if we can appeal to himself, who knoweth our hearts, with Peter, that we love him sincerely, though not so much as we ought, John xxii. 17. Eph. vi. 24.

Q. *Are there not many who have left their first love, like these,* Rev. ii. 4. *How shall we know if it be so with us?*

A. If decay of love to Christ be our disease, it will have such symptoms as these: 1. Christ will be less in our hearts and mouths than formerly.

2. We will be more slack in our obedience, and have less delight in duty than before.

3. It is a sign of decaying love, when we lose our tenderness of conscience, and wonted abhorrence of sin, Christ's enemy.

4. When we are more easy under Christ's absence and withdrawings, and less anxious for his presence.

5. When we lose our wonted appetites for our spiritual food and nourishment from Christ in the ordinances.

6. When we lose our public-spiritedness and concern for the interest of Christ's kingdom and glory in the world.

7. When we are little concerned to have heart-holiness, which is Christ's image, drawn upon the soul.

8. When we have little desire for Christ's second coming, or for the enjoyment of him in heaven.

9 When earthly-mindedness, and love to the world, is on the growing hand.

Q. *Is there not a love to worldly things, which is lawful and allowable? How may we know when we love the world too much?*

A. Our love to the world is unlawful and excessive: When, 1. worldly things are first in our thoughts in the morning, or last at night.

2. When they justle out spiritual things from our minds.

3. When we think on worldly affairs, with greater intenseness of mind, than these things that are spiritual and heavenly.

4. When the impressions of worldly things last longer with us, than those things which immediately concern the glory of God, and our souls' good.

5. When the ends we propose to ourselves in worldly cares are chiefly, that we may satisfy our natural desires, prevent poverty, or make ourselves great; not that we may glorify God, and be more capable to serve him.

Q. *What shall we do to get the decayed fire of love to Christ kindled and increased?*

A. 1. Let us labour to be deeply sensible of this evil of decay of love to Christ, and heavily bemoan the coldness of our hearts before God.

2. Let us humbly apply to Christ, our great physician who can only cure this plague of a spiritual consumption as well as our other souls' diseases.

3. Let us earnestly seek after further discoveries of Christ's excellency and loveliness; for if we once saw his beauty, our hearts would surely go out after him.

4. Let us meditate much on the love of a crucified Jesus in sweating blood, and laying down his life for such enemies as we are: let us take a view of him, in his dyed garments, as he is described, Isa. lxiii. 1, 2, 3.

5. Let us carefully search out the lust or idol, the Delilah, or worldly enjoyment, that hath stolen our hearts from Christ; and when we have found it, let neither our eye pity nor spare it, but presently cast it out.

6. Let us seriously think, on the one hand, upon the heavy curse and vengeance which abide those that do not love Christ, 1 Cor. xvi. 22. And, on the other hand, upon the unspeakable reward laid up for all true lovers of Christ, as recorded, 2 Tim. iv. 8. 1 Cor. iii. 9.

7. Let us consider that loving of Christ will be the eternal employment of saints in heaven: this grace of love abides for ever, when all the rest do fail.

8 Let us earnestly pray for the breathings of his Holy Spirit, these "north and south winds to blow on our withered gardens." And let us plead his gracious promises of strength and quickening, which he makes to languishing and decaying souls, particularly these, Isa. xl. 29, 30, 31. Jer. xxxiii. 6. Zech. xii. 8. Hos. xiv. 5, 6, 7. Let us often cry with David; "Quicken thou me according to thy word," Psalm cxix. 25, 107, 154, &c.

9. Let us, in this case, follow the advice and prescription of Christ, our great physician, Rev. iii. 4, 5. "Thou hast left thy first love, remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works."

The advice contains three directions; 1. "Remember from whence thou art fallen," *i. e.* compare thy former state with thy present: remember what a warm heart and lively affections you once had to Christ, and how cold and dead they are now.

2. Repent, *i. e.* mourn over your sad backslidings and decays, and acknowledge them before God.

3. Do thy first works, *i. e.* be as diligent in duty as formerly. When we find this holy fire decayed, we ought to

cast on more fuel, *i. e.* use all God's appointed means for rekindling the flame, be much in prayer, reading and hearing the word; delight much in the converse and fellowship of warm and lively Christians, and go frequently to that heart-warming and love inflaming ordinance of the Lord's supper, carefully guarding against formality in communicating, or slightness in preparing for it.

Q. *What way shall the lovers of Christ express, or shew forth their love to him?*

A. 1. By studying likeness and conformity to him. Holiness is Christ's image: let us imitate Christ herein, that we may in some measure be like him whom we love, in meekness, humility, self-denial, diligence, and heavenly-mindedness: in a word, let us be holy in our thoughts, affections, speeches, actions, and in all manner of conversation: for so Christ was, Heb. vii. 26. 1 Pet. i. 15, 16.

2. Let us seek to converse with him, and be much in his company: let us walk with him in the galleries of ordinances, and be much in secret prayer, and in all those duties where fellowship with him is to be obtained, Cant. i. 7. Cant. iii. 2. Cant. vii. 5. Cant. viii. 13.

3. Observe his injunctions and keep his commandments, John xiv. 15.

4. Be concerned for his interest, kingdom and glory upon earth, Psalm cxxii. 9. Phil. ii. 21.

5. Let us place all relations, worldly interests and enjoyments, below him, Mat. x. 37.

6. Give ready audience to his ambassadors, and kindly entertainment to all his love motions, Psalm xlv. 10. Cant. v. 2.

7. Avoid every thing that Christ hates, Psalm xcvii. 10. Psalm xiv. 7.

8. Love his people and whatever bears his image, 1 John v. 1.

Concerning Love to God's People.

Quest. *WHY is love to our neighbours, and especially to the people of God, so necessary for a worthy communicant?*

A. 1. Because God requires us, in all our solemn approaches to him, to see that we be in a state of amity and friendship with our brother; not harbouring any wrath or malice in our hearts, as we would be accepted of God, Mat. v. 23. 25. 1 Cor. v. 8. 1 Tim. ii. 8.

2. Because it is one end of this ordinance to represent the union of believers, together into one mystical body, as the bread is made up of many grains compacted together: and also to testify their communion and fellowship with one another as members of the same body: and how can this be done without mutual love? 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

3. Because brotherly love is inseparable from faith, and given frequently as a mark of Christ's disciples, for whom this sacrament is appinted, John xiii. 35. 1 John iii. 4. 1 John iv. 7.

4. Because without this love we can expect no benefit by this ordinance, nor any communion with Christ in it, 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2, 3. 1 John iii. 23, 24. 1 John iv. 12, 16. As the Spirit descended on the disciples, when they met together in one house, and were all of one mind and one heart, so he will not enter the house or heart where love and peace do not dwell, Acts ii. 1, 4. Acts iv. 31, 32. Jer. xxxii. 39, 40.

5. Because as we are bound to remember Christ's death in the sacrament, so we ought in receiving it to remember the dying charge and injunctions he gave his people, when he instituted and dispensed it; and particularly this of brotherly love, which he so earnestly pressed in his sacramental discourse and farewel sermon, John xv. 12, 17. and also prayer for it, John xvii. 11, 21.

Q. *But if my neighbour hath offended me, or I him, and declineth to return to a state of love and reconciliation to me; should this hinder me from partaking of the Lord's supper?*

A. If we sincerely use the means which God hath appointed, in order to a reconciliation with our offending and offended brother, and endeavour, so far as we have access, to have the difference removed, and entertain no prejudice, hatred, or revenge in our hearts against him; though our endeavours of reconciliation should not have the desired effect, through our neighbour's obstinacy or untractableness, we are not to abstain from our duty, or deprive ourselves of the benefit of this ordinance, because of his fault, Mat. v. 23, 24.

Q. *By what marks may we know if our love to God's people be true and sincere?*

A. By these, 1. If we love them upon spiritual grounds, because of their relation to God as his children, and to Christ as his members, and because of their likeness to God and Christ in holiness, 1 John v. 1, 2. 1 Pet. i. 22.

2. If we love them universally, whether they be rich or poor, relations or strangers, and even though they differ from us in some lesser things, Col. i. 4. 1 Pet. ii. 17.

3. If we love them fervently, and above all others, 1 Pet. i. 22. Psalm xvi. 3.

4. If we love them constantly, in adversity as well as prosperity, when they are despised, reproached and persecuted by the world, as well as when honoured and esteemed, John xiii. 2. 1 John iii. 16, 17. Heb. xiii. 1.

5. If we prefer their company, and delight in it above that of any others, Psalm cxix. 63. Psalm xvi. 3.

6. If we sympathise with them, both in their joys and sorrows, Rom. xii. 15. 1 Cor. xii. 26.

7. If we be ready to serve them, and supply their wants, 1 John iii. 18, 19. James ii. 15, 16.

8. If we can bear with injuries from them, and be ready to forgive them, and even to cover their faults from others, 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 7. Eph. iv. 32. 1 Pet. iv. 8.

Concerning Love to our Enemies.

Quest. *WHEREFORE ought we to love our enemies?*

A. 1. Because God had commanded it, Mat. v. 44. Rom. xii. 14.

2. Because of the example of God in loving and forgiving us who are enemies to him, and of Christ in dying for us, Eph. iv. 32. Col. iii. 13.

Q. *What sort of love is it, that we ought to bear to our enemies?*

A. A love of benevolence and beneficence, though not a love of delight and complacency, Mat. v. 44, 45. Rom. xii. 20, 21.

Q. *How may we know if our love to our enemies be true?*

A. 1. If the example of Christ's loving and dying for his enemies, have influence upon us, Rom. v. 8, 10. Col. iii. 13.

2. If we incline to forgive them, and wish their good and welfare, Luke xi. 12. Prov. xi. 23.

3. If we rejoice not in their hurt, Prov. xxiv. 17. 18.

4. If we shun to revenge ourselves upon them, Rom. xii. 17, 19.

5. If we pray for them, relieve their wants, and return them good for evil, Mat. v. 44. Rom. xii. 20, 21.

VI. Concerning Thankfulness.

Quest. *WHY is thankfulness to God so necessary in partaking of the Lord's supper?*

A. 1. Because in this ordinance we have the representation of the greatest love and goodness that ever God expressed to the world, in giving his dearly beloved son to be a sacrifice for sin, and offering him to be a Saviour to us, John iii. 16. Gal. iii. 1.

2. Thankfulness to God is a special design of this ordinance: upon which account it is called the Eucharist or thanksgiving; because here we express our thankful remembrance of redeeming love, and celebrate the praises of our loving Redeemer, Mark xiv. 26.

Q *How may we know if our thankfulness be of the right stamp?*

A 1. By our low thoughts of ourselves, and our disclaiming all worthiness in us to receive the least mercy, Gen. xxxii. 10.

2. By our having a high esteem of God's mercies to us, and especially spiritual blessings; reckoning Jesus Christ to be the mercy of mercies, Luke i. 68, 72 2 Cor ix. 15.

3. By our dutiful rendering to God according to the mercies received from him, Psalm, cxvi. 12. 2 Chron. xxxii. 25.

Q. *What is it that a thankful communicant should render unto the Lord?*

A. 1. Both soul and body, as a living sacrifice and thank-offering, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. 2 Cor. viii. 5. Rom. xii. 1.

2. Sincere love and hearty affection, Luke vii. 27, 28, 47.

3. High praises and humble prayers, Psalm cvi. 1, 2. Psalm cxvi. 1, 2, 17. Psalm. ciii. 1, 2, 3. 1 Tim. i. 15, 17.

4. Paying our sacramental vows by a holy walk, diligent service, and zealous acting for God's glory, Psalm cxi. 12, 14, Psalm cxix. 106. 1 Cor. 15. Acts xxi. 13.

Concerning Holy Desires.

Quest. *WHAT are those holy desires, which are necessary for worthy communicants?*

A. They are the soul's spiritual appetite, or its hunger and thirst after Christ and his benefits, as its proper food and nourishment, Isaiah xxvi. 8, 9. Mat. v. 6.

Q. *Why is this holy desire or spiritual appetite so necessary to worthy partaking?*

A. 1. Because it is necessary in all our duties and approaches to God, and much more in this which is so solemn, Psalm lviii. 8.

2. This ordinance is a feast, and certainly an appetite is proper for that if we would profit by it. Without it we can taste no spiritual sweetness in this feast, get no nourishment by it, nor expect welcome to it, Mat. v. 6. Luke i. 53. Rev. xxii. 18.

3. The greater our appetite and longings be, the greater will be our satisfaction: when the desire opens the heart widest, God opens the hand largest to fill it, Psalm lxxxi. 19.

Q. *How may we know if our desires or appetite be of the rich sort?*

A. By these marks; 1. True hunger is insatiable without food: bring a treasure, a crown, or the greatest preferments to a hungry man, all cannot satisfy him: so nothing can satisfy the hungry soul but Christ; not his ordinances or benefits only, but himself; not the supper or bread of the Lord, but the Lord of the supper and the lord of the bread, Psalm lxxiii. 25. Job xxiii. 3.

2. Hunger is unsupportable without meat; the man must die if he want it; so the truly hungry soul cannot live or subsist without Christ; he can bear the want of other things, but Christ he cannot want, Psalm cxliii. 7, 9.

3. Hunger makes a man resolute, active and industrious; he will spare neither cost nor travel for food, it would even break through stone walls: so a hungry soul will venture through all difficulties to find Christ, Cant. iii. 2, 3.

4. Hunger makes a man very humble; he will make the coarsest bread, or meanest crumb, very welcome: so the truly hungry will be content to have Christ upon any terms, though it were even to be the meanest servant of his house, or set with his dogs, provided always he may have a relation to his family, Luke xv. 10. Mat xv. 27.

5. Hunger makes a man restless and impatient of delays till food be brought; so the hungry soul cries oft, " How long, Lord, wilt thou forget me? How long wilt thou hide thy face? When shall I come and appear before God?" Psalm xiii. 1. Psalm xlii. 1, 2.

6. It makes a man prefer Christ and his ordinances to all his wordly interests, and willing to part with all things to obtain these, Luke v. 11.

7. It makes Christ and his spiritual benefits very sweet and pleasant to the soul, and likewise the ordinances that do convey them, Cant. ii. 3. Psal. cxxxii. 1.

VIII. Concerning New Obedience.

Quest. *WHAT is that new obedience which is required in worthy communicants?*

A. It is an unfeigned desire and purpose of the soul, followed with suitable endeavours in the life (through the strength of Christ), to yield sincere, constant and universal obedience to God's revealed will; being humbled for short-comings, and desirous to be clothed with Christ's righteousness, and accepted of God, only, for the sake of his perfect obedience, Psalm cxix. 4, 5, 6, 30, 31, 32, 112. Phil. iv 13. 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19. Phil. iii. 9.

Q. *Why is it called new obedience?*

A. Because it is only performed by those who are new creatures, and are actuated by new principles, and enabled by new strength. according to the tenor of the new covenant, 2 Cor. v. 17. Rom. xii. 2. Phil. iv. 13.

Q. *Why is this new obedience needful to worthy partaking?*

A. 1. Because the new covenant, which is sealed in this ordinance, doth bind us to it; for as here we take God for our God; so we give up ourselves to be his people, which necessarily includes our obedience to him, Jer. xxxi. 33. Heb. viii. 10.

2. Because without new obedience, and sincere purposes of it, a man comes to the Lord's table in a state of rebellion and not in obedience to Christ; and so can have no communion with him: for his fair profession is but dissimulation, and his religious performances hypocritical and abominable to God, 1 Samuel xv. 22, 23. Amos iii. 3. Titus i. 16.

3. Carefulness to maintain good works is positively required of all that close with Christ by faith, and is an evidence of the reality of our faith, Titus iii. 8. James ii. 18. 20.

4. There can be no true thankfulness for redeeming love without it, Romans xii. 1. 2. Cor. vii. 1.

5. Without holiness in heart and life, there is no seeing of God, Matthew v. 8. Hebrews xii. 14.

Q. *How shall we examine the truth and reality of our new obedience?*

A. We ought to inquire into these five things; 1. If it spring from new principles. 2. If it be guided by a new rule. 3. If it be done in a new manner. 4. If it aim at new ends. 5. If it hath new properties.

Q. *What are the principles of gospel-obedience?*

A. The grace of God's spirit planted in the heart, and especially the graces of faith, love, and fear of God. Fear of hell, or love of reward, may force the hypocrite to some sort of obedience; but love to God, and a tender regard to his authority, do chiefly influence the believer, Romans xvi. 26. Hebrews xi. 7, 8. 2 Corinthians v. 14. Psalm cxix. 4, 5. Acts x. 35.

Q. *What is the rule of gospel-obedience?*

A. 1. The will and commands of God revealed and contained in the holy scriptures; and not the precepts and inventions of men, Isaiah viii. 20. 1 Thessalonians iv. 3. Psalm cxix. 4, 5. Galatians vi. 16.

2. The example of Jesus Christ, our pattern, 1 John ii. 6.

Q. *What is the new manner in which gospel-obedience is performed?*

A. It is done in faith, *i. e.* depending on the strength of Christ, for enabling us to it, and on the righteousness of Christ for our acceptance in it, and leaning nothing upon any of our own performances, but relying entirely upon Christ, Colossians iii. 17. Philippians iv. 3. Ephesians i. 6. Luke xvi. 10. Philippians iii. 7, 8, 9.

Q. *What are the ends which believers aim at in their new obedience?*

A. Not to gain the world, or get the applause of men, as hypocrites do; but to please God, shew forth his glory, and promote their neighbours edification, 1 Corinthians x. 31. Colossians i. 10. Philippians ii. 4.

Q. *What are the properties of gospel obedience?*

A. 1. It is universal; the obedience of the whole man to the whole laws and commands of God, Psalm cxix. 34. 2. Corinthians vii. 20.

2. It is a willing obedience, not constrained by the commands of men, education, a natural conscience, or fear of hell; but an obedience that springs from love to God and his ways, Psalm cx. 3. Psalm xl. 8. Romans vii. 22.

3. It is a quick and speedy obedience, Psalm cxix. 60. Galatians i. 16.

4. It is a persevering and resolute obedience, notwithstanding of trials and difficulties, Psalm cxix. 106, 112. Acts xi. 23. Revelations ii. 19.

5. It is a humble and self-denied obedience, Luke xviii. 10.

6. It is a fiducial obedience, performed in Christ's strength, and relying on his merits for acceptance with God, Ephesians i. 6. Hebrews xiii. 15.

So much concerning the first part of our preparation for the Lord's supper, viz. self-examination: and so we come to the second part.

CONCERNING THE EXCITATION OF GRACE.

Quest. *WHY should grace be excited and quickened, before our partaking of the Lord's supper?*

A. Because liveliness and activity of soul is necessary to worthy communicating. That a man may be qualified for a feast, it is fit that he not only be living, but also be in health, and have an appetite: for a sick or swooning person is unfit for a feast, as well as a dead man. So, in order to worthy communicating, it is requisite that grace not only be in the habit, but that it be brought forth to the lively exercise: and that for these reasons:

1. The very work of communicating lies in the vigorous actings of faith, love, repentance, and other graces of the Spirit.

2. Because in this ordinance we make a solemn and immediate approach unto the living God, who will be served in a lively manner, and abhorreth a cold and lukewarm temper in his worship, Romans xii. 11. Acts xxvi. 7. Revelations iii. 19. Malachi i. 14.

3. Because to act without liveliness, is not only unsuitable to this solemn ordinance, and to the author of it, but also most uncomfortable to ourselves; for lifeless duties are unpleasant, and do occasion many bitter reflections to the soul.

4. Without liveliness of grace, we are in hazard of unworthy communicating, and of drawing down judgments on ourselves, 1 Corinthians xi. 28, 29, 30.

Q. *What is that lively frame of soul which a communicant should have, on approaching to the Lord's table?*

A. He should have all the sacramental graces drawn forth into exercise, and his heart thereby brought into a humble and self-abasing frame, a melting and mourning frame, a loving and affectionate frame, a longing and panting frame, a thankful and praising frame, and a willing and obedient frame, to run the ways of God's commandments, Psalm cxix. 32.

Q. *What course shall we take to get the sacramental graces brought to lively exercise?*

A. By the diligent use of the means which God hath instituted, particularly by reading and hearing of God's word by serious and retired meditation upon proper objects, and by earnest prayer and frequent ejaculations to God for the help of his Spirit.

Q. *What are these proper objects we should meditate upon, in order to bring the grace of faith into lively exercise?*

A. Let us meditate on the greatness of Christ's sufferings, the acceptableness of his sacrifice, the infinite virtue of his blood, the fulness and sweetness of his promises, and the freeness of his gracious invitations, with the assurance he gives of acceptance and welcome to all that come unto him.

Q. *What shall we medtate on, in order to get holy fear quickened?*

A. We ought to meditate on the infinite justice and holiness of God, and his vehement indignation against sin, ma-

nifested in the sufferings of Christ for sin; and upon the near approach we make to a holy God in this ordinance, and the danger of unworthy communicating.

Q. *What should we meditate on, to get repentance quickened?*

A. Upon the heinous and God-provoking nature of sin, the number and greatness of our sins, the variety and greatness of our Redeemer's sufferings, and upon our sins as the cause of them all.

Q. *What shall we meditate on, to get love to God and Christ quickened?*

A. Upon the infinite love of God in sending his own Son to die for us; upon the matchless love of Christ in coming into the world, his readiness and willingness to sacrifice himself for us, his intrinsic loveliness and excellency; the unspeakable vileness and unworthiness of those whom he loved, and suffered so much for.

Q. *What shall we meditate upon to get love to the people of God quickened?*

A. Upon the words of our dying Redeemer enjoining it; upon the image they bear, their near relation to Christ and to us; and upon the love of Christ in dying for them.

Q. *What shall we do to get love to our enemies quickened?*

A. Let us think on Christ's command for it, and his example in loving and dying for us when enemies to him.

Q. *What shall we think on, to get our desires and spiritual appetite quickened?*

A. Upon our souls manifold necessities and wants, the fulness and suitableness of the supplies Christ hath provided for us in this ordinance; and the gracious promises he hath made to satisfy those that hunger and thirst.

Q. *What shall we meditate upon, to get our thankfulness to God quickened?*

A. Upon the freeness and greatness of redeeming love, the suitableness and excellency of the new covenant, the richness and fulness of this gospel-feast, and our unworthiness of the least of God's mercies.

Q. *What shall these do, who complain of their spritual deadness still continuing, and who cannot get their hearts brought to a lively frame, for approaching to this holy ordinance?*

A. 1. They ought to examine what may be the cause of their spiritual deadness. 2. Use all proper remedies for curing this disease.

Q. *What are the ordinary causes of our spiritual deadness?*

A. 1. Our commission of some sin, and not repenting for it; upon which account God is provoked to withold the influences of his Spirit, Psalm li. 11. 2. Our omission of duty or sluggish performance of it, brings on deadness. A key not turned rusts in the lock, Isaiah lxiv. 7.

3. Our careless entertaining of convictions, and the motions of the Holy Spirit, doth grieve and quench the Spirit, and so brings on deadness.

4. Our unthankfulness for former mercies, especially spiritual mercies and revivings, provokes God to shut his hand, and suspend his influences, Col. ii. 7.

5. Our earthly mindedness, and taking too much liberty in the delights of the world deadens the heart, Psalm cxix. 37. Jude 19.

6. When we grow proud of gifts, attainments, or enlargement in duty, God is provoked to blast them to us, James iv. 6.

7. Heavy troubles and discouragements tend to deaden the heart, Psalm cxix. 107.

Q. *What are the proper remedies for curing our spiritual deadness?*

A. 1. Let us be deeply sensible of this sad plague, search out the cause of it, and be humbled for it before the Lord.

2. Let us study to keep up a lively faith of the unseen things of another world; for when unbelief prevails, our spiritual life decays, Heb. iii. 12.

3. Let us act faith on Christ, and thereby draw life and quickening from him, who is "the fountain of life and head of influences" to his people; he is a living head, and will communicate life to his languishing members, John x. 10.

4. Let us carefully cherish all the motions and convictions of God's Spirit, watch against all known sin, the love of the world, the company of the wicked and every thing that tends to grieve and quench the Spirit, 1 Thess. v. 19.

5. Let us be frequent in reading, hearing, and meditating upon the quickening word and precepts of God, Psalm cxix. 93.

6. Delight in the company of lively Christains, whose flame may help to kindle our languishing spark, Psalm cxix. 63.

7. Let us think much on the activity and liveliness of the glorified saints and angels above, in the service of the living God; and as we pray that we may "do his will on earth as they do in heaven," let us join our endeavours with our prayers, chide our drousy hearts, and excite them to liveliness, Mat. vi. 10. Psalm lvii. 8. Psalm ciii. 1, 2. Jer. xxx. 21.

8. Let us attend God's quickening ordinance, and continue to use all means; still waiting, longing, and looking to the Lord, who hath promised to give power to the faint, and to be as the dew to Israel, Psalm xxvii. 8. Isaiah xl. 29, 31. Hosea xiv. 5.

Q. *But what shall poor exercised souls do, who, after using all means, find their deadness still continuing? dare they adventure to approach to the living God in the sacrament?*

A. 1. We ought to consider that our dying Saviour hath commanded us to come to his table, and we are under an indispensible obligation to obey it, and that our sinful indisposition cannot excuse us from our duty. And, therefore,

2. We must not sist in complaining of our deadness, but we must be restless under it, mourn over it, pray against it, struggle in the use of all means to get it removed, and set our hearts to our duty: and if we be conscious to ourselves that we have been honestly exercised (though with much weakness) in the use of all appointed means, we are not to give over thoughts of communicating; but, in obedience to Christ's command, and with a serious design to keep up the remembrance of his dying love, we ought to set about it with hope and expectation that God will meet with us in this quickening ordinance, and graciously remove our complaints, according to his promise, Psalm lx. 8. Psalm xxxiii. 18, 22. Isaiah xli. 17, 18.

3. Let us remember that this course of sincere aiming to obey Christ's command, and preparing ourselves in the use of all means, is to lay ourselves in God's way and road, who has promised to meet such as remember him in his ways, and commonly hath a desireable issue. For God often surprises his people with supplies of life, when they are struggling with their deadness in the use of means; help comes in, in the mean time, so that though they begin duty with a

dead-frame, yet they end it with a lively. "Before they are aware, their souls will make them as the chariots of Amminadab," Isaiah lxiv. 5. Cant. vi. 12. read Psalm xiii. the first verses compared with the letter.

Q. *Are not retired meditations upon the sufferings of Christ, and secret prayer to God, two special means for quickening our graces, and preparing us for the Lord's table?*

A. Yes; when they are rightly managed and duly performed.

I. Concerning the Meditation of Christ's Sufferings.

Quest. *WHEREIN doth the nature of the duty of solemn and retired meditation consist?*

A. It consists in the soul's abstract and retiring itself from the world, and setting itself seriously to contemplate, and think upon spiritual objects for holy and practical uses: which religious exercise is a very necessary and profitable duty in itself, and the character of a godly man, Josh. i. 8. Psal. i. 2. Gen. xxiv. 63. Psal. cxix. 97.

Q. *What is the advantage of this duty?*

A. It is a great help to other duties; it affords matter to the tongue in prayer and praise, it makes us fruitful in reading and hearing the word, it over-awes the soul from sinning, and melts the heart into penitential tears for sin, it quickens the graces in communicating, raiseth the soul's esteem of Christ, inforceth holiness, and excites diligence and activity in the service of God, Psal. xl. 1. Jam. i. 24. Psal. cxix. 97, 99. Psal. xc. 11. Psal. li. 3. 2. Tim. i. 12. Cant. v. 16. Psal. xxvi. 3. Heb. xi. 36.

Q. *Why is this useful and profitable duty so much neglected by us?*

A. 1. Because of our spiritual sloth, that makes us unwilling to engage in duties that are difficult, spiritual and tedious to the flesh, Prov. xxi. 25.

2. Because of our guilty consciences, that make us unwilling to be alone and retired, lest the mind should fall upon itself, or bring the awful judge of the world and a future state into our remembrance, Rom. i. 28.

3. Because of the carnality and dulness of our hearts, the throng of worldly business that takes up the time of many, the barrenness of our thoughts as to spiritual things, and the natural inclination of our hearts to wander and skip from one subject to another, Isa. vi. 10. Jer. iv. 14.

Q. *How shall we manage this work of retired meditation before the sacrament?*

A. 1. Let us call in the assistance of the Spirit of God to dispose and fix our hearts for it, Cant. iv. 16.

2. Let us excite and rouse up our souls, and all their faculties, to the work, Psalm lvii. 8.

3. Let us meditate but upon one thing at once, and labour to keep our mind and thoughts fixed upon the object that we think on, for some time together, till once our hearts be affected with it, and moved to holy mourning, prayer, or praise.

4. When we come any speed in this exercise, let us bless God for it, and this is the way to have more success in it: for as that which goeth up in vapours comes down again in showers; so that which goeth up in praises, comes down again in blessings, Psal. lxvii. 5, 6.

5. Let us begin and end this work with prayer; in the beginning, let us pray for a blessing on the duty, and in the end, let us pray that God may preserve the spiritual thoughts we have had upon our hearts, 2 Chron. xxix. 28.

6. Let us realize the presence of God to ourselves, and sist ourselves before his all-seeing eye, when we are about his exercise, firmly believing that his eye pierceth into our heart and most secret actions, Psal. xvi. 8.

Q *What should be the special subjects of our meditation before our approach to the Lord's table?*

A. The evil and demerit of sin, the goodness of God, the love of Chrit; the preciousness of the soul, and the excellent contrivance of our redemption; all which, as in a bright looking-glass, we may contemplate and view in the sufferings of Christ, which therefore should be the principal subject of our meditation, 1 Cor. ii. 2. Gal. iii. 1 John i. 29.

Q *What is it in the sufferings of Christ, that we should especially think upon?*

A. We should meditate, 1. On the variety and greatness of them. 2 On the cause of them. 3. Christ's innocency and patience under them. 4. The excellent properties of them.

Q. *How shall we meditate on the variety and greatness of Christ's sufferings?*

A. By taking a serious and fixed view of the many sore calamities and distresses which he endured in this world, in his life, and at his death, both in soul and body.

1. Think how our glorious Redeemer was harassed and tempted by the devil forty days in a wilderness.

2. What poverty and want he lay under, travelling up and down on foot, and having no where to lay his head.

3. What grievous reproaches were cast upon him.

4. How he was the object of the common hatred of the world; a multitude went to apprehend him, as if he had been a common enemy or robber; the multitude cried, "Away with him," and preferred the greatest mal factor before him, though he went still about doing them good.

5. Think on the unspeakable pressure of divine wrath which he lay under in the garden of Gethsemane, which made him wrestle as in an agony, and sweat great drops of blood, complain to his disciples, and cry to heaven for relief.

6. Think how he was betrayed by one of his own disciples, and sold to his enemies for a very small price.

7. How he was denied by another of his chosen disciples, and deserted by all the rest, in time of his distress.

8. How he was taken and fast bound with cords, as if he had been a thief or an evil doer.

9. How cruelly he was affronted and abused by rude soldiers a whole night; by being buffeted, spit upon, blindfolded, struck on the face, mocked with a ridiculous garb put upon him, and having the hair plucked from his cheeks.

10. How he was hauled to the judgment-seat of men, accused of crimes he knew nothing of, and, without any cause, stripped naked, and severely scourged.

11. How he had a crown of thorns plaited for his head, with the sharp points turned inward, and this put on, and driven into his head by a staff.

12. How contrary to all law as well as the conscience of his judge, he was condemned to be crucified, and put to death, as one of the vilest malefactors.

13. How the heavy tree of the cross was laid and fastened on his sore bleeding shoulders, and he forced to carry it to the place of execution, yea, to wrestle with it up to mount Calvary, till he was ready to faint under the burden.

14. How he was laid on the ground, stretched forth naked, and racked on the cross, and both feet and hands fastened to

it with big nails; and then the cross lift up with our nailed and bleeding Saviour upon it, and let fall into a deep hole digged for the foot of it; and so the wounds still widened, and the blood gushed forth, till he expired amidst these tortures, which lasted (as learned men think) for the space of six hours.

15. Think how great the anguish of his soul was at this time, when he bore our sins, in his own body on the tree; he was inwardly scorched with the fire of God's wrath, which "dried up his strength like a potsheard", and made him cry out, "I thirst," yea, cry aloud, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." So fearful were his sufferings, the whole world was moved thereat, the earth shook, the rocks rent, the heavens darkened, the sun vailed his face; and shall not our hearts be moved with contemplation of them?

Q. *What was the cause of Christ's sufferings?*

A. Our sins, which Christ out of pure love undertook to become a surety and sacrifice for, to the justice of God: These were the burden that pressed him down in the garden; that made the nails, and drove them into his body on the cross, Isa. liii. 5. Rom. v. 25. Dan. vii. 26.

Q. *How did Christ's innocency and patience appear under his sufferings?*

A. In that he was the immaculate Lamb of God who had done no evil. His judge on earth was forced to exculpate him; the Judge of heaven was well pleased with him, and received him into glory. "He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and opened not his mouth;" he reviled not his persecutors, but heartily prayed for them, and willingly poured out his soul unto death, Isa. liii. 7, 12. 1 Pet. ii. 22, 23. Luke xxiii. 14, 15, 34.

Q. *What are the properties of Christ's sufferings on which we ought to meditate?*

A. 1. The seasonableness of them; Christ stept in and suffered for his people, before so much as one drop of wrath alighted on them.

2. The voluntariness of them: he most willingly offered himself a sacrifise to divine justice, without any sort of compulsion, nay, he hastened to do it, Psalm xl. 8. Luke xiii. 50. Luke xxii. 15.

3. The universality of them; he suffered in all his offices, in his good name, his outward goods, in all his senses, in all his members.

4 The extremity of them; the cup he drank was most bitter, being altogether mingled with wrath and curses; he was roasted with the fire of divine vengeance, and found no pity nor abatement, Rom. 8. 32.

5. The acceptableness of them to God; a slain Christ was a "sacrifice of sweet smelling savour to God," seeing it brought honor to his law, glory to his justice, praise to his mercy, and safety to his people, Eph. v. 2.

6. We ought to think upon the efficacy and benefit of Christ's sufferings to us: so great is the efficacy and virtue of them, that they reach back to the beginning of the world, and extend forward to the end of it: and procure great blessings to his people in all ages. In a word, the wounds and sufferings of Christ have an atoning, reconciling, healing, purifying, and softening virtue, which we should often think upon.

Q. *How may we know, if we have an interest in these sufferings of Christ, and if he died for us in particular?*

A. By these marks: 1. If we be his people, and willing to do and suffer what he would have us, Mat. i. 21. Psalm cx. 3.

2. If we have an high esteem of Christ, and his sufferings, 1 Cor. ii. 2. 1 Pet. ii. 7.

3. If we reject all other saviours, and desire only to be sheltered in Christ's wounds, and sanctified by his blood, Hos. xvi. 3. Rev. i. 5.

4 If our hears melt for piercing him, Zech. xii. 10.

5. If we be bent to kill sin that crucified Christ, Gal. v. 2, 4.

6. If we be friends and lovers of Christ, ready to obey his commands, John xv. 13, 14.

II. Concerning Prayer.

Quest *WHY is prayer so needful before we approach to the Lord's table?*

A. 1. Because prayer is a great mean, on our part, for making up and preserving our acquaintance with God, Job xxii. 21, 26, 27.

2. It is needful, both to sanctify the ordinance to us, and us to this ordinance, 1 Sam. xvi. 5. 1 Tim. iv. 16.

3. It is the way to procure the spirit's influence for quickening grace, and enlivening us for duty, Cant. iv. 16.

4. Because no benefit can be expected by this ordinance without prayer; for it is the means appointed of God for obtaining all spiritual blessings, Ezek. xxxiv. 37. Mat. vii. 7. James i. 17.

Q. *What things should communicants especially pray for, before their partaking?*

A. 1. For pardon of the sin of neglecting this ordinance formerly, and of unsuitable partaking of it.

2. For the preparation of our hearts for this ordinance, and for quickning all the sacramental graces, particularly faith, love, repentance, and hunger, and thirst for this spiritual feast, Psalm x. 17. Prov. xvi. 1.

3. For pardon of all defects and short-comings in our preparation, 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19, 20.

4. For the Lord's gracious presence both with ministers and people, for communion with Christ in the ordinance, for the intimations of his favour, the breathings of his Spirit, and communications of his grace; that we, and many others may be nourished, strengthened and comforted by this ordinance, Exod. xxxiii. 14, 18. Cant. iv. 16. Isa. lxiv. 1.

Q. *What kind of prayer is it, that will be effectual?*

A. 1. Humble prayers; we must level ourselves with the dust, when we speak to the God of heaven; for it is such prayers that he will regard, Gen. xviii. 27. Psalm x. 17.

2. Prayer in faith; if we would prevail in prayer, we must by faith eye the power, mercy and promise of God, and rely upon the mediation and righteousness of Jesus Christ, in all our pleadings with God, James i. 6.

3. It must be fervent and importunate; as if it were the last prayer we were to put up, and the last sacrament we were to see, and as if our lives and eternal well-being depended upon it, Gen. xxxii. 25, 26. Lam. iii. 41. Isa. lxiv. 7.

4. It must be argumentative; pleading the power of God, the mercy of God, his free promise, the blood of his Son, the glory of his name, our great misery and necessity, Josh. vii. 9. Psalm lxxxix. 9. Dan. ix. 16, 17, 18.

Q. *But what if we have prayed and wrestled, and yet the Lord shuts out our prayers, and gives no answer?*

A. 1. This is no singular complaint, for it hath been the case of many of God's saints in former ages, Psalm xxxi. 22. Lam. iii. 8, 44. Jonah ii. 4.

2. There is a great difference betwixt delaying, and denying of prayer, or betwixt God's suspending the answer of prayer, and his rejecting it. For God, many times, for wise and holy ends, is silent, and lets his peoples suits depend long before he answer them; when yet in the mean time he approves and accepts of their prayers, Luke xviii. 7. Mat. xv. 23, 28.

Q. *How shall we know that our prayers are not rejected, when yet we receive no answer to them?*

A. 1. When we are resolved and enabled still to wait upon God in the way of duty, though he hide himself from us, Isa. vii. 17.

2. When we are enabled to clear and justify God in his dealings, and blame ourselves only for the cause of his silence, Lam. iii. 39, 40, &c.

3. When we are helped to discover the failings and defects of our prayers, so as to be humbled for them, Isa. lxvi. 6, 7.

4. When we get the Spirit's assistance to strengthen and enlarge our hearts in prayer, Psalm cxxxviii. 3. Isa. lxv. 34.

5. When the Lord's suspending his answer, makes us the more inquisitive into our hearts and ways, to find out the cause thereof, Lam. iii. 8, 40.

Q. *Wherefore is it that the Lord delays to hear his peoples prayer?*

A. For these ends; 1. To chasten and humble them for their sins, such as, their sloth and formality in duty, their self-conceit, and leaning upon their performances, their neglecting the Spirit's motions, their want of suitable apprehensions of God, and pure ends in prayer, their not joining suitable endeavours with their prayers, their not watching for a return, &c. Isa. lix. 2. Psalm lxvi. 18. Isa. lxiv. 7. 1 Pet. v. 5. James iv. 3. Psalm v. 1. 2. For the manifestation of his own glory particularly, for discovering his power and goodness in helping and delivering his people, when matters are brought to extremity with them, John xi. 5, 6.

III. For the trial and exercise of his peoples graces, either that the weakness of them may be discovered, or the sincerity of them evidenced, particularly, the Lord designs hereby,

1. To try our faith, if we will trust him for what we see not, and believe he is still as good as his word, though sense suggest the contrary, Mat. xv. 27, 28. 2 Cor. v. 7.

2. To try our patience, if we be content to wait God's leisure, and time of accomplishing his promises, Heb. vi. 12. Heb. x. 36.

3. To try our love, if we will esteem, and speak well of Christ, even when he frowns or hides himself, Cant. v. 6, 10. Cant. viii. 7.

4. To try our constancy, if we will adhere to a withdrawing God, and persevere in duty, when we have no sensible encouragement for it, Hab. iii. 17, 18.

IV. God delays to answer his peoples prayers, to advance their spiritual welfare, for hereby he keeps them humble and depending, quickens them to more fervency in prayer, and makes mercies more sweet to them when obtained, 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8. Cant. iii. 1, 2. Mat. xv. 24, 27, 28.

Q. *What is our proper duty in such a case, when God seems to shut out our prayer?*

A. 1. We should search for the Achan in the camp, and cast out the accursed thing, as soon as we find it. And if we cannot find it, we should go humbly to God, and cry, "Shew me, Lord, wherefore thou contendest with me? Job x. 2.

2. Let us justify God in all his dealings towards us, and lay all the blame on ourselves, Micah vii. 9.

3. Let us watch and look after our prayers, Psalm v. 3.

4. Let us be diligent also in the use of all other means for obtaining our desires, and go from one duty to another, Cant. iii. 1, 2.

5. We must resolve to persist in prayer, in midst of all discouragements, and wait patiently on God, though it were to the last hour of our lives, Isa. viii. 17. Psalm xl. 1.

Q. *What are these, in a word, that are in a fit case to come to the Lord's table?*

A. All penitent believers, who have seriously considered the nature of the covenant of grace, with the ends and uses of this sacrament; and examined themselves if they have unfeignedly consented to the covenant, and stand to the consent already given; live according to the covenant, in a sober, righteous and godly life, repent sincerely of all known falls and breaches, and continue not in any known sin; ask forgiveness of all they have wronged, and forgive those who have wronged them; stir up themselves to the lively exercise of faith, and all the other sacramental graces.

Concerning the Duties requisite in Partaking.

Quest. *HOW should we be employed, when the time of partaking comes?*

A. I have already anticipated much that might be said here, in opening the nature of this sacrament, and shewing what is signified by the sacramental elements, words, and actions; what is implyed in the act of worthy communicating, and what is the bodily gesture requisite therein: to which the reader is referred. Besides which, I shall add some directions how we ought to be employed, when going to the Lord's table, and when we sit down at it, and in the act of communicating.

Q. *How should we be employed when going to the Lord's table?*

A. 1. We should be thinking what a high privilege it is, that such unworthy creatures as we should be admitted unto such near communion and fellowship with God.

2. We should have awful impressions of the solemnity of the ordinance, and greatness of the work we are going about; the great advantage of doing it right, and the great danger of doing it wrong.

3. We should be thinking, this may be the last communion we shall see on earth, and the last offer we shall get of the water of life, in this manner; and therefore we ought carefully to receive and improve it.

4. We should guard against wandering and impertinent thoughts, and labour to get our hearts wholly fixed on the great work in hand.

5. We should be meditating on the unsearchable love of Christ, and his undertaking to suffer both the pains of death and hell for us, that were enemies to him.

6. We should be meditating on the fulness and suitableness of the many sweet offices and relations which Christ bears to his people. Let us think on him and go to him, as a surety, to pay our debt; as a physician, to heal our diseases; as a mediator, to make up our peace with God; as a ran-

somer, to deliver us from captivity; as a refuge to shelter us from danger, as a teacher to open our eyes; as a bountiful friend, to give an alms and satisfy our hunger; yea, as a loving husband, to clothe us, enrich us, and provide for us all we want.

Q. How should we be employed when we sit down at the Lord's table?

A. 1. We should compose ourselves into a serious frame and disposition, agreeable to this ordinance.

2. We are to behold, by faith, the affecting sight represented to us in this ordinance.

3. Raise holy and suitable meditations from the sacramental elements, words and actions made use of, in the administration of this ordinance.

4. Exercise the graces in a lively manner, which are necessary in the act of communicating.

Q. *What is that serious frame or suitable disposition of soul which communicants ought to have when they sit down at the Lord's table?*

A. We should approach to God in this ordinance and partake thereof; 1. With an holy awe and reverence of God; adoring his justice and holiness, manifested in the sufferings of Christ, 1 Sam. vi. 20. Ps. v. 7. Heb. 12. 28.

2. With humble, low, and abasing thoughts of ourselves and all that we can do, looking on ourselves as poor and maimed, halt, blind and impotent, unworthy of the least crumb, Luke xiv. 21. Isa. lvii. 15. James iv. 6, 10.

3. With stayedness and fixedness of thought, summoning all the faculties of the soul, and thoughts of the heart, to attend and keep close to this momentous affair, Eccles. v. 1. Ps. cxviii. 27.

4. With holy confidence, as children sitting down at their father's table, looking for, and expecting some gracious allowance from him, and beliveing that he would not give us stones when we ask bread, Mat. vii. 9. Heb. iv. 15, 16. Heb. x. 22.

5. With a sharp and lively appetite after the spiritual benefits contained in this feast, earnestly desiring nearer communion with God, clearer tokens of his distinguishing love in Christ, Ps. lxxxi. 10.

6. With burning love and affection to Christ, who purchased this feast and opened this fountain to us, and laid out the most precious treasure of his blood to make us happy, Ps. lxxiii. 25. Cant. 5, 8.

7. In this suitable communion frame, there should be a mixture of holy mourning and rejoicing, 1. Mourning for sin, when we call to mind the anguish of Christ's soul, the bruises of his body, and the effusion of his blood for it, 2. Rejoicing in Christ Jesus as those that are satisfied with his undertaking, and thankful for his coming, and wonder at the rich feast he has provided for us, Zech. xii. 10. Rom. 5. 11. Phil. iii. 3. Ps. xxii. 26.

Q. *What are these affecting sights set before the eyes of our faith, at the Lord's table, which we ought to contemplate, when we sit down thereat?*

A. In general, Christ crucified is here evidently set forth which is the most piercing and affecting sight to the eye and heart of a believer, Gal. iii 1. Zech. xii. 10.

More particularly, we may here see, 1. The great evil of sin, that nothing could atone for, but such a sacrifice, and nothing can cure but such a medicine.

2. The infinite justice of God, and his displeasure against sin, which nothing could pacify, but a satisfaction of an infinite value.

3. The greatness of the damned's misery, who have God's justice to satisfy for themselues for ever, without hope of any to be a propitiation for them.

4. The dreadfulness of that wrath which we deserved and must have suffered, if no surety had interposed to suffer it for us.

5. The greatness of the love of Christ, who condescended to suffer both the pains of death and hell, for such vile creatures as we are.

6. The preciousness of our souls, and the great value that Christ put upon them, in that he gave both his soul and body to be a ransom for them.

7. The excellency and blessedness of pardon of sin, that our infinitely wise Redeemer gave such a price to obtain it to us.

8. The worth of heaven and eternal glory, that could be purchased at no lower rate than the blood of the Son of God.

9. The riches and glory of the heavenly feast, where the saints see Christ as he is, and feed on him eternally, without signs or symbols.

10. The earnest desire Christ hath to engage sinners hearts to him, in that he comes in the sacrament, with his dyed garments to cover them, his wounds opened to shelter them, and his blood streaming forth to cleanse them.

Lastly, We may here see our glorious Redeemer spoiling principalities and powers (conquering and disarming our enemies, the law, Satan, death and hell) "making a shew of them openly, and triumphing over them in his cross," Col. ii. 15.

Q. *What meditation ought we to raise from the sacramental elements, words and actions, made use of at the Lord's table?*

A. I have already insisted on these more largely, when shewing the meaning and signification of them, from whence we may raise many suitable meditations. All I shall say now, shall be briefly summed up in these following things,

1. When we see the elements of bread and wine, let us think on the body and blood of Christ, as the only proper food and nourishment of the soul.

2. When we see the minister take the bread into his hand, to separate it from common use; let us think on God's setting Christ apart by his eternal decree, and separating him from all other men to be our mediator and surety.

3. When the minister doth bless and consecrate the elements; let us think on God's sending his Son into the world, sanctified and furnished with all gifts and graces needful for his mediatory office.

4. When we see the bread broken; let us meditate on the breaking and wounding of Christ's sacred body on the cross, and all the bruises, sufferings, and pains which he endured, both in soul and body, for our sins.

5. When we see the wine poured out; let us think on the shedding of Christ's most precious blood, and on his willingness to pour out both his blood and soul unto death to save us from eternal wrath.

6. When we see the minister offering and giving the elements to us; let us meditate on the infinite love of God the Father, in giving Christ to be our mediator; and of Christ the Son, in giving himself to be a sacrifice for us; and of the Holy Ghost, in revealing and applying Christ to us.

7. When the minister saith to us, "Take, eat, Drink ye all of it;" let us think, how freely God offers Christ to us,

and how earnestly he presseth us to accept of him as our Saviour.

8. When we see that there is both bread and wine provided for us in this feast; let us think on the plentiful redemption, complete nourishment, and fullness of grace which we have in Jesus Christ.

9. When we see that both of them are offered and given to us: let us think, that it is God's will that we should stretch out the arms of faith, and embrace Christ wholly, in all his benefits, offices, laws, and cross.

10. When we see the bread and wine given separately; we should think how Christ's blood was separated from his body, that we might not be separated from God for ever.

11. When we see the elements divided and distributed among the communicants; let us think how Christ is really, though invisibly, dealing forth the effects and benefits of his death and sufferings to the worthy receivers.

12. When we are receiving and eating and drinking the bread and wine; we should be meditating on the spiritual receiving, and applying of Christ by faith, and the sweetness and pleasantness of the benefits of his death, and on the close and intimate union that is betwixt Christ and believers.

13. When we feel the wine warming our cold stomachs; we should meditate the more intensely upon the warm love and blood of Christ, till once they warm our cold hearts and affections with vehement love and desire to our Redeemer.

14. When we hear of Christ's dying charge "to do this in remembrance of him;" and of his testament sealed in this sacrament; we should affectionately remember the love of our dying friend, and meditate on the precious legacies he hath bequeathed to believers. Of which I have treated more largely.

Q. *Wherein doth the work of communicating chiefly consist?*

A. Besides what I have said before on this head, I shall add these two things; 1. Upon God's part; Communicating lyes on God's giving infeftment to the believer, of Christ and all his purchase, by the symbols of bread and wine, Christ doth here marry believers, and give himself to them, in the relation of a husband; and in token thereof, give them, as it were, his ring or picture, and grants them the investiture and possession of his house or palace above, by delivering the key thereof into their hand; which, upon their consent and acceptance, gives them as true right to Christ and all his purchase, as any man hath to an house or estate by an infeftment or sealed charter.

2. On the believers part; Communicating lies mainly in their receiving the seal of God's covenant with them, and the seal of all his gracious promises to them in Christ; and particularly in laying hold and applying of Christ for pardon of sin, for cleansing from sin, and for strength to do every commanded duty; all which is promised in this covenant. So that the work of communicating doth not (as some are ready to think) lie principally, in meditating upon Christ's love and sufferings, our engaging and covenanting to be the Lord's, making vows against sin, or putting up of prayers and requests to God. All these, indeed, ought necessarily to attend our communicating, but they are not the direct and principal acts of it. The nature whereof, as is said, consists mainly, in our cordial receiving of Christ and his purchased benefits, as they are tendered in the covenant of grace, and sealed and applied in this sacrament: And in our believing that Christ's broken body, and shed blood here represented, with all his merits and graces, are as truly applied to us for curing and saving our souls, and become ours by faith; as the consecrated bread and wine do enter into our bodies, and become ours by feeding thereon. And these acts are to be accompanied with the lively exercise of all the sacramental graces, particularly faith, repentance, desire, love and joy.

Q. *How is faith to be exercised in partaking of the Lord's supper?*

A. Faith being as the eye of the soul, to descern Christ; as the hand of the soul, to receive him; and as the mouth of the soul, to feed on him in this ordinance, should be most actively employed and diligently exercised in our partaking; particularly in these acts: 1. In believing firmly the doctrine of the gospel, the truth of Christ's death, his redemption and the world to come.

2. In looking unto Christ lifted up upon the cross for healing to our souls maladies.

3. In fleeing into the open arms and wounds of a crucified Jesus, our bleeding high-Priest, for shelter and protection from wrath.

4. In embracing and clasping about this Redeemer, as our soul's up-making portion, saying with Thomas, "My Lord, and my God."

5. In applying the blood and merits of Christ to ourselves, for stopping the mouth of conscience, silencing the clamours and curses of the law, and answering the accusations of Satan.

6. In pleading his blood with a just and faithful God, for the pardoning of our sins, the justifying of our persons, the acceptance of our performances, the softning of our hearts, the curing of our diseases, the quickning of our graces, and sanctifying of our souls.

7. In giving up our souls and bodies to Christ, to be saved by his blood, guided by his Spirit, ruled by his laws, and disposed of by his providence: saying with the Spouse, "My beloved is mine, and I am his."

Q. *How is repentance to be exercised, in our partaking of the Lord's supper?*

A. By remembering our sins that pierced Christ, with holy shame and sorrow, abhorring them, loathing and condemning ourselvs for them, firmly resolving against them and, sincerely purposing to follow Christ all our days in the ways of new obedience.

Q. *How is holy desire to be exercised, in partaking?*

A. In panting and breathing after the virtue and efficacy of Christ's blood, still more and more; for subduing and killing of sins and lusts, for enlivening our dead souls, and curing our heart plagues, for quickening and strengthening our weak and decayed graces, and for more intimate fellowship with Christ, and surer tokens of his special and distinguishing love.

Q. *How is love to Christ to be exercised, in partaking?*

A. By the outgoings of the heart and soul towards him, closely thinking upon his free love and the expressions of it, with wonder and admiration: highly esteeming and prizing this glorious Redeemer, delighting in him, and cleaving to him, as our souls chief good and portion, and longing for the full enjoyment of him in glory.

Q. *How is holy joy to be exercised in partaking?*

A. By the soul's being cleared and lifted up in the believing view of its interest in Christ and his purchase, rejoicing in God as its covenanted God and portion, shewing forth his praise, and magnifying him for redeeming love.

Q. *What shall those poor souls do, who, in obedience to*

Christ's commnad, come to the Lord's table, but when they are set down at it, are wholly out of ease (as they think) for the exercise of the foresaid graces, being plagued with much deadness and confusion, and likewise harassed with strong temptations?

A. It is indeed very afflicting and discouraging when it is so with any poor exercised soul, and will occasion many great thoughts and searchings of heart.

But, 1. If the disorder of our hearts be our great grief and burden, and we desire nothing more than a right frame of spirit, for remembering and receiving a dying Saviour in the sacrament; it is a sign of some spiritual life and feeling.

2. We should consider, that it is no singular case, to be assaulted with temptations, at such a juncture; for Joshua the High Priest, when standing before the Lord, had satan at his right hand to resist him, Zech. iii. 1. 2.

3. If we feel much heart-deadness at such a time, we should send up some fervent ejaculations for the assistance and breathings of the Spirit to warm our hearts, and enliven our affections, Cant. iv. 16.

4. We ought to rouse and stir up ourselves, use quickening motives and arguments and expostulate with our own hearts, and say, Oh I am lively enough in all my worldly concerns, which are but trifles; and shall I be dead and dull in this weighty affair; when the question is, "Whether I shall live in heaven or hell for ever? What life and activity have many in the ways of sin, and service of the devil? And shall I be so dead in the service of the living God?" Oh my drousy heart! art thou not ashamed to think so coldly on thy bleeding Saviour? Is Christ's heart so warm to thee, and thine so cold to him?" Thus all means must be used in dependence upon God; and so let us wait on him, and help will come in the time of need, Psalm xxxi. 24. Psalm xliii. 5. Psalm lvii. 8.

5. Let us hence see the more need of a crucified Jesus, to quicken our dead hearts, and subdue our strong temptations; and let us apply the more heartily to him in this ordinance, where he seats himself on a throne of grace, ready to answer his people's requests, and supply their needs. Let us draw life from his death and quickening from his resurrection. And let us remember, it was Christ's special errand into the world, to bring *abundant life* to his people, and to *destroy the works of the devil*, John x 10. John iii. 8.

Q. *What shall those do, who complain of such wandering hearts, that they cannot get them stayed a moment upon one subject; and even when they are set down at the Lord's table, they find them hunting after vanity?*

A. 1. Let them groan under this before God, as a very grievous plague and affliction; for if ever there was a time when the heart should be fixed, and the thoughts stayed, it should be, when we sit down at the Lord's table, and have the great God to transact with.

2. Let us labour to over-awe our hearts with the deep apprehensions of God's presence and all-seeing eye, believing that God noticeth us now more than ever.

3. Let us cry for more love to Christ, and for further discoveries of his loveliness, and this would be a mean to fix the heart, "For where the treasure is, there will the heart be also."

4. Let us chide and check our hearts for every vain excursion, and say, "O my wandering heart! Did I come here to think on any thing, but Christ and his love? Is this a place for earthly trifles? Is this the way to shew forth my Redeemer's death? If I cannot watch with Christ one hour how shall I dwell with him, and live in the contemplation of him for ever?

5. Let us present a crucified Christ to the eye of the mind, and study to hold this object still in its view. And let us have the communicants proper work deeply fixed in our minds and memories, and labour to keep the heart close to its work, and even let us "bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar;" viz. the cords of strong resolutions and fervent ejaculations; and when those birds of prey come down upon the sacrifice, let us, like Abraham, drive them presently away, Gen. xv. 11. Psalm cxviii. 27. Psalm xxxvi. 11.

Q. *Are not* vows *and* prayers *requisite, at the Lord's table?*

A. Yes; for here we are to profess our sorrow for sin, our thankfulness for God's favours, and join ourselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant; and it certainly becomes all true penitents, thankful souls, and honest covenanters, to make vows: and those vows are nothing worth without prayers to God joined therewith, for strength to keep them. And those vows and prayers seem to be most seasonable after our receiving of the elements, and our exerting of the direct acts of communicating, Job xxxiv. 31, 32 Gen. xxviii. 20. John i. 16. Neh. x. 29.

Q. *What is the nature of these* vows, *which we ought to come under, at this juncture?*

A. A religious vow is a serious oath of dedication of ourselves to the Lord's use and service; or, it is a solemn engagement and promise unto the Lord, whereby we bind and oblige ourselves to be the Lord's dutiful children and servants, Num. xxx. 2. 1 Chron. xv. 12, 13, 14, 15.

Q. *What is the necessity of making such vows?*

A. 1. Because God is pleased thus to bind himself solemnly to us, which should draw out some answerable return from us to him, Heb. vi. 18. Psal. cxix. 106.

2. That we may solemnly confirm and ratify what was done and engaged in our name at baptism: a bargain that is made for an heir, during his nonage, is to be confirmed by him when he comes to age.

3 That thereby we may give our solemn approbation and testimony to God's ways and service as the best and most excellent.

4. That thereby we may engage our souls the more to stedfastness and constancy in duty, discourage Satan and our spiritual enemies, and prevent our backsliding, which we are naturally prone to, Hos. xi. 7.

Q. *What are those things which we ought to vow and oblige ourselves unto, at the Lord's table?*

A. 1. That we will in the strength of Christ keep ourselves from all known sin. 2. That we will make conscience of performing all known duties, or, in a word, that we will, "cease to do evil, and learn to do well," Isa. i. 16, 17.

Q. *What are these evils that we should* mainly *vow against at the Lord's supper?*

A. 1. In general, we must vow against all sin, as the traitor and murderer of the Lord of Glory. If ever the soul take up a prejudice and antipathy against sin, it should be at the Lord's table, where the evil of it is so clearly discovered; then it is, especially, that we, by solemn vows, should cast away all our transgressions, saying with Ephraim, "What have I to do any more with idols?" Hos. xiv. 8.

2. In particular, we ought to vow; 1. Against all gross sins. 2. Against all secret sins. 3. Against all heart-sins. 4. Against our darling-sins, and these sins that do most

easily beset us. 5. Against all temptations to sin, and especially the snares of bad company, Psal. xiv. 5. Psal. xix. 115.

Q. *What are these religious duties that we should vow and bind ourselves unto, at the Lord's supper?*

A. 1. In general, we ought, in the strength of the grace of Jesus Christ, solemnly to vow and promise, that we will mind religion as the one thing needful, and make the pleasing of God the chief business of our lives; that we will give God, not only the outward man but the heart, in all our duties; that we will set the Lord always before us, and study to live a life of communion with God, and still press forward to the full enjoyment of him above, Rom. xii. 11. Psal. xvi. 8. Phil. iii. 13, 14.

2. In particular, we should vow and bind ourselves; 1. To the conscientious performance of secret duties, which the eyes of the world cannot observe. 2. To these duties that contribute most to promote the life of religion, and bring us unto communion with God. 3. To these duties, that conscience doth most accuse of neglecting. 4. To these duties, by which we may be most capable to advance God's glory and the welfare of precious souls, and by which we may adorn our profession, and make religion amiable in the eyes of strangers: and especially, that we will make conscience of family-religion, and study to recommend piety to our near relations, Gen. xviii. 19. Joh. xxiv. 15. Psal. ci. 2.

Q. *Is it a season for communicants to be making requests, when they are at the Lord's table?*

A. Yes; for then we come to Christ in a good day when there is plenty about his hand, when he hath on his dealing garments, and both his heart and hand are open to us. On this royal feast-day he sets himself upon a throne of grace, with a sceptre of mercy in his hand, and waits for our addresses, and says, as the king to Esther at the feast, "What is thy petition?"

Q. *What are these particular suits, we should be putting up at the communion table?*

A. Our requests at that time should be suitable to the particular circumstances and necessities of our souls, which are best known to ourselves. Only, in general, it is very proper at that time to be putting up requests for strength to keep our engagements, and pay our vows; for the Spirit's influences to quicken us to liveliness of frame in this this and all duties; and to preserve liveliness in us; and likewise for holy wisdom and skill to improve Christ for righteousness and sanctification: for heart-holiness and grace, to subdue indwelling sin: for strength to grapple with temptations, and bear up under trials; for converting grace to our near relations; for the advancement of Christ's kingdom and interest through the world, and especially the land of our nativity, and the congregation we belong to; for persecuted Protestants, that are deprived of such gospel-feasts, &c.

Concerning the Duties requisite after Partaking.

Quest. WHAT *duties are required of us, after partaking of the Lord's supper?*

A. 1. To preserve and keep up a suitable frame of Spirit, when we rise up and come away from the Lord's table.

2. To examine ourselves when we go to our retiring places.

3. To order our conversation aright afterwards.

Q. *What is that suitable frame and disposition of Spirit, which communicants ought to have, when they rise and come from the Lord's table?*

A. We ought to come away from this ordinance, 1. In an admiring frame. 2. In a thankful frame. 3. In a rejoicing frame. 4. In a humble frame. 5. In a watchful frame. 6. In a praying frame. 7. In a charitable frame. 8. In a willing and obedient frame. 9. In a fixed and resolute frame. 10. In a longing and heavenly frame.

Q. *What is it that should be matter of admiration to us, when we come from the Lord's table?*

A. We should wonder at the goodness and condescension of God to us, that he should have had such thoughts of love to us; provided such a surety and sacrifice for us, as his own beloved Son; entertained us at his table; taken us into covenant and communion with himself, and given us earnests of the everlasting inheritance: and that he who is higher than the heavens should have done all this for creatures, who are by nature mean as worms, nay polluted and loathsome in the sight of God, Psal. viii. 4. Psal. cxiii. 5, 6. 2 Chron. vi. 18. 2 Sam. vii. 18.

Q. *What is it that we should be thankful for, when we come from the Lord's table?*

A. We should be thankful to God for his love in giving Christ; for Christ's love in giving himself; and for the love of the Holy Spirit in revealing Christ to us, and in us. Also, we should bless God for all the blessed fruits of this love, particularly for the well-ordered covenant of grace, and the seals of it; for pardon of sin, and all the rich benefits sealed to us at a communion-table; that we live in a Goshen on earth, and have the prospect of a Canaan above, Luke ii. 14. Eph. i. 3. 2 Cor. ix. 12, 15. Rev. i. 5. Deut. viii. 10.

Q. *What is it that we should rejoice in when we go from the Lord's table?*

A. 1. In the persons of the glorious Trinity; in God the Father, as our covenanted God and portion; in God the Son, as our Saviour and Redeemer; and in God the Holy Ghost, as our Comforter and Sanctifier, Psal. xliii. 4. Rom. v, 11.

2. In the attributes and perfections of God; particularly, in his goodness, mercy, wisdom, almightiness, immutability and faithfulness, as being all in confederacy with us, and engaged to promote our well-being and happiness, Psalm civ. 24. Psalm lxxiii. 25, 26. Psalm xlviii. 14. Heb. iii. 17, 18.

3. We ought to rejoice in our Redeemer's love, his wonderful undertaking, and in the glorious victories and purchase he hath obtained for us, Phil. iii. 3. Luke i. 46, 47. 49. 50, 51.

4. We should rejoice in the ways of God, having our hearts lifted up in them, and enlarged both to run and sing in the ways of the Lord, and go about every commanded duty with pleasure, Acts viii. 39. 2 Chron. xvii. 6. Psalm cxix. 32. Psalm cxxxviii.

Q. *Wherefore should we come from the Lord's table in a humble frame?*

A. Because we have manifold grounds for our humiliation before God at that time, when we consider: 1. Our vileness by sin, and our deservings on that account; we have more

reason to cry out than Mephibosheth had, when David promoted him to eat bread at his table, "What is thy servant, that thou should look upon such a dead dog as I am?—2 Samuel ix. 8.

2. When we consider the defectiveness of our preparation for this solemn ordinance; alas, our souls were not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary!

3. When we consider our great short-comings in the near approach we were making to a holy God; namely, that our hearts were not more deeply affected with the great sights presented to our view, and the glorious things put in our offer at the Lord's table; that our dull affections were not more raised, our wavering minds more fixed, and our cold hearts more warmed, when we were about such spiritual and heavenly work, 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19.

4. We have cause to be humbled, when we consider, that we are still exposed to many dangers, and environed with strong enemies, who are never more busy and active, than after we have been at the Lord's table, or admitted to nearness with God; and especially when we consider our own weakness and insufficiency to grapple with them, Luke xxii. 31. 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8.

Q. *Wherefore ought we to come from this holy ordinance in a watchful frame?*

A. Because of the many evils, snares and enemies, that we are then in hazard of; and therefore we must stand upon our guard and watch, particularly with these:

1. The malicious designs and devices of Satan, who is going about seeking to rob us of any benefit we have got by this ordinance, Luke xxii. 31. Matt. xxvi. 41. 2 John 8.

2. We ought especially to watch against the workings of spiritual pride, after this ordinance, for our wicked and deceitful hearts are most ready to be lifted up with the great favours and honour here conferred upon us, Luke xxxiii. 25.

3. We should guard against resting upon the sacrament, as if all our work were now done, and our warfare accomplished; no, we are still in a military state, and may expect new assaults from our spiritual enemies; we have still the good fight of faith to fight, and the work of our salvation to work out, which must be done with a constant holy fear and trembling, Cant. iii. 7, 8. Phil. ii. 12.

4. We must watch against the levity and wanderings of our own hearts, that are prone soon to divert from the work we have been about; and study to keep them close in meditation upon a crucified Christ, and the great sights which we saw at a communion-table.

5. We should watch against vain and frothy discourse, and the snares of company, after this ordinance; for hereby many have soon lost that sweet relish of the things of God, which they have had upon their spirits; wherefore secret meditations, prayer, and praise, after this solemn work, are safer for communicants, than to be in the best of company.

6. We should watch against the inroads of worldly cares and incumbrances, that they be not allowed suddenly to rush in upon us, to rob us of the spiritual frame and comforts we have been privileged with in this ordinance. We ought not hastily to return to our worldly business after a sacrament, but by degrees: and that with great tenderness, care and circumspection; resolving that Christ shall have the throne of the heart, and the world be kept at the footstool.

7. We should carefully guard against all temptations to passion and rash anger, and study to be meek and quiet under provocations; for if we give way to the disorders and tumultuous passions of our hearts, the holy Spirit will be grieved, and provoked to withdraw from us.

8. We should watch against sloth and formality in duty, and be endeavouring always to stir up ourselves to liveliness and spirituality in all our performances.

9. We must watch against relying on our own strength in performing duty, and study to keep ourselves constantly depending on Christ as our head of influences, and looking to him for our quickening and strength.

Q. *Why should we come from this ordinance in a praying frame? Do we need any thing more than God hath freely given us?*

A. Though all things needful be freely promised and sealed to us in the sacrament, yet we must continue to pray for the accomplishment of these promises, Psalm cxix. 49.

2. We must pray for the continuance of the Spirit's influences and grace to preserve in us that tenderness of heart, warmness of affection, and liveliness of frame, which have been wrought in us by means of this ordinance, 1 Chron. xxix. 18. Psalm lxviii. 28.

3. We must pray for strength to keep the promises, and pay the vows which we have made to the Lord at this occasion; and that God may save us from apostacy and backsliding, which our hearts are naturally bent unto, Psalm xvii. 5.

Q. *Wherein lies that charitable disposition which we ought to have, when we come away from the Lord's table?*

A. 1. In bearing a good will to the souls of all men, and heartily wishing their welfare, 1 Thess. iii. v. 12, 15.

2. In having a true love to all the members of Christ's mystical body, and bearing with them, though in several things they differ from us.

3. In a readiness to relieve the poor and indigent, according to our ability, Gal. vi. 10.

4. In a disposition to forgive those that have been injurious to us. And surely all who have been sharers of God's mercy and grace in the sacrament, will come away from it with such a charitable disposition.

Q. *What is that willing and obedient frame which communicants ought to have, when they come away from the Lord's table?*

A. It lies in these things: 1. A grateful sense of the many ties and obligations we are under to serve him

2. In making it our great scope and design to approve ourselves to God in all things.

3. In making it our study to know God's mind and will, and what it is that is most acceptable and pleasing to him.

4. In having an universal respect to all God's commands, and a readiness of mind to every good work.

5. In being active and zealous for the glory of God, and the interest of his kingdom among men.

Q. *What is that fixed and resolute frame which they ought to have?*

A. It is the soul's deliberate and stedfast resolution to adhere to Christ, his ways and interest, in the midst of all trials and difficulties. We must now be at a point in this matter, fully determined, by the grace of God, to look and go forward in our Christian course, and that no solicitation or temptation shall move us, either to look back or draw back; but that with "purpose of heart we will cleave unto the Lord," Psalm cxix. 30, 31, 115. Acts ix. 23.

Q. *What is that longing and heavenly frame which we ought to have when we come from the Lord's table?*

A. It consists in these things: 1. In a firm belief of Christ's second coming, and of the life everlasting.

2. In a lively meditation upon Christ's coming, and the future glory.

3. In an earnest looking for that blessed hope, and a joyful expectation of the glory to be revealed, Titus ii. 13. Rom. v. 2.

4. In a constant watching and preparing for the coming of the Bridegroom, Luke xii. 36, 37.

Q. *Are not our hearts prone to lose their tenderness and spirituality after the sacrament? How shall we retain our liveliness, and keep up, in some measure, our communion frame, even when the communion is over?*

A. 1. We must have deep impressions of the treachery and falseness of our hearts, and of their woeful natural bias to depart from God, and turn carnal, Hosea xi. 7.

2. We must be humbled under a sense of our own weakness and insufficiency to preserve our spiritual life, or so much as to think a good thought of ourselves; for God gives grace to such humble souls, 1 Peter v. 4.

3. We should be keeping up a constant thankful sense of God's kindness to us at the sacrament, and be thankfully praising him for it; and this is an excellent way to engage the continuance of his mercies, Psalm lxvii. 5, 6.

4. We should be frequently thinking on these affecting sights which we saw at the Lord's table, and study to keep up the impressions thereof on our minds. I made mention of these sights before.

5. Let us study and learn the art of deriving life and influences from Jesus Christ, by acting in a constant and believing dependence on him, as our fountain of life and head of influences, John x. 10.

6. Let us watch over our hearts and frames with much holy suspicion and jealousy, lest Satan, the world, or our lusts, should rob us of the spiritual treasure we have got. And especially, let us watch against the first declining of the heart, and beginnings of deadness, and presently cry to the Lord for help and quickening.

7. Let us be much in secret prayer, pleading with God for the constant supplies of his Spirit, which is the fire that can only maintain warmness and liveliness of frame in our souls, against all the cold blasts of the devil and the world.

8. Let us delight in the company and converse of lively Christians; for one live coal makes another to burn, Heb. x. 24.

9. Let us delight in attending sacramental occasions, and be still longing for the returns of this quickening ordinance, and for the Lord's special presence therein.

10. Let us always guard against those things that tend to deaden our hearts, or that may occasion the losing of our frames. And these I mentioned before, when treating on the causes of spiritual deadness.

Concerning Self-Examination after the Sacrament.

Quest. *WHAT is the necessity of self-examination after the Sacrament?*

A. Because our Lord put his disciples to the trial, concerning their faith, after they had been at his table, John xvi 31.

2. This is a necessary mean to bring us to humiliation and repentance, for the defects and short-comings that have attended our communicating.

3. It is needful to keep people from deceiving themselves, by thinking that they have true grace, and are in a happy state, while in the mean time they are poor, wretched, and miserable.

4. Without it we cannot be thankful to God for the benefits we received in this ordinance; seeing it is by after-reflection that we come to be sensible of the Lord's gracious dealings with us.

5. The neglect of self-examination after the sacrament, is the occasion of many doubts and perplexities, that the Lord's people fall into after this solemn ordinance. Did we carefully remark the workings of our faith and love at the Lord's table, and the tokens of Christ's love we receive there, we might be enabled to resolve many doubts, and repel many temptations, that otherwise will be too hard for us.

Q. *What are these things which we ought to examine ourselves about, after we come from the sacrament?*

A. Concerning two things: 1. How we have dealt with God in this ordinance. 2. How God hath dealt with us. We ought narrowly to examine if we have dealt sincerely and honestly with God in this solemn work; and if God hath dealt graciously and bountifully with us?

Q. *By what marks may we know if we have dealt sincerely and honestly with God, in this solemn ordinance?*

A. By these; 1. If we were meditating upon a crucified Christ at his table, with faith, love, mourning, and thankfulness, sincerely aiming and designing to keep up the remembrance of his matchless love, to shew forth his death till he come again; and were looking only to Christ for acceptance in the duty.

2. If it was our aim, when receiving the elements, believingly to accept of a bleeding Jesus, as our High Priest, Saviour, and Lord, and to apply his blood for answering all the exigencies and necessities of our souls.

3. If we sincerely aimed to transact and seal a covenant with God through Christ, at his table, according as personal covenanting was explained before.

Q. *How may we know if we were sincere in our transacting and covenanting with God?*

A. By these two things: 1. By reviewing the frame that our hearts were in, while we were a-doing it.

2. By considering the disposition of our souls since that time.

Q. *How shall we know if we had the right and gracious frame of heart, while we were transacting with God, which sincere covenanters have?*

A. We may know it by these marks: 1. If we were low and vile in our own eyes, and deeply sensible of our unworthiness to be received into covenant with God, Ezekiel xvi. 62, 63.

2. If we were weary of the burden of sin, and groaning to be delivered from it, Psalm xxxviii. 3. Matt. xi. 28.

3. If we were longing and panting for Christ, as the only suitable help and remedy provided for us by God, without whom we could have no access to God, no peace, no pardon, no grace, no glory.

4. If we found our hearts going out to God in Christ, as our God and portion, making choice of him, as our happiness, chief good, and end; and accepting of Jesus Christ as the only way to God.

5. If we were resigning, and giving up ourselves in all we are, and in all we have, unto God, to be governed, disposed of, and employed according to his pleasure, 2 Cor. viii. 5.

6. If we sincerely renounced our own righteousness, in

the point of justification; and our own strength in sanctification, and the performance of duties; saying, "In the Lord *Christ only* we have righteousness and strength," Isa. xlv. 24.

7. If we be sincerely renouncing and parting with every sin, and saying, with Ephraim, "What have we to do any more with idols?" Hosea xiv. 8.

Q. *How shall we know if the present disposition of our souls be such as sincere covenanters use to have, after their coming from the Lord's table?*

A. Let us try it by these marks: 1. If we can say, our souls have high and exalted thoughts of God, whom we have chosen, and admiring thoughts of Christ the Mediator, as altogether lovely, Isaiah xxv. 1. 1 Peter ii. 7

2. If we be well pleased with the contrivance and design of the covenant; *i. e.* to have our sins pardoned, and our souls justified and saved wholly by the righteousness of our Redeemer, that free grace alone may eternally have the praise, Rev. i. 5. Psalm cxv. 1.

3. If our hearts be melted for sin, at the remembrance of the wounds of Christ, which were represented to us at his table as pierced and opened by our sins; and be fully resolved, through his grace, that we will pierce him no more.

4. If indwelling sin and heart-plagues be a greater burden to us than all the crosses and troubles that we can meet with in this world, and that we are more desirous to be rid of sin, than of any affliction whatsoever.

5. If we are resolved, through divine strength, to be a people zealous of good works, and to obey every commanded duty. John xv. 14. Titus ii. 14.

6. If we are sensible of our own insufficiency and weakness to keep covenant with God, and therefore are brought to renounce all confidence in ourselves, and to say, "In the Lord *only* we have righteousness and strength," Isa. xlv. 24.

7. If we can say, the world and its best things are, in our eyes, as dung and nothing, in comparison of Christ and his righteousness: And that we are more concerned to have an interest secured in him, to have heart-holiness, and the image of Christ drawn in us; and that we desire further degrees of grace, of faith, of love, and brokenness of heart for sin, more than any honours, profits, and pleasures this world can afford: Then surely these are good signs that our hearts have been sincere in covenanting with God.

Q. *Is not their case sad, who, upon examination, may find that their hearts are not right with God, and that they have dealt falsely and hypocritically in this matter, and so have communicated unworthily?*

A. Yes; it is very sad: For, 1. They have been guilty of dissembling with the great God, in pretending to join themselves in covenant with God, while they continue in league with the devil and sin.

2. They have sadly been deceiving themselves in pretending to come and receive the pardon of their sins, while they never repented of them, nor designed to part with them; and so are in hazard of going to the grave with a lie in their right hand.

3. They have been crucifying Christ afresh, and putting him to open shame, and the blood of Christ is crying for vengeance against them.

4. They have been eating and drinking damnation to themselves, "not discerning the Lord's body;" nor receiving him by faith.

Q. *Is there any help for those that are in this sad case; and what is it they should do?*

A. 1. They ought to set their souls a trembling before God, for their condition is very sad and highly dangerous.

2. They should set their souls a wondering that the Lord did not lay his hand upon them, and smite them dead with the bread in their mouth, or cup in their hands, or that he did not send them to hell from the communion-table.

3. They ought to bless God that their case is not hopeless, remediless, like that of the damned, and that yet they are in the land of prayer and repentence, and have an offer of mercy and pardon through the blood of Christ.

4. They should presently go and weep and mourn over a slain Christ, whom they have pierced and crucified by their sins, and particularly by their unworthy communicating.—The advice which Peter gave to Simon Magus (whom he declared to be in the "gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity," after he had received the sacrament of baptism) is very proper for them: "Thy heart is not right in the sight of God; repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee," Acts viii. 21, 22.

5. They ought presently to flee by faith to the blood of Christ, which they have shed; and apply it for pardon and cleansing; seeing nothing can wash them from this guilt, but that very blood which they have spilt; and blessed be God for this efficacious remedy that can cure the deepest wound, and most desperate disease; "for the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," 1 John i. 7.

Q. *Ought we not also to examine and try how God hath dealt with us in this ordinance?*

A. Yes; we are not only to examine and try how we have dealt with God in this solemn ordinance, but also how the Lord hath been pleased to deal with us, that if we be sensible of his bountiful dealing toward us, we may be thankful for it; and if we be not sensible of it, that we may enquire into the cause, and be humbled before God.

Q. *May not some mistake God's dealings with them in this ordinance, and make wrong conclusions thereanent?*

A. Yes; there is no doubt but many mistake and deceive themselves in this matter; some concluding they have got real benefit by this ordinance, when they have got none; others, that they have got no good by it, when really they have; like those mentioned, Prov. xiii. 7.

Q. *Who are those that deceive themselves, thinking they have got benefit by the Lord's supper when they have really got none?*

A. 1. Those who mistake the common flashes of affection, which they may have on this occasion, for spiritual liveliness of soul, and the gracious influences of the Spirit.

2. Those who mistake their seeming joy and delight, which they may feel at this time, for joy in the Holy Ghost.

3. Those who take their delusive and false peace, which they may have in their minds on this occasion, for a true peace of conscience.

4. Those who apprehend their temporary faith, counterfeit love, and their pangs of grief, tears, and resolutions, which they may attain to, at such a time, to be true grace, and certain evidences of a gracious work of the Spirit; when yet they are no more than what hypocrites may arrive to, without the aid of special grace.

Q. *How shall we distinguish the gracious liveliness of believers, from the common flashes which hypocrites may have, at sacraments?*

A. By these characters: 1. True liveliness of soul arises from a gracious and renewed heart, influenced by the Spirit of God; but these common flashes may be where there is no

Concerning Self-Examination after the Sacrament.

gracious change in the heart at all, being occasioned only by outward things, such as the revelation of the great things done by Christ for lost sinners, the patheticknees or fervency of a minister, the lively representation of Christ's sufferings, the example of others, or the like.

2. Gracious liveliness humbles the soul, and inclines it to give all the glory to God: but common flashes do cherish pride, puff up the man to a conceit of himself, and to rest upon his attainments.

3. Gracious influences of the Spirit leave some solid and lasting impressions upon the soul, and make a man tender and conscientious in his after walk: But common flashes are soon gone, leave no abiding impressions, and produce no gracious effects in the heart or life; but the man that hath them, turns as carnal and careless, hardened and profane, as as formerly, Psalm lxxviii. 34, 37. 2 Peter ii. 22.

Q. *How shall we distinguish betwixt the joy of believers, and that which hypocrites may have at communion occasions?*

A. They differ in these things: 1. In respect of their antecedents; true joy follows after true sorrow and heart-brokenness for sin; this hypocrites know nothing of, but believers do, Psalm cxxvi. 5. Mat. v. 4.

2. In respect of their foundation: true joy is founded upon the promises, and the Mediator of the covenant, and springs from a gracious discovery of redeeming love, and our interest therein. But the hypocrite's joys are built on a false and slippery foundation. Mat. xiii. 20, 21. Phil. iii. 3. Rom. v. 11.

3. They differ, in respect of the matter of them; hypocrite's joys are only terminated upon the external part of duties and ordinances; but the believer's joy is upon the account of God's presence in them. The hypocrite rejoiceth not in Christ's ways and ordinances, as they are means for enjoying communion with him, but only as they satisfy conscience, and get them the applause of men.

4. They differ in their fruits and effects: 1. True joy abaseth, but the hypocrite's joy puffs up the heart. 2. True joy makes the believer's heart burn in love to Christ, and to have a very high esteem of him; but the hypocrite's joy hath no such effect. 3. The spirit of sanctification, and endeavours after holiness, do always attend joy in the Holy Ghost; but, notwithstanding of the hypocrite' joys, the heart is still carnal, and the life unholy, Rom. xiv. 17. 4. Spiritual joy doth encourage and strengthen the soul for duty, particularly for attending ordinances, bearing afflictions, and resisting temptations, Neh. viii. 10. Isaiah xi. ult. But the hypocrite's joy produceth no such fruits.

Q. *How shall we distinguish betwixt a false and delusive peace, which some may have after a sacrament, from a true peace of conscience?*

A. They differ mainly in two respects: 1. In respect of their antecedents and causes. 2. In respect of their consequents and effects.

Q. *How do they differ in respect of their antecedents and causes?*

A. I. A false peace of conscience, which hypocrites have, doth ordinarily flow from these springs: 1. From the flattery and deceitfulness of our own hearts, that are bent to speak peace to us, when there is no peace from God. 2. From the delusions and suggestions of Satan; sometimes he keeps the house as a strong man armed, and so all is at peace: at other times he is fain to make use of his cunning artifices for that end; he flatters the sinner, blinds the mind, dazzles the eye with false appearances, and sometimes ceaseth from tempting, and so he goes out when he is not casten out, Mat. xii. 43, 44. 3. This false peace proceeds from a man's mistaking of his soul's state and condition, thinking himself something when he is nothing; apprehending conviction to be conversion, legal sorrow to be repentance unto life, common flashes and stirrings in the affections to be the special influences of the Spirit. 4. From too high an opinion of our duties and performances, as if these were sufficient to satisfy God's justice, and recommend us to him. 5. From outward favourable providences, and worldly prosperity, as if these things were a certain sign of God's special love.—But,

II. True peace of conscience, which is wrought by the Spirit of God in the believer, doth spring from other causes and antecedents; such as these:

1. From a true faith in Jesus Christ, our peace-maker Rom. xv. 13.

2. From a true love to God and his law, Psalm cxix 165.

3. From a tender and conscientious walk, Gal. vi. 16.

4. From a view of our covenant-relation to God, and gracious nearness to, and communion with him in duty, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. 1 Sam. i. 18.

5. Solid peace of conscience commonly follows upon an inward soul conflict, and deep humiliation and trouble for sin, Psalm cxlvii. 3. Isaiah lvii. 15. Isaiah lxi. 3.

6. It ordinarily follows upon fervent wrestling with God by prayer, and upon the diligent use of all the other means and ordinances of God's appointment, 1 Sam. i. 18. 2 Thes iii. 16.

Q. *How doth a true and false peace of conscience differ, in respect of their consequents and effects?*

A. I. A false peace hath ordinarily such things attending or following upon it, as these:

1. It doth not incline the soul to be low in its own eyes, and to exalt Christ and free grace; but rather to exalt self, and lean upon duties and attainments.

2. It doth not determine the heart to hate sin, and love duty, or influence a man to a holy walk and conversation; but rather to separate what God hath joined together, viz. holiness and peace, Deut. xxix. 19.

3. A false peace cannot support a man when outward comforts are withdrawn; but leaves him comfortless in the time of affliction.

4. It makes a man unwilling to be searched and tried by the light of God's word, John iii. 20. But,

II. A true peace of conscience hath such consequents and fruits as these:

1. It makes the man to have an high esteem of Jesus Christ, who is our peace; and to count all things as loss and dung beside him.

2. It makes a man content with that lot and condition in the world which the Lord thinks fit to carve out for him.

3. It composes and chears the heart in time of the greatest dangers and difficulties, and when all worldly comforts do fail, Heb. iii. 17. John xvi. 33. Psalm iv. 7, 8.

4. It makes a man active for God's glory, and the interest of religion, Psalm li. 12, 13.

5. The man that hath it doth not shun the light, but is willing to be tried by it, Psalm cxxxix. 23.

6. He guards against the temptations of Satan, the rising of corruption, the out-breakings of sin, and every thing that tends to disturb his peace.

Q. *How may we know that the faith whereby we were re-*

ceiving and apprehending Christ in the sacrament was a true and saving faith, and not a temporary faith which hypocrites may have?

A. By taking a view of the different properties and effects of a temporary and saving faith.

I. As for a temporary faith, it hath these following: 1. It only gives a seeming consent to Christ, like the stony-ground hearers, and almost persuades them to be Christians; but doth not prevail with them cordially to accept of Christ, both as a Saviour and Lord.

2. It doth not make them part wholly with their own righteousness for Christ's righteousness, but still they continue upon their legal foundation, and rest upon their own doings.

3. It never brings a man the length to resign himself and his most valuable interests and concerns in the world, to Jesus Christ, to be disposed of by him as he thinks fit: but still some Agag or other must be reserved.

4. It never brings a man to apprehend Christ, as matchless and altogether lovely, and to be willing to suffer the loss of all things for him: but still there is something the hypocrite prefers unto Christ. But,

II. A true faith determines the soul to embrace Christ wholly in all his offices; it makes a man part entirely with his own righteousness, and cry, "None but Christ." It makes him give up himself wholly to Christ, to esteem Christ as exceeding precious, to study to raise his honour, advance his interest, and oppose his enemies, and to do every thing that is well-pleasing in his sight.

Q. *How shall we know if the love we were expressing to Christ at his table be true and sincere, and not a counterfeit love, such as hypocrites may have?*

A. 1. The hypocrite's love is selfish; he loves Christ because he apprehends that Christ loved him, laid down his life for him, and hath purchased great happiness to him; but he doth not love him for his own intrinsic beauty and excellency. Again, the hypocrite's love is not superlative; he loves him not above all things in the world, his love doth not prompt him to all that Christ commands, and to undertake these duties that are most difficult and spiritual: it doth not make him thirst for nearness to him in ordinances, and long to see him and dwell with him in glory. But,

2. True love to Christ makes the believer do all these; it makes him desirous of his presence, zealous for his interests, concerned for his people, and afraid to displease him. It makes the believer have common friends and common enemies with Christ, love what he loves, and hate what he hates; rejoice when he is glorified, and grieve when he is dishonoured. It makes him desire conformity to him, and love holiness, because it is his image; and also to long to be with him above, where he shall be like him, and see him as he is.

Q. *How shall we know if these pangs of grief and tears, which some attain to in this ordinance, be hypocritical sorrow, or repentance unto life?*

A. There is no doubt but hypocrites, and those whose hearts were never truly broken for sin, may shed tears, and have some pangs of sorrow at such an occasion; but then, it is certain their sorrow doth not proceed from an internal principle, or a special discovery of the evil and hateful nature of sin; but only from external motives and considerations, such as these—the consideration of the solemnity of this ordinance; the great danger of unworthy partaking; the hearing of a pathetic sermon, or a fervent representation of Christ's sufferings; the example of others weeping beside them; a view of the sad effects of sin, as it exposes the sinner to infinite wrath, and shuts out from eternal happiness. These things, I say, may occasion some pangs of sorrow, and tears in natural men, at a sacrament, and especially in those who are endued with something of a natural compassion and sympathy, which disposes them to relent and weep at the hearing of any tragical story, or beholding any pitiful spectacle. All this may be without any special operation of the Spirit of God, or real change on the heart; the hearts of natural men are like the stones, which are wet by the rain, but not softened. But,

2. That repentance, which is true and saving, makes the soul to mourn for sin, upon the account of its intrinsic evil; because it highly dishonours God, abuses the goodness of a Father, wounds a loving Redeemer, grieves the Spirit of grace, defiles the precious soul, defaces the image of God, and debars from communion with him. It makes the soul to mourn for heart-sins, as well as outward sins, and long earnestly for more heart purity, and a total deliverance from sin.

Q. *How shall we distinguish these purposes and resolutions which hypocrites may put on at a sacrament, to walk religiously and circumspectly, from the sincere resolution of true believers?*

A. 1. Hypocrites' purposes and resolutions are not cordial and deliberate, but hastily taken on without consideration; they are not made in faith, and with self-denial and dependence on Christ, but taken on in their own strength. Their resolutions are not sincere and universal against all known sin, and for all known duty, but only against some particular sins, and for some particular duties. They proceed not from a principle of heart love to God and holiness; but only from legal terrors and apprehensions of wrath.—They are not continuing, for they are only taken on in a fit, and soon evanish. But,

2. Believers' resolutions are cordial and deliberate, humble and self-denied, sincere and universal, and make abiding impressions on the soul. They proceed from heart love to God, a deep conviction of the evil and danger of sin, and a gracious discovery of the beauty and excellency of holiness. They are made in an humble sense of their own weakness, wholly distrusting their own power, and relying entirely upon the grace and strength of Christ their surety, according as it is promised to them in the covenant of grace, Psalm lxxi. 16.

Q. *Are there not some sincere souls who mistake the Lord's dealing with them, and think they have got no benefit by the sacrament, when they really have?*

A. Yes; for there is a difference betwixt real communion with Christ, and sensible communion with him: the two disciples going to Emmaus had the first, but wanted the latter; they conversed with Christ in the way, but knew him not. So God's people may sometimes get special tokens of his bounty at the sacrament, when they are not sensible of it; and many have ground to say, as Jacob did of Bethel, "Surely God was in this place, and I knew it not," Gen. xxviii. 16.

Q. *What may be the reasons of their mistake?*

A. 1. Some may think they have got no good at the sacrament, because they have not got that which they particularly expected and looked for, though perhaps God hath given them something in lieu of it, that is as necessary and fit for them.

2. Some may reckon they have got no good, because they have not got so much as others, or, perhaps, as they themselves have felt at former occasions: They too much overlook and undervalue the crumb God hath given them, because of its smallness; though surely the least token of his favour should be highly prized and thankfully received, as being far greater than they deserve.

3. Some may think they have got no good because they did not sensibly perceive it when they were at the Lord's table, or immediately thereafter: but we must know, that a sovereign and wise God will not be limited, but take his own time and way, to make his people sensible of these things that are freely given them at his table.

Q. *What is the reason that so many of the Lord's people complain they get little or no benefit by this solemn ordinance; that they come expecting to meet with Christ at his table, but alas, they return disappointed?*

A. 1. Sometimes the Lord may hide himself from his people, for his own holy and wise ends; that he may try them how they will behave in his absence; that he may humble them under a sense of their own weakness; and that he may excite them to greater earnestness and fervency in seeking after him. But,

2. The ordinary cause of God's dealing so with any, is for something in themselves: Either, 1. They have not been at due pains in preparing themselves, before they came to this ordinance. Or, 2. They have trusted too much to the preparation and pains they were at, expecting that this would make them acceptable to God, and merit something at his hand. Or, 3. Their appetites were not sharpened enough for this feast, they had not such a sense of wants and plagues as was needful. 4. It may be they rested more upon the ordinance itself, or the ministers that dispensed it, than upon the Author and Institutor of it. 5. Perhaps there was some leaven in the house, or Achan in the camp, I mean, some secret lust or idol, which was unhumbled for, or uncast out of the heart, for which God may be chastising them. 6. It may be, they have not readily hearkened to Christ's knocks, nor opened the door presently when he came to it, for which Christ is some times provoked to depart, as Cant. v. 2, 3, 6.

Q. *What course ought these to take, who complain they find no benefit in this ordinance?*

A. 1. They ought always to justify Christ in his dealings, and never blame him, who is certainly a gracious and bountiful Saviour, and delights in mercy.

2. They should only blame themselves for it, and diligently search for the cause of their disappointment in themselves, and cry with Job, "Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me, make me to know my transgression and my sin."

3. When the sin is found out, they should humble themselves for it, mourn over it before the Lord, and flee to the blood of Christ for pardon.

4. They should long for another communion occasion, prepare for it more diligently and self-deniedly, watch more carefully over their hearts, and seek Christ more earnestly than before; resolving still to look to him, wait for him, and ly at his feet; pleading his power, mercy, and faithfulness, to the very last.

Q. *How may we know if the Lord hath dealt bountifully with us in this ordinance?*

A. The Lord deals bountifully with his people in this ordinance, when he visits them with his gracious presence, draws nigh to them by his Spirit's operations, and vouchsafes to hold communion with them.

Q. *Are not God's people always near God, and he to them, and doth not his Spirit still dwell in them?* Psalm xxxiv. 18 and cxlviii. 13. John xiv. 16, 17. *How then doth God draw nigh to them with his gracious presence and Spirit in the sacrament?*

A. 1. We must distinguish betwixt a state of nearness and acts of nearness. Believers, by conversion and faith in Christ, are brought into a state of nearness to God, in so far as they are brought into favour and friendship with God, get the image of God drawn upon their souls, and the Spirit of God to dwell in their hearts. But it is in worship that believers attain to acts of nearness and communion with God.

2. There are some special acts of nearness to God in worship, that believers only attain to at some times: For God is nearer to them in some duties than others; as he allows them more of the evidences of his favour, and of the influences of his Spirit, at one time than another.

3. Though God be always near to his people, in respect of his Spirit's inhabitation; yet not always in respect of his sensible operation. Though Christ doth still dwell in the heart by his Spirit, yet he doth not always act alike in the soul, but only according to his good pleasure.

4. God is always near to his people by those operations and influences of his Spirit, which are necessary for preserving the being of grace in them; but not always near by those influences which actuate and enliven grace, and give them suitable consolations.

Q. *How is it that God draws nigh to his people by his gracious presence, and holds communion with them by the special operations of his Spirit?*

A. He draws nigh and communicates himself to his people, by his spiritual influences: 1. Of light. 2. Of life. 3. Of strength. 4. Of comfort.

Q. *How is it that he draws nigh to his people with his influences of light, in this ordinance?*

A. By giving them gracious and satisfying discoveries of God, and Christ, and spiritual objects: As,

I. When he gives them such a view of God's glory, in his attributes and perfections, as make deep impressions on their hearts; as, 1. When he lets them see the greatness and majesty of God, so as to fill them with holy fear and reverence of God, and humble them under a sense of their own nothingness before him. 2. When he shews them the infinite holiness and purity of God, so as to humble them under a sense of their own vileness and sinfulness in his sight, and make them cry with Isaiah, "Wo is me, I am undone, I am unclean," &c. Isaiah vi. 5. 3. When he makes his goodness and mercy pass before them, proclaiming his name in their hearing, "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness," &c. Exodus xxxiv. 6, 7. So as to set them a-wondering at God's free grace and goodness in pitying wretched rebel-sinners, and finding out a way for their recovery.

II. When he discovers to us the glorious divine attributes shining forth in a crucified Saviour: As, 1. When he lets us see the infinite justice and mercy of God illustriously displayed, yea, meeting together, and sweetly reconciled in the death and sufferings of Jesus Christ.

2. When he lets us see the divine power and strength treasured up in a crucified Jesus; and that he is able to draw our dead souls out of the grave, though our sins were as mountains of lead to hold them down. That he is able to

kill our lusts, though every one of them were like Goliah for strength. That he is able to cleanse our souls, though every one of our sins were red as crimson. That he is able to bear us up, bring us through, and keep us by his power through faith unto salvation, though of ourselves we be weak and unstable as water.

3. When he lets us see the infinite goodness and mercy of God laid up in a crucified Christ, that he is not only able, but most willing, compassionate, and ready to save and pity helpless sinners; so as our hearts are melted by the discovery, and made to say, we'll never again have uncharitable thoughts of Christ, we'll never say, he is cruel or hard-hearted to a perishing sinner; for we see he is all made up of bowels and tender mercies.

4. When he lets us see all the divine fulness dwelling in a crucified Redeemer. 1. That there is a fulness of grace in our Mediator, answerable to all our soul's wants and miseries; a fulness of light for our darkness; a fulness of life for our deadness; a fulness of strength for our weakness; and a fulness of merit for our guiltiness. 2. That there is in him a fulness and suitableness of offices; being constitute of God to be a prophet, to cure our ignorance; a priest, to atone for our guilt; and a king to rescue us from the bondage of our enemies. 3. That there is in him a fulness and suitableness of relations; that he stands in the relation of a physician, to cure our diseases; of an advocate, to plead for our acceptance with God; of a surety, to clear our old compts and arrears; of a shepherd, to seek the lost straying sheep; of a brother and friend, to agent our cause with God, when we are incapable to act for ourselves.

III. When he lets the soul see that Jesus Christ is not only a great and glorious Saviour in himself, but that he is our Saviour; when he clears up to us the evidences of our interest in him; so that we are in case to say with Job, "I know my Redeemer liveth;" and with Paul, "I know in whom I have believed."

IV. When he lets us see the intrinsic evil and vileness that is in sin, and gives us such a discovery of it, in the glass of Christ's sufferings, as makes us to see its monstrous deformity, and God-provoking nature; and also to loath ourselves, because of our abominations.

V. When he lets us see such a beauty in holiness, as it is the image of God, and that which makes us to resemble him, as causeth our souls to thirst for further degrees of it.

VI. When he gives us a heart-engaging view of the fulness, suitableness, freeness, sureness, order, and excellency of the new covenant and its promises; that it is Christ's blessed testament and latter-will to his people, containing and bequeathing many rich and precious legacies to them; all which are ratified and sealed to them in the Lord's supper.

VII. When he gives us a convincing view of the emptiness of the world, and the insufficiency of all creatures to help a sinner, or satisfy the desires of an immortal soul; so that we are fain to betake ourselves to Christ as our all-sufficient help, and cry, "None but Christ."

VIII. When he gives a soul-ravishing discovery of the things that are unseen in the other world, the glory of heaven, and the inexpressible happiness of the saints that dwell there; so as to make us long for the finishing of our pilgrimage, that we may depart and be with Christ.

These, and such like discoveries, doth the Lord oftentimes make by his Spirit to his people, in this ordinance; by opening their understandings to see divine things in another way than ever they saw before.

Q. *How is it that the Lord draws nigh and communicates himself to his people in the sacrament, by the influences of life?*

A. By sending his quickening Spirit to put life in their graces, and to draw them forth to a lively exercise; particularly, 1. When he actuates their faith and enables them to go out to Christ, lay the burden of their sins upon him, and lean wholly to him for pardon and salvation.

2. When he quickens repentance, and makes the heart to melt into tears and godly sorrow for sin.

3. When he kindles love in the heart, and makes it to burn, while he talks with them, and opens to them the scriptures.

4. When he draws out the desires and pantings of their souls towards Christ, and makes them hunger and thirst for God, and follow hard after him.

5. When he quickens the spirit of prayer in them, and makes them more fervent and lively in pouring out their hearts to God, and causes them to take delight in their duty. Thus the Lord draws nigh to his people in the sacrament, by enlivening their souls in the exercise of grace; but seeing I have treated of this liveliness more particularly before, and given marks for the trial of it, I shall add no more upon this head.

Q. *How is it that the Lord draws nigh and communicates himself to his people in this ordinance, by his influences of strength?*

A. He doth it by the operations of his Spirit in their souls, these several ways:

1. When he seasonably steps in, and supports their weak faith, staggering hope, and fainting hearts, when ready to sink with fears and discouragements, Isaiah xli. 10.

2. When he encourages them to undertake, and enables them to perform, the hardest and most difficult duties, not only to attend all public ordinances; but even to make conscience of secret prayer, mortification, mourning over sin, &c. Isaiah xl. 24.

3. When he enables them, not only to perform duty, but even to do it with delight, and activity, counting it their meat and drink to do God's will, and reckoning one day in his courts worth a thousand elsewhere.

4. He strengthens his people at the sacrament, by enabling them to conquer and subdue their strong lusts and corruptions, that formerly were too hard for them.

5. He doth it by enabling them to resist all temptations, and get the victory over Satan, Luke xxii. 31.

6. By heartening them to patient bearing of the cross, and all these afflictions and burdens that the Lord thinks fit to lay upon them, Psalm cxxxviii. 3.

Q. *How is it that the Lord draws nigh to his people in the sacrament, by his influences of comfort?*

A. 1. By clearing up the evidences of their graces to them; so that they are made to see that they have true grace wrought in them by the Spirit of God. Before, they questioned if they had any faith; but now they can say, with the poor man in the gospel, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief:" Before, they doubted if they had any love to Christ; but now they are helped to say, with Peter, "Lord, thou that knowest all things, knowest that I love thee."

2. He comforts them, by clearing up to them their interest in the great and precious promises; and in Jesus Christ the author of them, and his glorious purchase; so that they are

enabled to say with the spouse, Cant. ii. 16. "My beloved is mine, and I am his;" and neither sin nor death will dissolve this sweet relation, Rom. viii. 35, 38. and this gives them very strong consolation.

3. He comforts them in the sacrament, by intimating to them the pardon of their sins, and a free discharge of all their debts, graciously whispering by his Spirit into the ear of the soul, such a word as that which Christ spoke to the man sick of the palsy, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee," Mat. ix. 2.

4. He comforts them, by loosing them from their bonds and straitening of spirit, and allowing them free access unto the throne of grace, so as they can pour out their melting hearts in God's bosom, with some confidence of his favour and good will, 2 Cor. iii. 17.

5. He comforts them, by hearing and answering their prayer, and graciously bestowing upon them their spiritual mercies, which they have been many a-day seeking and wrestling for, Deut. iv. 7.

6. He sometimes gives them the assurance of his love and favour, by the witnessings of his Spirit concurring with the reasonings of their spirits, whereby they are enabled clearly to discern and know the things freely given to them of God, and conclude, that they are in covenant with God, and passed from death to life, 1 Cor. ii. 13. Rom viii. 16.

7. He comforts them, by letting out upon their souls the sensible breathings and influences of his Spirit, that are like the dew to the withered grass, the rain to the dry ground, or the south wind to the spices. And those do enlarge their hearts, put an edge upon their faith and love, and make them chearful in every duty, Psalm lxxii. 6. Hosea xiv. 5. Cant. iv. 16. Psalm cxix. 32.

8. He sometimes comforts them, by bringing them into his banqueting-house, and setting them under the banner of his love. He sheds abroad his love in their hearts, and gives them peace and joy in believing. He scatters their clouds, dissolves their doubts, removes their fears, and makes them to hear the voice of joy and gladness. Conscience acquits them, as sincere in their faith and love. God smiles on them, and kisses them with the kisses of his mouth; *i. e.* he enables them to apply the sweet comforts of his promises, which are the refreshing words of his mouth, sweeter to them than honey from the honey-comb. Thus the Lord sometimes makes his people joyful in the house of prayer, satisfies them as with marrow and fatness, gives them the peace that passeth understanding, and fills them with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; whereby they are enabled to delight and rejoice in God, as their covenanted God. He brings them out of the miry clay, sets their feet upon a rock, establishes their goings, and puts a new song in their mouth, "even praises to our God," Psalm xl. 1, 3. Cant. ii. 4. Rom. v. 5. Rom. xv. 13. Psalm li. 8. Cant. i. 2. Psalm lxiii. 5.

Q. *How shall we know that our manifestations, and attainments on sacrament occasions, are real, and not delusions?*

A. 1. Those manifestations which are from God, do commonly carry their own evidence alongst with them, that convinces the soul of their reality.

2. They are usually attained after much wrestling, humiliation, and tender walking.

3. They are accompanied with great self-loathing and abasement, and bring humbling discoveries of our own emptiness and vileness, Luke v. 8.

4. They excite us to high exalting thoughts of Christ and free-grace, and to approve heartily of Christ in all his offices.

5. They stir up those that have them to holiness and tenderness of walk, and to have a holy jealousy over themselves. But so do not the delusory attainments of hypocrites.

6. Where manifestations are real and gracious, the soul entertains good thoughts of Christ, and gives him its testimony as lovely and matchless, even when he is withdrawn, Cant. x. 6, 10.

Q. *But what shall these serious souls do that cannot lay claim to those high attainments and comforts before-mentioned?*

A. 1. Let them bless God that they have these things necessary for making out a saving interest in Christ; for some of these high things aforementioned are not essential thereunto.

2. Let them beware at any time of razing the foundation, upon the account of their wanting these special blessings and attainments; seeing the promises of life and salvation are not annexed to these, but unto faith followed with holiness.

3. We have even ground, from Hebrews ii. 15. and other texts, to believe that there are some heirs of glory, who have a cloudy passage and a rough sea through their whole voyage to the heavenly Canaan; being all their life-time very subject to fears and darkness: though, indeed, I grant it is God's ordinary way to give his people some lucid intervals and calm breezes now and then, for their support and through-bearing.

Q. *May not some poor souls have real communion with Christ, and reap spiritual benefit by this solemn ordinance, who have not such comforts and sensible manifestations from God, as before-mentioned?*

A. No doubt they may; for when Christ gives his people a hearty grief and sorrow for sin, it is as sure an evidence of his gracious presence, and his holding communion with them, as when their souls are affectionately melted into love, praise, and joy. There is communion with Christ, even in a reproof, as is evident in the case of Peter, when he denied his Master; Christ gave Peter then a look, and it was a heart-piercing look, whereby he was sharply rebuked; and yet it was one of the sweetest and kindest looks that ever Peter met with since his conversion; for it melted his heart, set him a-mourning, and brought him back again to his Redeemer, whom he had so foully deserted. And there, we see, was sweet communion with Christ, even in sharp rebukes; so that the nature of communion with Christ is by many very much mistaken, when they confine it only to sensible manifestations of God's love, and the smiles of his face. For there may be real communion with Christ, and great soul advantage, reaped by the Lord's supper, where these are not enjoyed.

As for instance, 1. When we find our repentance and grief for sin increased; when we see more of sin's deformity and bitterness; abhor it, and resolve against it more, as Christ's enemy; and are more afraid of grieving or piercing him by it, than formerly.

2. When we have an higher esteem of Christ and his glorious undertaking, and find our hearts better pleased with the tenor of the covenant, and contrivance of redemption through Christ, than formerly.

3. When we are strengthened to pray better, cry more fervently to God, and be more anxious for his presence in duty, than formerly.

4. When we find stronger desires after heart-holiness, and for grace to make us capable to serve Christ, and advance his glory and interest in any station.

5. When our hearts and consciences are more tender than formerly, so that we dare not now shift any known duty, nor venture on sin, or temptations to it, as before. The company of the wicked, and all other temptations to sin, are now unwelcome to us.

6. When at least we can say, that we have a greater burning of desires towards Christ than before; that we long, thirst, and are wholly restless without him, and even would be content to part with all our best enjoyments in the world for an interest in him: then it is a sign Christ hath been with us in this ordinance, and hath shewed us tokens for good, for which we have cause to be thankful to him.

Q. *What shall we say of those who thought they had something of the shining of God's face upon their soul, when they were at the table; but now they are gone, and their sky is again overcast with clouds: they apprehended their hearts were melted, and their affections thawed, and their souls were in a good frame, but now they are dead again, as before?*

A. 1. Let such examine their attainments, whether they be temporary flashes, or seeming goodness of hypocrites, by the marks and differences which I have laid down before for that end.

2. Let them not conclude that all they tasted or felt at the Lord's table was delusion, because their case is so soon altered; for it is no new thing for the people of God to complain of a sudden change in their prosperous condition, and to be troubled with heart-deadness and drowsiness, and with Christ's withdrawing soon on the back of sweet communion with him, Psalm xxx. 6, 7. Cant. ii. 17, 18. compared with Cant. ii. 1. Matthew xxvi. 26, 30, 35. compared with chap. v. 40, 43, 45.

3. They ought to reflect upon their own carriage under Christ's smiles, and see what ground they have given him to withdraw. It may be, 1. They were not thankful when they had his presence. Or, 2. Perhaps they were vain or proud of it. Or, 3. They were not watchful against their spiritual enemies. Or, 4. They trusted too much to themselves, and did not depend upon Christ for preserving their gracious frame of heart.

Q. *What course ought those serious souls to take, who have so soon lost their gracious frame and attainments?*

A. 1. Let them beware of questioning all the former proofs of God's favour, or blaming Christ now for unkindness in tarrying so short while with them; but let them blame their own unwatchful and untender carriage while he was pleased to visit them with his presence.

2. Let them go in secret, and be deeply humbled under a sense of their miscarriage and mismanagement, and look to the blood of sprinkling for pardon.

3. Let them try to close afresh with Christ on the gospel offers, and seal the covenant of new; and if they subscribed it before with a trembling hand, and so indistinctly and darkly that they cannot read their name, let them now subscribe it over again, and study to do it in more distinct and legible characters.

Q. *What is incumbent upon those who are still sensible of God's gracious presence, and bountiful dealing towards them, at the sacrament?*

A. 1. They should wonder that he condescends so far to such vile unworthy creatures, 2 Sam. vii. 18.

2. They should be thankful, and rejoice in him: Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King, Psalm cxlix. 4.

3. Let them entertain their Redeemer kindly, and hold him in the galleries by a holy importunity, and carefully guard against every thing that may stir him up, or awake him, till he please, Cant. ii. 7.

4. They ought to set up their pillar of remembrance; record what they have seen and met with at this ordinance, take all about them to witness that it is Christ, and resolve to keep it always on record, and make use of it against the time when cursed unbelief, or a challenging devil will be ready to say, "Where is thy God?" Psalm xliii. 3, 4, 6.

5. They ought to walk very tenderly and watchfully, fearing lest they should lose what they have got; like a traveller that hath much money or many jewels about him, who is apt to suspect every one he meets with for a thief. We have many envious enemies, who have a narrow eye upon us at this market of grace, and seek to rob us of the precious treasure we get there, Luke xxii. 31.

6. They ought to pity and pray for others that have not won their length, and by prayer send portions to those for whom nothing is provided.

7. Let them commit their hearts and frames to Christ's keeping, that he may preserve any good thing to them they have got, and be surety for them and it, and make it forthcoming to them against the time of need, 1 Chron. xxix. 18. Psalm cxix. 122. 1 Timothy i. 12.

8. Let them carefully notice the first step or least degree of God's withdrawing from them, and endeavour to hold him, and stop his way, by throwing themselves at his feet, and humbly beseeching him to stay with them, notwithstanding of many grounds of provocation.

Q. *But what shall those poor believers do, who, instead of praising God for his bountiful dealing at this ordinance, are put to sigh and mourn under darkness and desertion?*

A. 1. They should consider that this case is not unusual for the best of saints; Job, David, Asaph, Heman, nay Christ himself, have complained of desertion.

2. They should make no harsh construction of God's dealing with them, but leave their complaints upon themselves, and justify God in all he doth.

3. They should be deeply humbled under the loss of God's gracious presence, be grieved for these things that have sinned him away, sit as a widow in his absence, and refuse all other comforters till he return, Lam. i. 16.

4. They should be searching diligently for the Achan in the camp, the sin for which God is contending with them, Psalm lxxvii. 6. Job x. 2.

5. They should learn to live by faith, and trust in a withdrawing God; believe him, think and speak well of him when he frowns, as well as when he smiles, Job xiii. 15.

Q. *Is not desertion, or the withdrawing of God's presence from a poor soul, a very sad and melancholy case?*

A. Certainly it is, for 1. The soul under desertion is deprived of the light of God's countenance, which is the choicest blessing in the world, Psalm iv. 6.

2. The consequents of God's withdrawing are very heavy and grievous to believers; because ordinarily there follow upon it these evils:

1. Great darkness and confusion upon the Spirit, Lam. iii. 2.

2. Great hardness and impenitency upon the heart, Isa. xliii. 17.

3. Much deadness and stupidity upon the affections.

4. Loss of spiritual appetite and desires.

5. Unspiritedness and disability for duty, Psalm xl. 12. Psalm lxxxviii. 4.

6. A general barrenness upon the soul, and witheredness of the graces, John xvi. 6.

7. Liableness so all sorts of dangers and enemies, Numbers xiv. 9.

8. Anxiety of mind for former unkindness and unthankfulness to God, Psalm lxxvii. 3.

9. Unwelcome thoughts of death and judgment.

10. A revived sense of wrath, and of the law's curses and threatenings.

11. Melancholy apprehensions of God's judgments to pursue them, while they are in time.

12. Fears of utter rejection, and eternal banishment from God's presence, Psalm lxxvii. 9, 10. Psalm cxix. 8.

Q. *What are the usual causes of God's withdrawing from his people?*

A. 1. Their scandalous outbreakings, Isaiah i. 23, 15.

2. Their wearying of duty, Isaiah xliii. 22.

3. Their not entertaining Christ's calls, and his Spirit's motions, Cant. v. 2, 3, 6.

4. Their earthly-mindedness, and preferring of time's things to precious Christ, Isaiah lvii. 17. Mat. viii. 28.

5. Their sloth and formality in duty, Isaiah lxiv. 7.

6. Their want of a due sense of their own sins, and the sins of the land where they live, Hos. v. 15.

7. Their making a saviour of their duties, and putting these in Christ's room.

8. Miscarriages under, or after signal enjoyments and manifestations, 1 Kings ii. 9.

9. Their sins under, or after great afflictions, Isa. lvii. 27.

Q. *What shall we do to recover God's gracious presence again when we have lost it?*

A. 1. Let us be sensible that we have sinned him away.

2. Let us humbly enquire into the cause of his departure.

3. Let us be restless and uneasy in our minds till he return.

4. Let us conscientiously attend all ordinances, and use all means for recovering God's presence.

5. Let us be still lamenting after the Lord, and bewailing the loss we sustain for want of him.

6. Let us both be mourning for, and striving to mortify these sins and idols that have taken our Lord away from us.

7. Let us still continue in fervent prayer, and wrestle with God for his gracious return; and let us fill our mouths with arguments to plead with him for it, Psalm xxv. 16, 17. Job xxii. 3, 4.

Q. *What are those proper arguments, which we are to plead in prayer for the return of God's gracious presence?*

A. 1. We ought to plead the low and helpless case we are in without it, Psalm lxxix. 8.

2. We should plead the extreme need we stand in of it.

3. Plead the greatness and tenderness of God's mercy, and Christ's bowels of compassion, Mat. xv. 22.

4. Plead how easy it is for him to answer all our complaints, and redress all our grievances, Psal. lxxx. 7.

5. Plead the freeness of his grace.

6. The greatness of his power.

7. The glory of his name, Psalm lxxix. 8.

8. Let us plead former experiences of his kindness, Psalm lxxxvi. 3, 5, 13.

9. Let us much plead our covenant relation to God, and our interest in him. The church and people of God do often make use of this argument with God, "We are thine, a people that belong to thee," Isaiah lxiii. 19. Psalm cxix. 94. Psalm lxxix. 8. And this argument hath often prevailed with God to return to his people, Isaiah lxiii. 8. Exodus xxxii. 11, 12, 13, 14.

Q. *But what shall these do, who cannot plead this argument, in regard they fear they are not in a covenant with God, and so cannot say to him, We are thine?*

A. 1. Though believers under desertion are often tempted to renounce and quit claim to any covenant-relation to God, yet we should not hearken to that temptation, nor be willing to let go the covenant we have taken hold of. But seeing we have fled to the horns of the altar for safety, we should abide by them; and even when by temptations we are beat off from one horn, we should strive to hold fast by another. And, therefore, when we cannot say to God, *We are thine* by his acceptance, yet we should say, *We are thine* by our own resignation. As we have formerly given up ourselves to God, so we resolve to abide by that deed: we will not be the devil's, nor the world's, but we will be the Lord's. And when we are thus helped resolutely to cast ourselves upon him, our souls may revive, and faith gather strength in prayer; for, to be sure, God is more ready to covenant with us than we with him; and more willing to be ours, than we are to be his.

2. Let us plead a title to God by creation, when we cannot do it by redemption; so doth the church under desertion, Isaiah lxiv. 7, 8, 9. "O Lord, thou art our Father, we are the clay, and thou our Potter, and we are all the work of thine hand. Be not wroth very sore," &c. If we can do no more, let us thus plead an interest in him by creation, and wait his leisure; for if we duly make use of this one talent, it will increase.

Q. *What shall be said to those disconsolate souls, who are complaining that it is not with them now as in the days of old, and in months past, when the candle of the Lord shined on their heads; once they went to communions with great satisfaction, and returned with the high praises of God in their mouths, but now God hath altered the course of his dealing with them: He hides his face, and sacrament days are melancholy occasions to them. They call to mind former experiences, but alas, they find that doth but increase their trouble,* Psalm lxxvii. 3.

A. 1. Let all such consider, that God takes different ways of dealing with his people. He useth to treat young beginners otherwise than those who have made some progress in religion: He knows young beginners are raw and tender, and unable to bide a storm: and therefore it is said, "He carries his lambs in his bosom." We use to hire children to learn their lesson, when they go first to school; but afterwards we correct them, and make them learn with a frown.

2. We ought to remember that Christ will have his people to live and walk by faith, and not by sense, to follow him in dark nights, and through rough paths, and even when he seems to flee from them. It would be no trial to our faith and love, to follow Christ in the roughest ways, had we still a view of the crown, and of Christ's smiling face: but Christ will have his disciples taught to follow him without sensible encouragements. We see these that run a race, get a sight of the silver cup or prize, when they set forth; but perhaps never see it again till they get it in their hand,

and yet they run on: So a traveller may see the city he is going to, when he is several miles off, and yet it may be out of his sight when he is within half a mile of it; but he believes it is not far off, and therefore still goes on.

3. Let such disconsolate souls strive to keep up a warm love to Christ, and to commend him highly, even in his absence, as did the spouse, Cant. v. 6. There we see she had sought Christ, but could not find him; she called him, but he gave no answer; and she is rudely handled in his absence by the watchmen, and upbraided by the daughters of Jerusalem: Yet, notwithstanding of all these discouragements, she breaks out in the most lofty commendation of her beloved and his matchless excellencies, verse 10. to the close; and concludes all with this, " He is altogether lovely."

4. However melancholy the present case of such may be, yet they should study to sing praises to God, in a thankful remembrance of the kindness he hath shewed to them in former times. It is a provoking carriage in many believers, that when any new cloud comes, or doubt arises, they prove as froward and unthankful to Christ, as if he had never done any thing for them at all. It would certainly be both just and generous in believers, to sing praises to their beloved under their darkest clouds.

Q. *But how shall they sing, who think they have cause to weep with Jerusalem,* Lam. i. 16. *For these things I weep, mine eyes run down with water, for the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me?*

A. They should mix their weeping with singing, for tears and praises are not inconsistent, sometimes it rains while the sun shines. Believers are called to " praise God at all times, and in every thing to give thanks, and to rejoice evermore," We see Paul and Silas sang praises to God in a dark prison at mid-night, when their backs were torn with scourges, and their feet fast with stocks, Acts xvi. 25. Hence it is, that believers are called " singing birds," Cant. ii. 12. They would sing in all the seasons and months in the year, even in winter, and in the dead months of affliction and desertion. When it is winter and foul weather, they should sing in remembrance of the fair blinks they have had, and in expectation of the summer-sun at the return of the year; and so rejoice in hope of better times.

2. This course may prove very successful to the removing of our grievances, and altering of our frames. For thus, some exercised souls have sung away their heart plagues and ill frames. By praising, they have conquered their unbelief, distrust, and unworthy thoughts of Christ, as Jehoshaphat did the Ammonites, by sending singers before the army into the field when he was in great distress, 2 Chron. xx. 21, 22. So did David in his dejected and melancholy condition, Psalm xliii. 6, 8, 9, 11. " O my God, my soul is cast down within me, therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar: Yet the Lord will command his loving kindness in the day time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.—I will say unto God my rock, why hast thou forgotten me? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." Where we may observe, how David sings away his discouragement and dejection, partly by reflecting and looking back on what God hath done for him before; and partly by expecting and believing what God would yet do for him. Likewise we see the church in the Lamentations, for as low as she was in distress, under which she was mourning and weeping; yet she hopes and praises in the midst of all, Lam. iii. 17, 18, 24, 25, 31, 32.

Q. *But what shall those do whose case is so dark, and hopes so sunk, that look they back or forward, they can see no light? How shall they sing or praise?*

A. Though they had no other matter of praise, they should try to sing of Christ's wonderful free love, his glorious undertaking and amazing condescension, in leaving his throne in heaven, to dwell with worms on earth, and bear their sins upon the cursed tree. Is there not here sufficient, nay, endless matter of praise, both for angels and men?

Q. *How shall they praise who think they have no interest in that love undertaking?*

A. 1. How many things do we praise that we have no interest in, and are nothing the better of. We praise the strength of Samson, the wisdom of Solomon, and the courage of Alexander, that we are not interested in.

2. The angels admire and praise Christ's glorious undertaking for lost men, though he took not upon him the nature of angels, nor died for them; and much more ought we, whose nature he assumed, to whom he so freely offers the benefits of his death, Rev. v. 11, 12.

3. It is surely our own fault, if we have not an interest in Christ's undertaking, seeing we are so pressingly invited to come and share of it: for if we will but come and accept of Christ's love, and the benefits of his death, then all is ours. And why then should we not willingly accept of the gospel offer, and claim an interest in all that Christ hath done for sinners?

4. Let us mint to look to Christ, love him and praise him as we can; and he will cause our sky to break, and give us more ground of praise. For we are sure he never sent one to hell, that loved and praised him with his heart.

Q. *But what shall those dejected souls do, who can say they have prayed, they have praised, gone to many communions, attended all ordinances, and all duties, and essayed all means they can think of; but they miss God in them all, still he hides his face; and so they are almost hopeless, and fear matters will never mend with them?*

A. 1. We have Job, that eminent saint, making that very same complaint, Job xxiii. 8, 9. " Behold, I go forward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand that I cannot see him." Where we see, he trieth all airths, essayed all means, and used all diligence to find God's gracious presence, and still he is disappointed. And good Hezekiah, in his distress, says, " He mourned as a dove, and his eyes failed with looking upward," Isa. xxxviii. 14. So that we see such a complaint is no singular case.

2. We should never succumb in the day of adversity, whatever be our trial, but always make known our case to God by prayer, and never faint, Prov. xxiv. 10. Luke xviii. 1. As this is our commanded duty, so it is the practice of the saints in the greatest strait; they still lie at the throne of grace, and never give over duty, Psalm cxix. 81, 82, 83.— Yea, Jonah, when his case seemed most hopeless, he being in the belly of a whale, and in the bottom of the ocean, yet he persists in duty, Jonah ii. 6. " When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came in unto thee."

3. As we should persist in seeking Christ, so we should continue to do it sorrowing and weeping, as Mary did at the

sepulchre; yea, her sorrow for her loss was so great, that two angels could not dry up her tears, nor comfort her heart, without Christ.

4. Let us see that our sorrow be of the right stamp; that it be, 1. Not only for our loss, but for our sins, that are the cause thereof; alas, it is our sins that have grieved his Spirit.

2. That it be not so much for the loss of the comfort and sweetness we have felt in communion with God, as for the loss of God himself, and his presence, which is valuable.

3. That it be not so much for the disadvantage we ourselves sustain, as that we are less capable to serve God, having no life for duty, no strength to love or praise him, as formerly.

4. In the midst of our deepest sorrows for God's absence, let us not omit to take notice of God's goodness in any thing that is favourable in our cause, and bless God for it: As, for instance, 1. That he gives us a sense of our condition, and that we are not past all feeling, as many are.

2. That we are living, and have yet time to search, mourn, pray, and use means for recovering his presence.

3. That we are not in a hopeless, despairing condition, like Spira, or the damned in hell; for what better are we than they?

4. When our reason tires and succumbs, then faith should take place, and we should even hope against hope, according to Rom. iv. 18. When ordinary means do not succeed, we should even look to God, that can work without means, beyond them; and can act miraculously. Let us observe Jonah's behaviour in the whale's belly, Jonah ii. 3, 4.—"Thou hast cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas, and the floods compassed me about, all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight: Yet I will look again toward thy holy temple."—Jonah's case looked to be singular; he thought God had quite forsaken him, and would never return again; for he had no example before him of any in his case, or of any that were delivered out of a fish's belly. There was no way of escape open to him, but by a miracle; and what ground had he to expect that a miracle of mercy should be wrought for him, who was now made a monument of justice. His own conscience, no doubt, would flee in his face and tell him, that he had wickedly fled from the presence of the Lord, and therefore God might justly cast him out of his presence: That he had procured all this sad distress to himself, and so had little ground to expect deliverance. And yet we see how wonderfully his faith overcame his fear and despondency, ver. 4 "Yet I will look again toward thy holy temple." Though his guilt made him ashamed to say, he would dwell in God's house, either on earth or in heaven; yet he says, I will at least look toward it: Though thou shouldest cast me never so far away from thee, yet I will look again to thee:" yea, though thou shouldst cast me down as low as hell, yet I will look up from it to thee again; still my heart will hanker after thee, and I will look for pity at thy hand.

5. Let us plead the mercy of God's nature, and the faithfulness of his word, and stay our fainting souls on these props; and when our darkness is great, let us send forth hope, that good messenger, to see what it can spy, and what good news it can bring in from the mercy and faithfulness of God, according to Psalm xliii. 5. Psalm cxix. 81. Psalm viii. 9. Isaiah lvii. 16.

6. It becomes us, under hidings and disappointments, at such a solemn occasion, humbly to submit to divine sovereignty, (for God knows what is best for us) and quietly to hold his time and liesure; and still to hope for a visit from him in due time: It was a noble saying of one in such a case, "Though he came not to dine with me, yet he will come and sup, therefore I will wait on him." The Lord takes a liberty with his people while here, because he has a whole eternity to manifest himself to them; the time is near when those who groan under his absence, "shall be ever with the Lord," 1 Thess. iv. 17. O deserted believers take comfort; for what you come short of obtaining on earth, will be abundantly made up to you in heaven; whatever doors, walls, or lattices, are now betwixt you and Christ, hereafter there shall be none. You may say, how long he will hide, I cannot positively determine; but this I am sure of, he can withdraw himself no longer from a poor believer than he is in this world. Rejoice in this, you shall drop all your complaints, fears, and jealousies, at heaven's gates, and never take them up again. And, in the mean time, let present hidings and disappointments have the same effect upon you they had on the spouse, Cant. iii. 3. she turns sick of love to Christ, rises from her sloth, and goes through all the streets and ways of the city, seeking him whom her soul loved.

Q. *But what shall be said to those distressed souls, who apprehend that none of these counsels and comforts that belong to God's children under desertion, are applicable to them; because they fear they are totally and finally forsaken?*

A. 1. Let such remember what counsel they have sometimes given to support others, in the like case, and study now to take it to themselves; lest it be applicable to them what Eliphaz said to Job, "Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees: But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled," Job iv. 4, 5. It is indeed much easier to give advice than take it: people in health will advise sick folk to take this and the other thing; and yet, when the case comes to be their own, they are at a stand what to do.

2. Let such seriously consider, whether indeed they bear the characters of a total desertion, yea, or not; indeed, if their hearts be willing to quit God, give up all claim to him, be satisfied with the world, and indifferent whether he return again or no, it is a bad sign: But let them be ingenuous; is there not still some hankering desire in their souls, towards God? Is there not something in their hearts, that says, Let him do with me as he pleases; I am resolved to ly all my days at Christ's feet, and never go to another door for mercy: Though he should never smile on me: Yet I will still be uneasy and restless without his favour: I will wait for him, cleave to him, and mourn after him. Whatever the devil, or my own heart suggest, I will not believe any evil report of Christ. I will not hear an ill tale of that lovely one, nor go from his door with any harsh thoughts of him. And though their case be very dark and hopeless like, yet let me ask them, if they would be willing to quit any little hope they have of Christ, for all the world's pleasures, or flattering offers that sin and Satan can make them. Nay, is there not something in their consciences, that still stands up for God against sin, saying, though I should die in darkness, yet I will never hearken to sin or Satan, I will never quit prayer, I will never hate Christ or holiness, I will never yield to temptations, nor join with the wicked, who wallow in sin's puddle, and mock at religion. Do they not see many about them, that for as ill as their case is, yet they would

not exchange cases with them, for all the riches and honours in the land? Then surely they are not totally nor finally forsaken. For what is it but the Spirit of God that keeps them waking and restless without Christ, when others are sleeping in sin, and have no trouble for want of him? What is it but his grace that keeps them still waiting on God in the way of duty, and in the use of all means? And though they come little speed, yet they dare not slight ordinances, nor neglect prayer, as many do, but still would be at casting themselves in Christ and his Spirit's way, and keep as near him as possibly they can; and dare never think of saying to God, with the wicked, Job xxi. 14. "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Surely this is owing to Christ's upholding grace, and not to ourselves: For were we wholly left by him, we would run as far from God and his presence as ever we could, and shun all sorts of converse with him. Let us then receive and take notice of the least crumb of Christ's goodness with thankfulness, and cordially bless him for it, for that is the way to get more, Psalm lxvii. 5, 6. Luke xvii. 15.

Of the Conversation of Communicants, after they have been at the Lord's Table.

Quest. *WHAT is that conversation that communicants ought to have after the sacrament?*

A. It must be a conversation that is rightly ordered, and suitable to the obligations we are laid under by this ordinance: particularly it must be in some measure suitable to these things: 1. The rule of God's word. 2. The pattern of Christ's life. 3. The principles of our profession. 4. The vows we have made. 5. The sights we have seen. 6. The favours we have received. 7. The promises that are sealed to us in this ordinance. Lastly, The offices and relations which Christ hath undertaken, and stands in to his people.

Q. *When is our conversation suitable to the rule of God's word?*

A. 1. When we conscientiously study to know God's mind revealed in his will.

2. When we put a high value on God's word, and esteem all its precepts to be just and right.

3. When we sincerely aim at an universal conformity thereto, both in heart and life, without neglecting any known duty.

4. When we carefully notice all our wanderings and aberrations from this rule, mourn for them, reform from them, and also hate and avoid every thing contrary to this holy rule, Isaiah viii. 20. Psalm cxix. 128.

Q. *When is our conversation suited to the pattern of Christ's life?*

A. When we study to follow his steps when he lived on earth, and imitate him in all his imitable perfections; particularly in these:

1. His meekness and lowliness.
2. His mortification and deniedness to the world and its enjoyments.
3. His heavenliness and spirituality in discourse.
4. His frequency and fervency in prayer.
5. His love to holiness.
6. His zealous concern for the purity of God's worship and ordinances.
7. His readiness to do good to others.
8. His forgiving and praying for enemies.
9. His obedience to parents.
10. His peaceful and quiet deportment.
11. His temperance in diet.
12. His contentment in a mean condition.
13. His thankfulness for mercies.
14. His willingness to die.

Q. *When is our conversation suited to the principles of our profession?*

A. When we distinctly know them, firmly believe them, openly profess them, stedfastly adhere to them, and have our practice corresponding to our profession; particularly, when we live and walk as those who fixedly believe,

1. That God is infinitely holy and just.
2. That God is the fountain and giver of all good.
3. That all things in the world are vanity, and infinitely below God.
4. That sin is the greatest evil in the world, and cannot be expiated without an infinite satisfaction.
5. That Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of sinners, and infinitely precious.
6. That Christless souls are in a lost state, under the power of sin and Satan.
7. That a holy God hath tied sin and sorrow together.
8. That repentance is absolutely necessary to the pardon of sin.
9. That faith in Jesus Christ is the only way to reconciliation with God, and the obtaining of any mercy from him.
10. That without regeneration we cannot be admitted to the communion with God, nor see the kingdom of heaven.
11. That holiness and happiness are inseparably connected together.
12. That God is a Spirit, and can never be pleased with bodily service, but must needs have the heart in every duty.
13. That we have no good thing in ourselves, grace must work all in us, and without Christ we can do nothing. Now, if our practice be suitable to these principles, we must be numbered among those that glorify God and order their conversation aright, Psalm l. ult. But if our walk be contrary thereto, we will be ranked among those that "profess that they know God, but in words deny him," Titus i. ult.

Q. *When is our conversation answerable to our sacramental vows?*

A. 1. When we keep up a lively sense of our vows and engagements upon our spirits, Psalm liv. 12.

2. When we distrust our own strength, for keeping and performing our vows, flee to God in Christ for strength, and back our vows with earnest prayers, Psalm cxix. 8, 57, 58.

3. When we carefully study in Christ's strength to perform our vows, by a constant watchfulness against all sin, and a constant diligence in all duty, Job xxxi. 1. Psalm cxix. 106.

4. When we make these persons witnesses to the performance of our vows, whom we made witnesses to the making of them; that is, when we behave ourselves so circumspectly and Christianly in all these parts of our conversation which are visible to the world, that the whole congregation may observe a change to the better, and take notice of us, "That we have been with Jesus," Psalm cxvi. 14. Acts iv. 13.

5. When we stand upon our guard against all those temptations that may induce us to break our vows; such as evil company, and immoderate love to the world; for by these both Peter and Demas were tempted to break their vows.

6. When we improve our vows in time of temptation, for

quenching the fiery darts of the tempter, and resisting all his solicitations, saying, "Thy vows are upon me, O God. And how can I do this wickedness, and sin against God."—Psalm lvi. 12. Gen. xxxix. 9.

7. When we remember our vows, so as to rouse and quicken us to duty, when we begin to grow backward to it, or slothful in performing of it, Psalm cxix. 106.

Q. *When is our conversation suited to the sight which we behold in the sacrament?*

A. When we are so affected with the sufferings of Christ, and the dreadfulness of God's wrath, and severity of his justice against sin here represented, as to keep up constant impressions of the evil of sin, and to hate it, and avoid it with all carefulness, 2 Cor. vii. 11.

2. When we are so affected with the greatness of Christ's love to us here displayed, as to be thereby constrained to love him again, to admire and praise him; study likeness to him; converse much with him; avoid what he hates and forbids; and practise what he loves and commands, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

3. When we so believe the preciousness of our souls, that Christ gave his life a ransom for; and the worth of heaven, that Christ hath shed his blood to purchase; as to be willing to quit with all sinful pleasures to gain these and make it the uptaking business of our lives, to win our souls and eternal glory, Mat. xvi. 26. 2 Cor. iv. 18.

Q. *When is our conversation suited to the favours which we receive at the sacrament?*

A. 1. When we keep up grateful impressions, and a high sense of redeeming love upon our spirits.

2. When we labour to preserve these comforts which we have tasted at the Lord's table, and to keep these evidences unclouded, which we have got there cleared up, by our tender and humble walking with God, 2 John 8.

3. When we set ourselves with all holy care and watchfulness, to guard against the snares of satan, the charms of sin, and every thing that is displeasing to Christ, who loved us, and hath done so much for us, Ezra ix. 13, 14. Psalm lxxxv. 8.

4. When, from a principle of gratitude, we set ourselves not only to love and praise God for what he hath done for us, but also to walk before him in the land of the living, in a holy and exemplary conversation; comply with his will, consult his honour, and lay out ourselves with zeal and chearfulness in his service; thinking nothing too much to do, too hard to suffer, or too dear to part with, for him that hath done, and suffered, and parted with so much for us, Psalm cxvi. 8, 9. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.

Q. *When is our conversation suited to the great things promised and sealed to us in the sacrament?*

A. 1. When we firmly believe them, and rely on God's faithfulness for the accomplishment of them.

2. When we are thankful, and praise God for making such great and precious promises to us, 2 Sam. vi. 18, 19.

3. When we undervalue this present world, with all its pomp, treasures and pleasures, and look for better and greater things to come, Heb. ii. 13, 14. 1 Peter i. 13.

4. When we are patient under trials and afflictions, expecting a happy change of our circumstances sooner or latter, Micah vii. 9. Psalm xlii. 5.

5. When we wait quietly for the accomplishment of God's promises, even when he seems to stay long, believing that at last he will make abundant recompence for his stay, Micah vii. 7. Lam. iii. 25, 26.

6. When we live as heirs of the promises, and behave ourselves as candidates for heaven, resisting temptations, conquering lusts, contemning the world, overcoming the fears of death and love of life, and studying to be holy in all manner of conversation, Heb. xi. 9, 10. 1 Peter ii. 2. 2 Peter iii. 11, 12.

Q *When is our conversation suited to the offices and relations which Christ hath undertaken, and stands in to his covenanted people?*

A. When we love and honour him in these offices and relations, and study to express our love and respect in our carriage and behaviour towards him. As, for instance,

1. Is Christ our Prophet, to instruct us? Then let us carefully hearken to him, and learn these lessons which he teaches us; particularly, to contemn the world, deny ourselves, and depart from all iniquity; which, he tells us, is the truest wisdom, Job xxviii. 28.

2. Is Christ our Priest, that appeases offended justice for our sins, by his precious blood? Then let us hate sin, and fear to offend that holy and dreadful God, whose justice is so inexorable, that he would not pass sin without such a satisfaction.

3. Is Christ our King to govern us? Then let us behave as loyal subjects to him, obey his laws, oppose his enemies, and give no harbour or entertainment to those traitors that seek to dethrone him, or pull the crown off his head.

4. Is Christ our physician to heal our diseases? Then let us obey his prescriptions, apply the healing plaister of his blood to our wounds, and beware of cutting or mangling ourselves of new by sin.

5. Is Christ our surety to pay our debts? Then let us acquaint him fully with the state of our soul-affairs, and beware of running ourselves into new arrears; for this were to turn the grace of God into wantonness.

6. Is Christ our cleanser, that washes us in the fountain of his blood? Then let us study to keep our garments clean, and beware of going again into the puddle of sin.

7. Is Christ our shepherd, that leads and feeds us in green pastures? Then let us follow him, and beware of straying from him, or going into the devil's fields to feed on swinish husks.

8. Is Christ our friend and agent in heaven, to appear in our name, and take care of our affairs? Then let us be concerned for his interest here on earth; and beware of requiting his kindness with unthankfulness.

9. Is Christ our husband, to whom we have given ourselves in a marriage covenant, and sworn to be faithful? Then let us put away other lovers, and beware of going a-whoring from him; seeing in that case we can look for nothing from him but destruction, Psalm lxxiii. 26.

Q. *What is the necessity of communicants studying such a holy and well ordered conversation?*

A. 1. Negatively, it is not to merit or purchase heaven; for it is only Christ's holiness and obedience that doth this, and not ours. For, 1. Our holiness and obedience bears no proportion to the reward of eternal life. 2. The grace that enables us to obey, is freely given us of God. 3. Our obedience, at best, is imperfect and mixed with sin. 4. It is our bound duty to God, though no reward at all had been promised; upon all which accounts we can merit nothing by any of our services, Job xlii. 3. 1 Cor. iv. 7. Psalm cxliii. 2. Luke xvii. 9, 10.

2. Positively this holy and well ordered conversation is absolutely necessary, 1. In respect of the command of God

that enjoins it as the beaten road, and pathed way to heaven, peremptorily declaring, "that no man shall see God," Heb. xii. 14.

2. It is necessary, that we may thereby be conformed to our head, the Lord Jesus Christ, 1 Peter i. 15.

3. That we may testify our thankfulness to God for his mercies, especially redeeming love, Luke i. 74, 75.

4. That we may evince and clear up our interest in God, and our title to heaven, 1 John ii. 29. Mat. xxv. 30.

5. That we may be made meet and capable to hold communion with God, here and hereafter. Without holiness we cannot be prepared either for the employments or enjoyments above, Col. i. 12.

6. That we may engage strangers to fall in love with Christianity and godliness, Mat. v. 16.

Q. *What are the properties of this gospel conversation which communicants ought to have after the sacrament?*

A. 1. It must be a good conversation, for so it is termed, 1 Peter iii. 16. because it is a conversation with a good God, according to a good rule, viz. his word; having good company, viz. his people; and leading to a good end, viz. to be ever with the Lord.

2. It must be an honest conversation, so it is called, 1 Peter ii. 12. which includes sincerity toward God, justice in our dealings towards men, and purity and chastity, in opposition to the filthy conversation of the wicked, mentioned 2 Peter 7.

3. It must be a heavenly conversation, Phil. iii. 20. which includes our deadness to earthly things, our imitating the inhabitants of heaven, our delighting in heavenly exercises, our seeking communion with God, and aiming at heaven as our home.

4. It must be a humble conversation, Micah vi. 8. which implies our having a low opinion of ourselves, our being denied to our own performances, and counting all our own righteousness as filthy rags.

5. It must be joined with a constant dependence on Jesus Christ for strength and acceptance in every duty, Cant. viii. 5. John xv. 5.

6. It must be adorned with meekness, patience, and contentment in every condition, 1 Peter iii. 4. Phil. iv. 6, 11, 12.

7. It must be an even and stedfast conversation, endeavouring to hold fast what we have got at the sacrament, were it only a good resolution or purpose, and carefully guarding against all apostacy and backsliding, 1 Cor. xv. 58. Heb. x. 38.

Q. *Wherefore should communicants guard so carefully against apostacy and backsliding after the sacrament?*

A. 1. Because God is much delighted with his people's stedfastness, earnestly wishing it, and frequently enjoins it, Deut. v. 29. Phil. i. 27, 28. Hebrews x. 23. 2 Peter iii. 17. 2 John 8. Rev. iii. 8. Acts xi. 23.

2. Because of the solemn vows and engagements we have come under to stedfastness, Psalm cxix. 106.

3. Because we have many enemies and temptations to draw us from Christ and duty.

4. Because of the many sad evils and consequences of apostacy, Jer. ii. 19.

5. Because of our natural instability and proneness to backslidings, Hosea xi. 7. Jer. xvi. 10. Nay, the best of saints have been ready to miscarry, after vows and signal mercies, and manifestations of God's favour, as might be sadly verified by the instances of Noah, Lot, David, Hezekiah, Solomon, Peter, the Israelties, and Christ's disciples.

Q. *What are the evils and sad consequences of apostacy and backsliding after the sacrament?*

A. They are many; for thereby we do great and manifest injuries. 1. To Jesus Christ. 2. To ourselves. 3. To others.

Q. *What injury do we to Christ by apostacy?*

A. We thereby requit his kindness to us with the basest ingratitude.

2. We reflect and cast reproaches upon him as if he were a bad master; for, by our turning our back upon Christ, after we have been engaged with him, we on the matter say, that, "after trial, we find the devil the better master of the two;" and this is a greater injury than if we had given him a flat denial at the first.

3. We hereby open the mouths of atheists and the enemies of Christ, to blasphemy, and say, "Where is the blessedness that ministers and professors of religion speak so much of? Where is the sweetness of Christ and his way, that is so much talked of? The report we have often heard is certainly not true," &c.

4. By apostacy from Christ we wound him to the heart, and cause him to take up most heavy complaints against us, as these in Isaiah i. 2, 3. Jer. ii. 5, 11, 12, 13. Micah vi. 3. What a heart-affecting word was that which Christ said to his disciples, in a time of common defection, John vi. 67 "Will ye also go away?"

Q. *What injury do we to ourselves by apostacy?*

A. 1. By forsaking the Lord, we let go our life and all our happiness at once, Deut. iv. 3, 4. Deut. xxx. 20. John vi. 68.

2. We lose all our former pains, and will get no thanks for any thing we have done, Ezek. xviii. 24. 2 John verses 8, 9.

3. We forfeit all fellowship and communion with God, in duties and ordinances, Jer. xvii. 5, 6. Heb. x. 38.

4. We may make ourselves incapable of ever recovering again, according to that terrible word, Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6.

5. We make ourselves the butt of God's fearful threatenings, and expose ourselves to many sad strokes and plagues, both temporal, spiritual, and eternal; particularly, apostates fall more under Satan's power than ever: like prisoners who have made their escape, and are afterwards taken, their fate is to be loaded with double irons. We know what judgments the Lord inflicted upon Lot's wife, Judas, Spira, Julian, besides many other apostates; and we see what he threatens against such as do backslide from him, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. Psalm cxxv. 5. Prov. xiv. 14. Jer. v. 6. Heb. vi. 6, 8. 2 Peter ii. 21.

Q. *What injury do we to others by apostacy?*

A. 1. We wrong the godly, by sadening their hearts, and offending them by our carriage.

2. We wrong the wicked, by hardening them in sin, stumbling them at the good ways of the Lord, and giving them occasion to think there is no such excellency in religion, as the gospel doth report.

Q. *Whence is it that communicants are so ready to backslide, and break their vows after a sacrament?*

A. In hypocrites it proceeds mainly from the want of a solid root and good foundation laid in the soul, by a thorough work of grace in the heart: for they that begin in hypocrisy do commonly end in apostacy. But in believers

themselves there is also great inconstancy and proneness to backslidings, because of these things:

1. The immoderate love and cares of the world, which are most dangerous to the soul; hence it was that both Judas and Demas apostatized from Christ. And hence it is we soon lose any liveliness of frame that we get at a sacrament; which should cause us to take heed how we return again to the world after such an ordinance, that it be with jealousy and holy fear.

2. Because of our unwatchfulness, self-confidence, and security, upon the back of a communion; we are too ready to be puffed up with our privileges and attainments, to think our mountain stands strong, and hence to lift ourselves up above our neighbours, and despise those that come not our length; upon which account God is provoked to leave us for a little to ourselves, as he did Peter, on the back of the first communion, for the same cause, and we know what came of him.

3. Because of Satan's malice and diligence, who seeks by all means and devices, to winnow communicants upon the back of such an ordinance, that he may sift away their good frames and spiritual motions towards Christ and heavenly things, Luke xxii. 31.

4. Because of bad company that is ready to ensnare us to do that which is evil, as it did Peter after the sacrament; or have a bad influence upon us, to cause us forget, or neglect that which is good: and therefore we should endeavour to shun the company of the wicked, their carnal joy, vain mirth, and worldly discourse, which tend very much to deaden the heart.

5. Because of the slavish fear of man, and of persecution for adhering to Christ and his interest. This fear had very bad influences on Peter, when he followed Christ to the High Priest's hall.

Q. *What course shall we take that we may prevent our apostacy or backsliding after a sacrament?*

A. 1. We must labour to keep up the constant impressions of the odiousness of sin: for if we would "cleave to that which is good," we must still "abhor that which is evil, Rom. xii. 9.

2. We must endeavour to keep up a constant high esteem of Christ, and a warm love to him; for we cannot think of parting with that which we sincerely love and esteem.

3. Let us beware of entertaining any unmortified lusts, or secret idols, for these will bid fair to loose our hearts from Christ, when religion begins to thwart with them. Herod heard John gladly till once his Herodias was struck at, but then he turned his enemy.

4. Let us beware of self-confidence, or high thoughts of ourselves; for Peter, that promised most in his own strength, was the first that denied Christ.

5. Let us study to get as much nearness and communion with Christ as possible, and to experience the power of religion in our souls, which would be a noble preservative against apostacy; for those that know most of Christ, will be most unwilling to turn their backs upon him, John vi. 68.

6. Let us be oft on the mount of contemplation, taking a view of the promised land, and the crown laid up for the perseverers in religion, Luke xxii. 28, 29.

7. Let us always entertain a jealousy of our treacherous hearts, and guard against the first declinings thereof; for "happy is the man that thus feareth alway," Prov. xxviii. 4. Judas was the last of his disciples that suspected himself, and said, "Master, is it I?" And yet was the first that betrayed Christ.

8. Let us be earnest in prayer, that God may hold us up by the hands of his power and mercy, which have always sustained his people, 1 Peter i. 5. Psalm xciv. 18. As the child is never so safe as in the nurse's arms, so neither are we safe, but when we commit ourselves, by believing prayer, into the hands of divine power and mercy. And, therefore, we have still cause to pray with the Psalmist, "Lord, hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not,"—Psalm xvii. 5.

Now to him, who only is able to guide us through the wilderness of this world, carry us over the Jordan of death, and land us safe in the Canaan of glory, be everlasting praise and glory in the highest. Amen.

AN

APPENDIX;

CONTAINING

Some things useful for Young Communicants; such as, an Example of a Personal Covenant, with Meditations and Materials for Prayer, before and after Partaking.

An Example of a Young Communicant's secret Transacting and Covenanting with God, before his approach to the Lord's Table.

ETERNAL and Almighty God, behold me, a poor creature, lost and undone by Adam's fall, and deeply sunk into the gulf of sin and misery; Oh! I want words to express my miserable condition by nature. I am a poor captive under the slavery of sin, tyranny of Satan, bondage of the law, and the empire of death. My sins are great, and also many, they swarm both within and without me, and have made me black and loathsome in thy sight. I see the sword of justice drawn, the law thundering curses against me, and the clouds of wrath hanging black over my head. My soul is within a step of death and hell: yea, hell is gaping for me beneath, and my sins are like mill-stones about my neck, weighing me down into it. Lord, it is a wonder of thy mercy and patience, that I am not at this moment roaring in endless and ceaseless flames, without all help and hope.—Lord save me, or else I perish!

Alas! I have long lived in a state of distance and enmity with thee, and have preferred Satan's drudgery to thy favour, and stopped my ears against thy calls. A wicked rebel have I been, the hottest place in hell is my due.

But glory to God for free redeeming love; for though I have destroyed myself, yet a way is found out for satisfying justice and saving sinners, by the incarnation and death of Jesus Christ. And therefore, O Lord, seeing thou hast graciously contrived, revealed, and offered help and salvation to me, a lost, hell-deserving sinner, in and by the mediation and satisfaction of thy dear Son, as my High Priest and Surety, I humbly desire to fall in with this project of rich, sovereign, free grace, and venture my perishing soul upon the blood of that glorious Redeemer. I am well pleased with the Mediator and his righteousness, and acquiesce heartily in the wise and noble method of redemption through

him. I consent to the free offers of Christ and salvation thou makest to me in the gospel, and accordingly I do here throw my guilty soul into the open arms of a crucified Jesus, lodge it in his wounds, and clasp about him as my bleeding High Priest and Surety, to make atonement to justice for my sins, wash me in his blood, and bring me to God; I do here disclaim and renounce all other saviours and methods of salvation; and lay the whole stress of my soul and salvation upon Christ alone. And seeing it is in Christ the Mediator only, that God is well pleased with any sinner, and is willing to become my God and portion through him, I do here make choice of God in Christ, as my God and portion, for time and eternity. Nay, I take heaven and earth to witness that I unfeignedly accept of the whole glorious Trinity, and chuse God the Father to be my Father, God the Son to be my Saviour, and God the Holy Ghost to be my Sanctifier. And I do solemnly devote and give up myself, both soul and body, to this God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, my God in Christ, to pardon, wash, and sanctify me for his glory and service.

Likewise, according to thy rich gospel-offer, I do here embrace my Mediator and Saviour Jesus Christ, in all those sweet offices and relations wherein he is held forth to me; I accept of him as my High Priest, Prophet, and King, and give up myself to be saved, taught, and ruled by him. I take him for my Priest, to atone for me by his blood and merits; I rely entirely upon the virtue of his sacrifice for my justification before God. I renounce mine own duties, works, and attainments, and all mine own righteousness and worthiness, as filthy rags; and avow Christ alone to be the Lord my righteousness. I accept of him as my great Prophet and Counsellor, and renounce mine own wisdom: I submit to his teaching, and commit myself to his conduct, that he may lead and guide me through the wilderness, and bring me to heaven at last. Nay, he is not only my guide to find my way, but I take him for my strength to walk in it, and my rest at the end of it.

I likewise receive Jesus Christ as my King and Ruler; I make choice of his government and laws, and swear allegiance to him, and will suffer no other lord besides him, to have dominion over me. What have I to do any more with idols? I renounce all other lords and lovers, and will have none but Christ. I renounce mine own will, and take thy will for my law. I esteem thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and will hate every false way. I accept of all thine ordinances, and bless thee for thy word and sacraments. I submit to all thy providences: dispose of me and mine as thou thinkest best. I am content to take up thy cross, and follow thee wheresoever thou goest.

Lord, I do with all my power accept of thee, to be my Lord and husband. I do willingly make choice of thee and all that is thine; and that for richer, for poorer; for better, for worse; for weal, for woe; for prosperity, for adversity; yea, for all times and conditions, to love, to honour, to obey thee above all. O now let the marriage-knot be cast, which death nor hell will never be able to loose. Lord, I take thy Holy Spirit for my quickener, guide, and comforter; thy blessed word for my rule; thy promises for my encouragement; thy glory for my scope; thy testimonies for my counsellors; thy sabbaths for my delight; thy people for my companions. In a word, I take Christ for my life, holiness for my way, and heaven for my home.

And, O Lord, as I do accept of thee and all that is thine; so, through thy grace, I do, without reserve, resign and give up to thee, myself, and all that is mine. Alas! I am poor, and have nothing to give thee; but with the poor widow, I cast in my two mites, soul and body, into the treasury. I dedicate my heart to be thy temple; my soul's faculties and affections, to be thy servants and agents; my body's senses and members, to be instruments of righteousness; and all mine enjoyments to be employed for thy use and service.—Lord, do thou henceforth set thy mark, and stamp thy image upon me, all that is mine; that all I have may be set apart and consecrated to thy glory and honour.

I know, O Lord, thou chiefly requirest the heart; alas, the heart of man is deceitful above all things: and, Oh! my heart is deceitful above all hearts, so that I am ashamed to offer it to thee, and afraid it prove false to thee. O if my heart were better, and worthy of thy acceptance! had I ten thousand hearts, they were but a poor present; but such a heart as I have, I here offer it, Lord, to thee who made it at first, to make it anew: O make it as thou wouldst have it, soft, pliable, and holy; put thy fear in it, and write thy laws upon it, that I may serve thee continually, and never depart from thee. I give my hearty consent this day to thy entering in, and taking possession of the throne in my soul.—Be cast open, all ye doors of my soul, that the King of glory may enter in, and dwell for ever. Lord, come in, put down lusts, subdue corruptions, and cast out all that stands in opposition to thee: And let my soul and body, and all that is within me, be formed and fashioned by thy Spirit, and sanctified by thy grace, that I may shew forth thy praise.

O Lord, I do here avouch thee this day to be my God, to walk in thy ways and statutes: But thou knowest my weakness, my enemies, and the manifold temptations and snares I am exposed to; nay, in me dwells no good thing: I look therefore to thee, my Surety, for covenanted grace and strength to enable me for duty and for righteousness, to cover mine imperfections therein, and to present me faultless before God.

O Lord, I depend entirely on thee for the daily assistance of thy Spirit, in order to my resisting temptations, bearing afflictions, conquering lusts, performing duties, and exercising grace. Lord, give always what thou requirest, and then demand what thou pleasest. Be still forthcoming to me in my straits, and come in with seasonable supplies according to my need. I take heaven and earth to witness, that I desire to be saved in the method of free grace; that I distrust my own resolutions and mine own strength; that I make all purposes and promises in Christ's strength; that I rest not at all in my promise made to him, but in his unto me, that he will never leave me, nor forsake me. O Lord Jesus, in thee only have I righteousness and strength: Be surety for thy servant for good, and undertake for all that God requires of me, and for all that I have promised to him.

Lord, ratify in heaven what I have done on earth, and let it be a sure and everlasting covenant, a covenant which thou hast made with me, as well as I with thee. And let this covenant be a never-failing spring of comfort to me, through all the steps of my life, and especially at the hour of death; that I may rejoice in God as my covenanted God in Christ, both in time, and through the ages of eternity. Amen.

SOME MEDITATIONS AND MATERIALS
FOR PRAYER,
Proper for Communicants before Partaking.

MEDITATION I.

GOD's mercies to me have been very great and distinguishing. I was born in a valley of vision, I dwell in a lightsome Goshen, when many others are covered with Egyptian darkness, and sit in the region of the shadow of death. I hear heaven's free market-day of grace proclaimed, when others are trysted with silent sabbaths. I am invited to a rich gospel feast, when others are trysted with a famine of the word of God.

It is a great privilege, that I am allowed to speak to God in prayer, or hear from him in his word; but how great is the honour he puts upon me, when he invites me to a communion with himself at his holy table, where I may feast upon the fruits of Christ's purchase, and hear him say to the guests, "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

Oh! I am unworthy of the least crumb that falls from his table, far less of being admitted to sit with him at the table, and eat of the children's bread.

But since he is pleased to honour me so far, as to call me to the marriage-supper of the Lamb; O that he would also give me the wedding-garment, prepare my unprepared heart, and grant me all the sacramental graces, that I may be in case to attend and entertain the King of glory.

O for spiritual hunger and thirst for the soul-feast, the heavenly manna, and water of life, that is to be set before me! O that I had wells digged in this valley of Bacca, that heaven's rain would descend and fill the pools! That so the wilderness might be turned into a fruitful field, and the dry land of my heart into springs of water, and my barren soul might blossom as the rose, and send forth a smell as of a field which the Lord hath blessed.

I am now to ascend mount Calvary, and go to the place where Christ is to be set forth as crucified before mine eyes; O that there I may look on him whom I have pierced, and mourn for sin, that made the nails, and drove them into my Redeemer! O that I may there receive a broken Christ into a broken heart! O that the blood of Christ, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel, may there plead with God for me, answer all the challenges of the law, and speak peace to my conscience! Let him there kiss me with the kisses of his lips, and enable me to embrace him in the arms of my faith, saying, "This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend." O for a lively and strong faith, that I may take and hold a strong grip of my Redeemer, that, like the spouse, I may say, "I held him, and would not let him go!" Alas, for my weak and slippery-fingered faith, that oft lets Christ go, when I have fair occasions of getting grips of him. Oft do I lose my grips; Lord, fasten them better. Did not Christ take faster grips of me than I do of him, my soul had been in the devil's grips without relief. Ever blessed be his name for the strong grips he took and held of elect sinners on the cross: yea, so sure and fast were they, that neither death nor devils, the wrath of God, nor curses of the law, could ever make him loose them again. Many waters could not quench his love, neither could the floods drown it. His love was stronger than death. Oh! where is my love to him? O that the infinite love of Christ, in dying on a cross, might kindle in my frozen heart this sacred fire of love to him, that might burn up all my lusts and idols as stubble; and make me cry out, "None but Christ, none but Christ."

MEDITATION II.

I WAS entered into covenant with God by baptism, and was then brought under strong engagements to be the Lord's: But Oh! I have broken my covenant, and backslidden from Christ. Were I under the law or covenant of works, I would be utterly undone. But, blessed be God, I am under the tenders of a covenant of grace, that admits of repentance, and a surety for the guilty criminal; and graciously promiseth pardon to the penitent believer: nay, promiseth repentance to the hard-hearted, faith to the unbelieving, and pressingly inviteth backsliding children to return to God, through a Mediator. I do here take hold of this gracious and well-ordered covenant; Lord, seal it to me at thy table; what shall I render to the Lord for instituting this ordinance, for leaving this precious legacy and token of love to his Church, for preserving it to this age, and continuing it in this land; and particularly for sparing and allowing me to come unto it? Glory to God, that I see the seal of this covenant, that I see this welcome rain-bow appearing in the clouds of wrath, as a sign and token of God's confirming his covenant to believers, and securing them against a destroying deluge. Blessed be God, that I am neither among Jews or Pagans, upon earth; nor devils or damned souls in hell. I thank the Lord of heaven and earth, that the things which were hid from the wise and prudent, are now revealed unto babes: And that my eyes see and ears hear that which many prophets and kings desired to see and hear; and yet might not: And that now life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel.

O what would fallen angels and damned spirits give for such a day and such a prospect as I have! Lo, fire and brimstone from heaven is rained upon them, while manna is rained upon me! O that the solemn day I have in view, may indeed be the Son of man, a day of his power, and a day of his courts, better and sweeter to me than a thousand!

O that the holy table I am going to, may be richly furnished by the great Master of the feast! O that he may grace it with his own presence, and abundantly bless the provision! That by it the starving creature may be fed, the needy beggar may be satisfied, the hard heart may be softened the cool affections warmed, the cloudy soul brightened, the straitened heart enlarged, the dim eye enlightened, the wandering mind fixed, and the doubting soul resolved. O that it may be a feast of fat things full of marrow; a meal signally blessed from heaven to me! That it may prove life to my soul, death to my sins, strength to my graces, and poison to my lusts. Lord, let my heart begin to burn, when I see the elements; let my bands be loosed when I touch them; let my eyes be lightened when I taste them; and let my soul be strengthened when I partake of them.

O that in receiving the bread and wine, I may be enabled to receive Jesus Christ into my heart, and may thereby get true and real infeftment of all Christ's purchase; and a valid and unquestionable title to the everlasting inheritance, sealed and confirmed to me! Lord, make thyself known to me, in the breaking of bread; manifest thyself to me as thou dost not unto the world. O bring me into the banqueting-house, and let thy banner over me be love! Lord, come to the feast, for it will be a dead and heartless feast, if thou be absent: Sit thou at the head of the table, carve every one

their portion, and give me a Benjamin's mess, (if it be thy will) that my soul may be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth may praise thee with joyful lips. And when the King sits at his table, let my spikenard send forth the smell thereof "Awake, O north-wind, and come, thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out: And then let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits. O let my well-beloved come and feed among the lilies, till the day break, and the shadows flee away."

MEDITATION III.

BLESSED are they that hear and know the joyful sound: But, O what will the news of Christ avail me, without an interest in Christ? What will it profit me, to have the Son revealed to me, if he be not revealed in me.

O for the practical and experimental knowledge of Christ! Lord, hide not thyself from me, stand not behind the wall, but shew thyself to me through the lattice of ordinances. O draw aside the vail of my guilt, and make a display of thy glorious and attractive excellencies, that mine eyes may see the King in his beauty, and my soul may be engaged to flee to him upon the wings of faith and love.

I am this day called to go to the table of this great King: But I am in a strait betwixt two: If I decline to come to this table, then I disobey my dying Saviour, who commands me to shew forth his death in this manner; if I come unworthily, then I fear lest I contract the guilt of his blood, and eat and drink mine own damnation. Alas, mine unworthiness makes me tremble to come; and yet my need pinches me so, that I cannot stay away. To whom, Lord, shall I go, but to thee: For thou hast the words of eternal life. Thou art my sun, from whose beams I must receive the light of grace. Thou art the fountain, from which I must draw living water. Thou art the root, from which I must receive sap of increase. Thou art my head, from whom I must get life and influence. So that without thee I am nothing, I have nothing, I can do nothing. Let all my wants be upon thee, and let all my supplies come from thee. Surely, O Lord, the sea is not so full of water, nor the sun so full of light, as thou art full of grace and mercy. O fill my narrow vessels out of thine inexhaustible fountain. Cast open the doors of thy treasures, and let me have access to Christ's unsearchable riches. Are not these freely bestowed upon the needy, without money and without price? O scatter thy bounty among poor beggars, and let me be admitted to gather it.—Let not such a miserable object go from thy door without an alms, for thou wilt'st not miss a crumb to me. O let not the needy be forgotten, let not the expectation of the poor perish for ever. Let none return ashamed from the fountain, who come expecting water. Hast thou not said, "I will pour water upon them that are thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground?" And is there any more dry, more poor and needy than I am? Lord, make me as thirsty as I am dry; as humble as I am poor; and as sensible as I am needy. Open my mouth wide, and then fill it. Alas, the voice of my prayer is weak, but O the cry of my wants is strong: Lord hear that loud cry. Deal not with me according to my feeling and sense of need, which is small; but O deal with me according to my real necessity and thy royal bounty, which is great beyond expression.

Lord, grace thine own ordinance, and beautify the assembly of thy people with thy presence; put the wedding garment upon the guests; let thy Spirit rest upon them, let thy power be present to heal them, and cause thy glory fill the temple.

O that God would bow the heavens and come down! O that he would touch the mountains, (viz. hard hearts, unbelief, pride, worldliness, &c.) and cause them all flow down at his presence. Let the Jordan of my lusts be driven back. Let the mountains skip like rams, and the little hills like lambs. Let the earthly heart tremble at the presence of the God of Jacob. Let the rock be turned into standing water, and the flint into a fountain of water.

O come down as rain upon the mown grass, and as showers that water the earth, and do thou revive all the withered roots of thy people. O for a shower from heaven, even a shower of the Holy Ghost, to make all their souls as a watered garden, that they might spring up as the grass, revive as the corn, grow as the lily, cast forth their roots, spread out their branches, and their beauty might be as the olive tree, and their smell as Lebanon.

O if our Lord Jesus Christ's love and glory would come flowing like a full sea, or the rushing of a mighty wind, and fill all the corners of his house and of his table, that great grace may be on all his people. O to hear a sound of going in the tops of the mulberry-trees, a sign that God is gone forth before us to smite the hosts of our lusts, and triumph over our enemies. O that the kindly breathings and prosperous gales of God's Spirit would enliven all the drooping hearts, and fill all the empty sails of wind-bound communicants. O that this heavenly wind would blow from the right airth, that poor leaky vessels might come speed in their voyages, and sail straight forward to the shore of Immanuel's land.

MEDITATION IV.

HOW great is the divine goodness and condescension to me, in that he is pleased to allow me such near access to him! The men of Bethshemesh had not liberty to look into the ark: But I have a warrant, yea, a command to contemplate a crucified Jesus, who is the image of the invisible God, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person: Yea, not only to look to him, but also to touch him, handle his wounds, embrace his person, and lodge him in my soul.

O Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; the house is so ruinous, smoaky, and defiled, thou hast not a fit place with me where to lay thy head; but since thou didst not disdain to lie in a manger among beasts, nor to dine with Simon the leper; O come in and furnish the house, prepare an upper room in my soul, and there abide and keep the passover with me. A look or word from thee would do it. Lord, speak the word, and thy servant's soul shall be healed and cleansed. Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.

Happy would I be, if I might get a heart melting and soul-overcoming look of Christ's face at his own table, even of his face that is white and ruddy, and fairer than the sons of men. O for such a look as he gave poor Israel, when wallowing in his blood, a look that may cause me to live. O for such a look as he gave backsliding Peter, a look that may pierce my hard heart, and cause me to weep bitterly. O for such a look as he gave the publican Zaccheus, a look that might bring me speedily down from sins and idols, from my self-

conceit and self-righteousness, and cause me receive Christ joyfully into my heart.

Lord, look all my idols out of countenance, and look my wandering heart into a right frame for thy work. O come, put in thy hand by the hole of the door, and let heaven's sweet smelling myrrh drop upon the handles of the lock, that I may awake from my drowsiness, and open all doors to the King of glory. Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without. Come, and cast out all mine idols, worldliness, pride, prejudice, doubtings, and unbelief. Come, lay an arrest on all my wandering thoughts, and call in my straying affections. Come, bind Satan, the enemy of my soul, and restrain him, so as I may get my Saviour entertained at his own table. Come in, Lord, and abide in my heart, as long as I abide here in the flesh. "Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly."

O thou, who deliveredst Noah from drowning in the great deluge, by the ark prepared for him; do thou deliver my soul from perishing in the fearful deluge of thy wrath, by the ark of Jesus Christ, whom thou hast prepared for saving heavy loaden sinners.

O thou who deliveredst Lot from Sodom and the flames of fire; deliver my soul from the Sodom of a natural state, and from the flames of divine anger, that will consume those that abide therein.

O thou that deliveredst Isaac from being slain and offered up a sacrifice, by the ram caught in the thicket; O deliver me from being sacrificed to divine justice, by Jesus Christ, my propitiatory sacrifice, in whom thou art well pleased.

I am now to make a near approach to a crucified Christ, my ark and city of refuge: O to be safely lodged therein. How sad will it be, if I be found hovering without the ark, till the flood come and wash me off from the very side of it! And even when I see a window opened, and mercy's hand put forth to take in poor shelterless doves, how sad eternally will it be to be so near Christ, within a step of him, and never reach him, but perish like the thief upon the cross, with a Saviour on his side, and sink into hell betwixt the outstretched arms of his mercy, and with his gracious calls sounding in mine ears. What woeful madness will it be, wilfully to starve for hunger beside a rich feast that is prepared for the hungry? To perish for thirst near a full and running fountain? Or to die in my wounds beside the Balm of Gilead, and the skilful Physician there? Let me stir up myself in time to take hold of him.

O that when I approach so near a crucified Jesus, in the Lord's supper, I may, with Thomas, thrust my hand into his side, and also throw my heart into it. Let me not only behold the wounds of his side, hands, and feet, but also, by faith, drink of the water of life that runs from them, and bathe my soul therein.

MEDITATION V.

THE Lord is now calling me, as he did Moses, (not out of the midst of a burning bush, but out of the middle of the flames of his love,) "Put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place *whither* thou *goest* is holy ground!" O that I may put off the shoes of earthly affections, strip myself of worldly cares, and look narrowly to my steps, when making such a near and solemn approach to the great Jehovah. Had not I been invited and commanded to come to his holy table, such a sinful wretch as I am durst never have attempted it.

Instead of stretching forth a sceptre of mercy to invite me to his table, he might, with the rod of his wrath, justly have dashed me in pieces as a potter's vessel. Instead of entertaining me with the bread of life and the cup of blessing, he might have given me the bread and water of affliction; yea, have thrown me down there, where I should in vain cry out, for ever, for a drop of water to cool my tongue.

I am polluted and unfit to appear before God, but O they are undone who keep away from him. I come not to him because I am unworthy; but because he is rich in mercy, and has contrived a way for saving such as I am. I come as the poor starved wretch to the fire; I come as the hungry to be fed; as the naked to be clothed; as the sick and maimed to be recovered and healed; as the unclean, to be washed in "the fountain opened to the house of David."

Lord make this a healing ordinance to my diseased soul, and the savour of life to my dead heart; make it also a sealing ordinance to clear up to me the evidences of grace.—Confirm to me the pardon of sin, and the assurance of thy love. O that I may so approach to Christ at his table, that I may return from it with my heavy laden soul disburdened and at rest, my conscience quieted, my corruption subdued, my grace increased, my soul encouraged, and my heart enlarged to run the way of his commandments.

Lord, encrease my faith, excite my repentance, and warm my cold heart with affection to thyself: O that the love of God were shed abroad in my heart.

Lord, thaw my cold and icy heart with the beams of thy love, and breathings of thy Spirit; may I have grace to wait closely upon God and attend all the motions of his Spirit.—And when he draws, O cause me to run; when he knocks, O make me to open; when he blows, O help me to spread the sails; and when the waters are stirred, O let me put in for cure. I am lying like the impotent man at the side of the pool, but of myself I am unable to step in, and there is no man to put me into it; nay, all the men on earth or angels in heaven cannot do it; only the man Christ Jesus can give healing virtue to the waters of the sanctuary, and apply them to me.

Lord, bless those who are to be employed as thy stewards at this solemn feast; enlarge their hearts, and open their mouths: Give them both a door of utterance, and of enterance: Let them speak from the heart, and to the heart.—O make their tongues as fined silver, that their words may be powerful and pleasant, suitably and fitly spoke, like apples of gold in pictures of silver. And while they are busied in inviting, calling, and serving others at thy table; let them not go unserved themselves.

O that thou wouldst descend, at this occasion, upon the mount, in sight of all the people. Let the Spirit of God, with his influences, be like Jordan, at this season, to overflow all its banks. O for a blessed inundation, and a high-stream tide of that river, whose streams make glad the city of God; Lord, send a stream of it into every communicant's heart, and let mine be well watered, and become like the garden of God. O that I had Jacob's spiritual strength, I would wrestle with thee for thy presence, and blessing, to myself and others; I would even say, I will not let thee go till thou bless me: Nay, Lord, I would have the blessing and keep thee too, for thy presence is the best of all blessings. And O it is a needful blessing at the solemn feast; what can the people do there without thee? They will be no better than a company of dead carcases set about thy table: Oh! there will be no life among them, if the Lord of life be away. If thy presence, Lord, go not with me, carry me

not up hence: The desire of my soul is to thee, and the remembrance of thy name: For there is none in heaven or earth, but thou alone, who can suit my soul's necessities.—Nothing less than infinite mercy can forgive my sin: Nothing but infinite power can subdue my lusts: No less than infinite fulness can supply my wants: And nothing but infinite wisdom can guide me through this wilderness, and bring me to Canaan above.

MEDITATION VI.

SHALL such a wretched dog as I presume to come unto thy table, and eat of the children's bread; who am not worthy to gather the crumbs that fall from it! But I have heard of the mercy of the King of Israel, that he delights to shew it to the unworthy, even to the chief of sinners — Lord, here is an object of thy pity; I am starving, and have no bread; naked and have no clothing; wounded, and have no cure; polluted, and have no fountain; in debt, and have no money; burdened, and have no rest. Thus I have destroyed myself, and have no remedy in myself; but in the name of the Lord Jesus, I have a sure all-sufficient help.

Lord, I have a multitude of sins and miseries, but thou hast a multitude of tender mercies. I have deep and heinous guilt, but thou hast a deep fountain to wash it out — Behold one depth calleth to another, the depth of my misery to the depth of thy mercy. My sore is broad, but thy plaister is answerable. My wound is great, but thy balm is excellent. O Lord, be merciful to me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee. Come, display thy matchless excellencies, and healing virtue of thy balm at this time: And O begin with my distempered soul, and make experiment of it upon me. I am grievously stung with sin and satan, these fiery serpents; but blessed be God for providing the brazen serpent, and lifting it up on a pole, even Jesus Christ, wounded and lifted up on the cross. O give me faith's eyes to spy him thus lifted up, under the symbols of bread and wine: O that I may lift up my eyes and see his healing wounds, and feel healing virtue come from them to my wounded soul.

Lord, draw me, and I will run after thee; cast a cord of thy love about my heart, and hale me to thee. Oh! but my heart, my soul is heavy, I have great guilt, and many lusts, like lumps of lead, hanging at me; how can I run, and how shall I be drawn? But hast thou not said, Lord, "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me; sinners of all sorts and sizes" Surely a crucified Jesus lift up on a cross, with his bleeding arms stretched out, to embrace lost sinners, is the most attractive and drawing sight in the world. This wonderful loadstone hath drawn thousands of iron hearts to it at once: And shall my obstinate heart refuse to be drawn? O give me faith's eyes, and let me see the glorious conqueror Jesus dying, and drawing his poor captives home to himself; and let my heart be drawn with the rest.

Now the devil is holding, and Christ is drawing: Now Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels, are striving about communicant's souls: O that Michael may prevail, and his followers may be encreased. O that the red dragon's head may be broken, and his interest get a fatal blow at this time.

Lovely Jesus, shew thyself at this occasion through the lattice for "thou art fairer than the sons of men, more glorious than mountains of prey, and the chiefest among ten thousand." Thou art white and ruddy; white, in regard of thy spotless innocence; and ruddy, in regard of thy bloody passion; and this matchless complexion makes thee altogether lovely in the eyes of all true believers. O bright morning star! I beseech thee to shew me thy glory. Make thy holy table like mount Tabor to me, the mount of transfiguration, where I may get a heart-ravishing sight of Christ's beauty, and such a view of his comeliness, as may satisfy my mind, captivate my heart, and make me long to be where I shall have the full and everlasting vision of his face.

Lord, meet with me at thy own table, and shew me a token for good. Deliver my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. Rescue me from the fearful pit, bring me out of the miry clay; set my feet upon a rock, and establish my goings; and put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God. Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed, even thy beloved Son in whom thou art well-pleased. Lord shew thyself well-pleased with me in him; and let me be accepted in the Beloved.

Lord, say unto my soul, fear not, I am thy salvation: Thy voice is sweet, O cause me to hear it. And make me hear thee, so as I may follow thee: and follow thee so as I may find thee; and find thee, so as I may never lose sight of thee again.

MEDITATION VII.

O WHITHER am I going? The place is holy, the table is holy, the bread that I am to eat is holy, the cup that I am to drink is holy; and God who is infinitely holy, holy, is terrible from his holy places.

A wrong touch or look now is criminal, and may cost me dear, as it did Uzzah and the Beth-shemites. This fearful breach that was made on them, may cause me tremble and cry out, "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?"

If John the baptist (one of the greatest that was born of women, and filled with the Holy Ghost from the womb) thought himself not worthy to unloose Christ's shoes; O how much more unworthy am I (the meanest of creatures, yea, a transgressor from the womb) to be admitted to touch, nay, feed upon Christ's broken body and shed blood!

If Peter, having seen Christ's glory, and his own vileness, thought himself unworthy to be in the same ship with Christ, and cried out, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man:" How shall I, who am the chief of sinners, adventure to sit at the same table with him, and feed upon his flesh and blood!

If the poor woman who had the bloody issue, feared for to come and touch the hem of Christ's garment; how much more may I who am full of the running issues of sin, fear to touch the sacred symbols of his body and blood, and to put my hand into his wounds, and feel the print of the nails? Lord, if the holy angels, those pure and unspotted seraphims, who burn in zeal for thy service, must even cover their faces before thee: O how dare I appear in thy presence, whose zeal is so languishing, whose love is so cold, whose mind is so earthly, and prayers so dull!

But what shall I then do? Shall I, with those who were bidden to the King's feast, refuse and make my excuse? O, I fear then the king would be angry, declare me unworthy to taste of his supper, and swear in his wrath, that I shall never enter into his rest.

I confess, Lord, I am fallen asleep with the foolish virgins, I find no oil in my lamp to go and meet the Bridegroom at his table. But blessed be thy name, the market of grace is not yet ended: I will therefore go presently to those that sell it, not to the merits of saints, or blood of martyrs; but to Jesus Christ himself, who graciously counselled me to buy of him tried gold, and precious oil, that will stand me in stead in time of need. O that my oil and my lamp may be lighted at the beams of the Sun of righteousness, and so it shall never be put out.

Many pieces of furniture do I need: I want the girdle of sincerity, the shield of faith, the helmet of hope, the sword of the Spirit, the breast-plate of righteousness, and to have my feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.—But praises to my Redeemer and Captain of Salvation that hath provided a full store-house and armoury to answer all my soul's necessities. O that out of his fulness I may receive grace for grace!

Lord, these things are so valuable, I have not wherewith to buy them, for I am wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked. But, good news! the poorest person in the world can make this purchase, for all gospel-wares and commodities are bought without money and price. O let me win to this cheap market, and be content to take all out of Christ's hand, as a free gift, disclaiming any worthiness in myself.

Lord, furnish me freely with all the qualifications and grace which I need: And when I come and offer my gift at thy altar, I'll say with David, "All things come of thee, and of thine own have I given thee. For what have I but what I have received?" Nay, I'll join with the redeemed for ever in their song: "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be glory."

MEDITATION VIII.

IF the centurion, whose faith was so strong and lively, that Christ said he had not seen such faith in Israel, yet was fain to say to Christ, "Lord I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof," What shall I think of myself, who have so little faith, and so much unbelief? Can I think myself worthy that Christ should come into my heart? Oh! I am utterly unworthy of such a guest: But seeing so great a king is willing to lodge in so poor a cottage; Lord, send before hand, and furnish it for thyself. O let thy Spirit come and adorn the upper-room, and make me all glorious within. O for a penitent soul, and a believing heart.

Moses of old, with his rod smiting the rock, brought forth running water. O if Christ, with the rod of his word, would but touch my heart, it would soon melt into tears of repentance. Alas, my hard heart will neither break nor melt, till the Spirit of Christ come and deal with it. Lord, though I have not tears enough with Mary Magdalene to wash thy feet; yet thou hast blood enough to wash my feet, heart, hands, and altogether: O bring my polluted impenitent heart to thy fountain: I know nothing will bring tears from mine eyes, and sorrow from my heart, if a believing view of that blood do it not.

O for the eyes of faith to look to Golgotha and Gethsemane, and view Christ's agony and bloody sweat, and the plentiful stream of his blood that flowed down from the cross. O that I could remember the wormwood and the gall, the cries and tears, the curses and pains, the desertion and anguish, which my sins brought upon the Son of God. O how did they pierce his head with thorns, his hands with nails, his side with spears, and his heart with sorrows! O the sharpness of that sword that pierced his soul! O the bitterness of that cup which he drank for me, a cup all mingled with the guilt of my sins, and the curses of a broken law! O can I go to his table, look to his bleeding wounds, hearken to his dying groans, see my Redeemer's heart melted like wax; and yet my heart continue hard and unbroken? O shall the rocks rend sooner than my heart!

O my soul, where is thy faith? Where thy bowels? Where thy gratitude? Where thy humanity? Come, then, behold the author of life becoming obedient unto death, the spring of blessedness underlying the curse; the fountain of happiness thrown into misery, nay, into hell, and all to save thee from it. O behold thy glorious Surety, with his head bowing on the cross, and inclined to die Behold his innocent hands, that healed all sorts of diseases, and were still doing good, pierced and besprinkled with his own blood. Behold his feet, that never stood in the way of sinners, but always walked in the law of the Lord, with sharp and long nails fastened to the cross Behold his side opened with a cruel spear, and all red with his own blood. Behold his bowels, that yearned for sinners, now shrunk and dried up. Behold his face, that was fairer than the sons of men, now defiled with the spittings of the ungodly. Behold his mouth, that spake as never man spake, hath no other refreshment but vinegar and gall. Behold his ears, that were wont to hear the angel's praises, now ringing with the mocks and blasphemies of the wicked. Behold the eyes that were brighter than the sun, now darkened with the shadow of death. Oh! now I see the sun of righteousness under a fearful eclipse.—I see his spotless soul covered with the black clouds of the Father's wrath. I see the heavens shut and darkened against him in the time of his distress. I see his royal visage turned pale, his strength dried up like a potsherd, his tongue cleaving to his jaws, and the streams of his precious blood watering his pierced feet.

O shall I thus see the innocent Lamb of God falling a sacrifice to incensed justice, for my heinous guilt, and not loath myself for all mine abominations? O cursed sin! murderer of the Son of God! shall I ever harbour it any more? O let me never look upon it without tears of grief; nor think of it without indignation and rising heart. O that henceforth the face of sin may be more frightful to me than hell, and temptations to it more terrible than death.

MEDITATION IX.

UNDER the law they who had touched the dead were forbid to come near the altar upon which were offered sacrifices that were but types of Christ upon the cross; and shall I, who am by nature dead in sins and trespasses, and perform nothing but dead works, be allowed to approach that holy table, where a living Saviour and a living God is present?

Blessed be the Lord Jesus, that has come to visit the dead, though rotting and stinking in the grave. O that I may be raised up by the word of his power, as Lazarus of old was, and all my bonds loosed, that I may be at liberty to worship and serve him. And O that I may be allowed to be at the table with him, as was Lazarus, after he was raised by him from the dead.

Lord, though I be dead in sins and trespasses, yet the bread which thou hast prepared can not only strengthen the living, but can also give life to the dead. Art thou not the

resurrection and the life, who can raise the dead to life, and call things that are not as though they were? O cause me to hear thy quickening voice.

Blessed be God, for the encouragement he hath given me to come to this great feast. It being a feast of charity, to which are invited not only the rich, but the poor, maimed, lame, and blind, who cannot make any return to the author of it. My blessed Saviour, while he was on earth, disdained not to eat with publicans and sinners; and surely, though he be now highly exalted in glory, he still retains the bowels of a man, and all the pity and charity to perishing souls that ever he had.

Lord, I am polluted, but will not despair, for with thee is the fountain of salvation. I am poor, but I will not despond, for thou art the Lord of the whole earth, and openest thy treasures to the needy. I am naked, but I will not run away, with Adam, and hide myself from thee, because I am so; but I will come with the more speed to thee, to cover me with the wool and fleece of the Lamb of God, even the spotless righteousness and innocence of my Saviour. All my righteousness is as filthy rags; but, Lord, clothe me with the goodly raiment of my elder brother, which hath a sweet smell in thy nostrils, that therein I may obtain the blessing of my Father, and a title to the inheritance. And let me, by my Saviour's grace, be enabled to offer thee a sincere and contrite heart, which is as savoury meat, in which thou takest special delight. "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Lord, break my hard heart.

And will God, in very deed, dwell and converse with men, yea, sinful men? With thee, Lord, is great and terrible majesty; nay, to the wicked and Christless thou art a consuming fire. But, glory to thy name, I see thee seated upon a throne of grace, that a poor sinner like me may draw near and converse with thee: yea, I see a rainbow about thy throne, a sure token of thy mercy and willingness to be reconciled to sinners, through thy Son, Jesus Christ. I see thee in the word and sacraments reaching forth thy sceptre of grace, that I may come and touch the top of it, and live. Lord, all my hope is in the mercy of thy bowels, and the merits of Christ's death. Surely thou art more ready to give than I am to ask; and more willing to forgive than I am to repent.

I am now going to a great feast; Lord, forbid it be to me like Belshazzar's feast, who, in the time of it, perceived a hand writing his condemnation. But O that I may see the finger of God writing mine eternal absolution, and assuring me that God will not enter into judgment with me. And as of old, thy gracious presence in Solomon's temple was manifested by the fire which came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt-offering, so, I beseech thee, to send from heaven into my heart the fire of thy love, to consume my lusts, kindle mine affections to thee, and make my prayers more fervent.

Lord, thou usest not to send beggars always from thy house without an alms. Yea, thou hast often been found of them that sought thee not; and has made surprising and unexpected visits to poor souls, and made them, before they were aware, like the chariots of Ammadab. O that I could win near hand Christ at his table; O that I may be allowed to kiss his feet, hear his voice, feel the smell of his garments, and the savour of his sweet ointments. Amen.

SOME MEDITATIONS AND MATERIALS FOR PRAYER, PROPER FOR COMMUNICANTS AFTER PARTAKING.

MEDITATION I.

WHAT shall I render to the Lord for all his gifts and benefits unto me? The royal Psalmist admires divine goodness in causing the sun, moon, and stars, to shine in the firmament, for man's behoof; and cries, What is man, that God is mindful of him! But, surely, more cause have I to cry so, when I consider how God has caused the Sun of righteousness to shine on me in the firmament of gospel-ordinances, and made the day-spring from on high to visit me: O that I may find this heavenly light shining also into my heart.

The same Psalmist also exalts God's goodness in giving the beasts of the field, fowls of the air, and fishes of the sea, to be food for man; but far greater cause have I to praise God's infinite mercy, for giving me the flesh and blood of his only Son, to feed and preserve the life of my soul

The poor woman of Canaan asked only leave to gather the crumbs which fell from the children's table, but unworthy I have been admitted to sit at the table of the Lord, and eat of the children's bread! Nay, I have been invited to eat heartily, and drink abundantly! Seeing then I have eaten of Christ's meat, O that in the strength of it I may travel a good journey, and work a good turn for Christ! O that I may be a diligent and faithful servant to so good a master. Lord, I have eaten of thy bread, let me never lift up the heel against thee.

Nay, Lord, I have gone to thy table, and adventured to seal a marriage-contract with Jesus Christ, as my Lord and husband: I am, indeed, a black and uncomely bride; but my glorious husband can beautify me with his perfect comeliness put upon me. Let me for ever discharge mine old husbands and lovers, the law, mine own righteousness, the world, my lusts and idols, and never have any hankering thoughts after them. O that I may be looking, longing, and providing for the marriage day! The bridegroom is ready long since, O that I were ready to go forth and meet him. That will be a glorious day, when he will rend the clouds, come down, and set tryst with me in the air; and send his angels to carry me up to meet with him there. Why then doth he delay his coming? Not because he is unready, but because I am not ready, and all the elect are not yet gathered in. O that I were made meet and prepared for his coming; and my heart and thoughts were still with him.

I have now a journey to go, and a race to run, even a race to heaven, and I have great need of strength and direction in it O if Christ would take me up into his chariot of salvation, that is all paved with love, how easily would I sit, and how safely and pleasantly would I travel in the King's high road towards Immanuel's land? What sweet views and prospects would I get from Christ's triumphal chariot? O the lovely hills, the fruitful vallies, the pleasant rivers, the fair gardens, the flourishing trees, which I might see in the heavenly Canaan? What ivory palaces, golden streets, and gates of pearl, might I see in the new Jerusalem? O could I travel in Christ's company, my journey would not be tedious to me.

MEDITATION II.

IF he that wanted the wedding-garment at the king's table was cast into utter darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; what shall become of those who have come to Christ's table, not only wanting the wedding-garment, but even clad with Satan's livery, wearing the rags of the old man, and drawing the chains of iniquity about with them? Lord, hadst thou dealt with me and my fellow communicants according to our sins, nay, according to our religious services, thou hadst made the congregation an Aceldama, a field of blood: Alas, we have mingled our sacrifices with our sins, no wonder though thou hadst mingled our sacrifices with our blood. But, blessed be thy name, who, instead of destroying us with the breath of thy mouth, art pleased to breathe such words of comfort to us, "I will not execute the fierceness of my wrath, because I am God, and not man. I am the Lord, I change not, therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Merciful God, thou forbiddest men to give that which is holy to dogs, and cast pearls before swine; and yet, in thy boundless compassions, thou givest thy Son, who is the Holy One of God, and the most precious pearl in heaven, unto such miserable sinners as I am, even to me, who has so often promised to live holily, and to leave my sins; and yet have ever returned to my vicious course, as the dog to his vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. But seeing God has been yet again offered, and speaking peace to me, O let me never again return to folly. Lord, save me from making peace again with these lusts, which nailed Christ's hands, and made his soul heavy unto death. May I now be helped to abandon all mine old sins, and never venture again upon that which killed my Saviour, dishonours his Father, grieves his Spirit, and damns mine own soul.

Lord Jesus, undertake for me, deliver me from my spiritual enemies, and especially from myself, and from my false and treacherous heart, which hath so often beguiled me, and yielded me a prey to sin, Satan, and the world, and will now be ready to do it over again, if it be not prevented by thy grace. I have great need to be always near thee; for without thee I can do nothing, but sin; I can do nothing but contract defilement for thee to wash, make wounds for thee to heal, and take on debt for thee to pay. O Lord, my poor soul is often like a leaky vessel which is heavy laden, and ready to sink; the tempest of wrath blows hard, and threatens to overset me. O that I may get my vessel run ashore near the rock Christ, so that if it break or shipwreck any where, it may be about the clefts of this rock, where many a shipwrecked soul hath found safety. O who ever perished at Christ's lee shore? Who ever drowned in the sea of wrath, that sincerely aimed to grip to, and fasten upon the clefts of this rock?

MEDITATION III.

THE *manna* in the wilderness was lodged in the tabernacle, and kept within a pure golden pot. And shall I lodge Jesus Christ, the *manna* that came down from heaven, in a corrupt and unclean heart? Lord, cleanse my heart from sin, and furnish it with grace, that it may be fit for thy residence. O that by tasting of the manna I may find my soul strengthened, and lusts weakened. O that by touching the border of Christ's garment, I may feel a secret virtue gone out of him, to stop the running issue of my corruption, and heal all my soul-diseases.

Jonathan's eyes were enlightened after he had eaten a little honey dropping in a wood: But I have been eating honey dropping from the rock of salvation, Jesus Christ. O that I may find the eyes of my understanding illuminated therewith, that I may clearly perceive the vanity of the world, and excellency of Christ; the deformity of sin, and beauty of holiness; the emptiness of my own righteousness, and the all-sufficiency of Christ's merits.

Men admire Abraham's happiness, in that he lodged angels; but how far greater is my happiness, lodging him whom the angels adore, and in whose presence they all cover their faces with their wings, and cry, "Holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, &c." O that I had suitable room and entertainment for so glorious a guest! Lord, thou must both fit the room, and bring the entertainment with thee.

O be not a stranger unto me, or a way-faring man that only turns aside to lodge for a night; but let Christ dwell in my heart by faith. O that he may say of my heart, "This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it." Lord, say this also of thy Zion in our land, and establish thy throne amongst us.

Lord, thou hast promised many special blessings to the utmost ends of the earth, and to the isles afar off in the sea, among whom we in this land are. O hasten the accomplishment of thy promises to these remote parts of the earth, and make the Spirit of error, superstition, and formality, wholly pass out of them, that thy name may be great among us, and in every place incense may be offered to thee, and a pure offering.

Lord, send the news of Christ to the heathen nations, who have long dwelt in the region of darkness. How sad is it, that God, who made all the world, should have so little of its service; and that the devil, who ruined mankind, should have the far greater part of the world to adore and serve him! Alas, that he should have so much to justify that usurped title of his, "The God of this world." Lord, destroy his kingdom, and hasten the downfal of Babylon; when shall the forty and two months be expired. Let the hills melt, and the mountains flow at the presence of the Lord, and the seven hills among the rest. O why is his chariot so long a coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?

Lord, remember the poor blinded Jews, the posterity of Abraham, thy friend. Oh, we are many a prayer behind with them; they oft minded the little sister, when she had no breasts; and now the elder sister hath none, O what shall be done to her in her desolate case! O that the Redeemer would come to Zion, and "turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Lord, lift up thy feet to these perpetual desolations, and let the receiving of them be as life from the dead.

Lord, plead for thy persecuted people all the world over; let their enemies know that their Redeemer is mighty, and will hear the sighs of the oppressed. Let the earth disclose her blood, and no more cover her slain.

MEDITATION IV.

O THAT I could wonder at the glorious Son of God, who descended from the highest heavens; and took not on him the nature of angels, but the nature of man, and hath

crowned it with glory and immortality; yea, hath carried it above all heavens, above the seats of angels, beyond the Cherubims and Seraphims, and hath placed it on the right hand of his eternal Father! And hath likewise promised to exalt believers (whom he hath united to himself, as members of his body) unto the same honour and dignity! Lord, what is man, that thou art thus mindful of him: and what am I, the worst of men, that I should be admitted to share in those glorious privileges which Christ hath purchased!

O that I could sing a song of praise to my well-beloved, a song of his eternal love and glorious undertaking, a song of his passing through the Red Sea, and fighting the red dragon; a song of his bruising the serpent's head, and unstinging the king of terrors; a song of his victorious resurrection, triumphant ascension, and glorious return. Lord, clear up and tune my heart to sing a song of Zion, and rejoice in Christ as my portion. Let me speak of the glorious honour of his majesty, and declare his wondrous works.

Lord, revive the spirits and enlarge the hearts of all thy people; give them high and exalted thoughts of Christ, that their souls may glorify thy name. Open thou their lips, that their mouths may shew forth thy praise. O shall the wicked go singing and rejoicing to hell, and thy people go always drooping and sorrowing to heaven: Is there any master like Christ, and can any give wages like to his. Let me never, by my carriage, bring up a bad report (as the unfaithful spies) upon Christ's way, or the land that is afar off. Thou hast recorded many encouraging words for thy people's comfort. Thou hast said, "That light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." O for a shower from heaven to make that seed to spring. Blessed be thy name, God's seed will not rot beneath the clods, it will spring up sooner or later. Let me support myself with the Psalmist's cordial, "The Lord liveth, and blessed be my rock." Why should believers look like dead men, while their Lord liveth, and their rock standeth? Their hopes may die, their comforts die, their frames die, their relations, their gifts, and outward means, may all die; but, good news! their Lord will not die, their rock will not fall. No wonder though the disciples drooped and looked as dead men, when Christ was dead and lying in the grave. But, blessed be God, he is risen, he liveth, and will die no more. I have these good news from his own mouth: "I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death." Is my Redeemer jailor of the prison of hell and the grave? Good news! he will not lock in any of his friends or lovers: None but his enemies and haters shall be made prisoners there.

Many are the comforts thou givest, Lord, unto thy people; but let me not adore thy comforts more than thyself, or love the apples of life more than the tree of life; let Christ himself have still the chief room in my soul.

MEDITATION V.

WHO can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can shew forth all his praise? From all eternity thou didst mercifully foresee man's misery, and contrived a remedy for it: thou providest a surety for him before the debt was contracted, and a Saviour before he was lost. Thy wrath soon broke out against the angels that fell; thou waitedst not for their repentance, but presently condemned them to everlasting chains of darkness. But long hast thou waited on me; yea, followed me with mercy, and that even after I had many times undervalued and trampled upon the greatest gift and richest jewel of heaven, Jesus Christ.

Heavenly Father, though I have been a prodigal and runaway from thy house, yet graciously own me again upon my return, for thy child. I am a poor destitute orphan, that can do nothing for myself, but in thee the fatherless findeth mercy. I am a helpless and needy child, hanging at the breasts of ordinances. O let them not prove dry breasts to me, nor let me suck wind or poison from them, as many do to their destruction: but let me suck the sincere milk of the word, for my growth and enlargement in thy ways.

Lord, thou hast directed thy people "in malice to be children, but in understanding to be men;" many, alas, are found the very reverse of this, "in understanding they are children, but in malice they are men." Lord, free me from the leaven of malice, of pride, and envy. A child I am, alas, in knowledge, O that I were such in duty and affection. Lord, make me like a little child, meek and humble, obedient and tractable, affectionate and full of regard to thee my heavenly Father. O that I were born again, and had the Spirit of adoption in me, enabling me to cry "Abba Father;" and inclining me to be much about my Father's hand. My needs are very great, but, blessed be thy name, thou hast erected a throne of grace for me to come to, in the time of need.

Many are the needs which thou has left upon me, that I might have the more errands to thy throne, and thou mayst the oftener hear my voice. Lord, pour out upon me a spirit of grace and supplication, and cause me to delight in approaching to thee.

Lord, help me to remember the vows and solemn engagements I have been taking on. I have been giving thee my bond at a communion-table, for thankfulness, love, and obedience; O let me have Christ's back-bond for my relief, that he will strengthen me by his powerful grace to pay my vows to God; for I do entirely distrust my own strength. O that my obedience may be universal, cheerful, constant, and growing like the morning light.

Give me grace always to believe and remember the end of my creation, and the vanity of this world, the shortness of my life, and the uncertainty of the time of my death; the miseries of such as die in their sins, and the unspeakable joys of those who die in their Lord.

MEDITATION VI.

I HAVE been swearing allegiance to the king of heaven, over the broken body and shed blood of his dear Son. And seeing I have now opened my mouth unto the Lord, O save me from going back. Yea, I have been listing myself as a soldier to fight under the banner of Jesus Christ, as the Captain of my salvation; and my Captain has been giving me a feast to hearten and encourage me against all difficulties. O that I may be strengthened by it, to fight manfully against all his and my enemies; yea, to prevail over them, and put to flight the army of the *aliens*. Alas! I must confess to my shame, that I have often fainted and turned back in the day of battle. I have gone from Christ's standard to the enemy's camp. O for the shield of faith! O for grace to depend more upon my Captain for strength and furniture, whether for work or warfare, duty or difficulty. Lord, leave me not to tug at the oar of unassisted endeavours, or to struggle with duty in my own strength; but help me

always to look to my covenanted Lord for covenanted strength. O let covenanted grace be sufficient for me.

May I now be going on from strength to strength, from one degree of grace to another; from one evidence, experience, and manifestation, to another, till at length I appearbefore God in Zion. Let me forget these things that are behind, and reach forth to these things which are before, and so press on toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And let me count all things but dung and loss, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, but his, to clothe me.

My days are flying away as a swift post, eternity is hasting on with wings; much of my hand-breadth of days is worn away, and soon will my sun be turned, and be very low. O that I may be near my lodging against night. The blast of the last trumpet is at hand, and a proclamation will shortly be made by one standing in the clouds, that time shall be no more. O that I may improve precious time while it lasts, and run fast with my eyes toward heaven, as my home and everlasting lodging place It is an encouragement to run, that Christ is in heaven before me; God send us a joyful meeting. Lord, give me the traveller's charges by the way, something to sweeten my journey, and make it lightsome. O where are the grapes of Eshcol, the cordials of faith, the prospects of Canaan from Pisgah-hill? O that I were frequently sending faith and hope, these two faithful spies, to survey the promised land, or at least to visit the borders and outer-coast of my Lord's country; that they might bring me back some encouraging reports, to support and cheer my heart in the wilderness.

Lord, my wants are many, and I need daily supplies from thee, but blessed be God that I have such an agent in heaven as Christ, to present my bills, petitions, and supplications. I put all my requests in his hand, and leave them to his care and management, who knows the fit time to present them, and send me an answer of them. I desire to put him on all my secrets, and trust him with all my concerns.

Lord, stay not away from me, but let me have some gracious visits now and then in thy ordinances. Give me thy holy Spirit to teach me, when I am ignorant; to quicken me, when I am dull; to awaken me, when I am secure; to revive me, when I am faint. Let thy good Spirit be still suggesting things to me, and bringing thy words and promises to my remembrance, that my hard heart may now and then gush forth in streams of love and desire toward thee. O divine shepherd, thou hast refreshment for my weariness, guidance for my wanderings, and balm for my wounds. O lead me into the pleasant pastures that are watered by the fruitful streams of thy Spirit, that so this tempest-beaten soul may at last be brought into the harbour of rest, and laid up securely with thee.

MEDITATION VII.

GLORY to God, that hath not withheld his Son, even his only Son, from me, but hath given him to be a propitiation for my sins, yea, and to be the life and food of my soul. Blessed be his name, that he who offered himself for me upon the cross, doth also offer himself for me at his table. O that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which he offered on the cross, and which I have been commemorating at his table, may atone for all the failings and miscarriages both in my preparations and performances. O blessed for ever be the Lord Jesus for the wounds which he received on the cross for my sins. O print them deeply on my heart, that I may still remember them, and continually bear about with me "the dying of the Lord Jesus;" that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in me.

I have been eating the bread of my Father's house, O let me not return to feed on the husks of the world and sin. But as I have the Lord Jesus, so help me to walk in him. Uphold me by thy right hand, and let none pluck me out of it: and, according to the well-ordered covenant, O put thy fear in my heart, that I may never depart from thee. O thou that givest power to the faint, and increaseth strength to them that have no might, and who only art able to keep me from falling; O establish, strengthen, and settle me. Lord, never leave nor abandon me to myself, otherwise I will be, as a reed shaken with the wind, and a leaf driven to and fro. Alas, my heart is like Reuben, unstable as water; O if it were liquid as water, that I might, like Hannah, pour it out in prayer before the Lord.

Lord, preserve any degree of softness of heart, or liveliness of frame, which thou hast wrought in me by thine own ordinance, and help me to improve it: otherwise the devil and the world will soon come and lull me asleep, take away the living child, and leave a dead one in its room. Screen me from the cold chilling blasts that come from the devil and the world, that my love be not frozen up: But let the south winds of the Spirit come, and kindly breathe upon any spark of grace thou hast kindled, cherish convictions, preserve good motions, and encourage desires. O maintain the fire of thy love in me, by the oil of thy gracious influences. Let the name of Jesus be always to me as precious ointment poured forth, that I may remember his love more than wine. And let the remembrance of his love be still efficacious to melt my hard heart, enliven my dead soul, and inflame my cold breast with a burning affection to him. O let the charms of my Redeemer's love triumph over all the charms of sin's pleasures and Satan's devices, and cause me reject all their solicitations with disdain and abhorrence. I have seen Christ's love in bleeding to death on the cursed tree, to deliver me from lying in hell; O let me never again wilfully walk in the road that leads to it. I have seen him wrestling in an agony to open heaven's gates for me, let me never turn back on heaven, and tell him, by mine unworthy carriage, he might have saved his labours. O let me never requite the kindness of my glorious friend at this rate.

O that I could spend my life in admiring Christ's love, and contemplating his beauty! Surely he is the *rose of Sharon*, yea, the most beautiful rose in all the garden of God, and that rose that beautifies all the flowers in the garden. How charming is his beauty, and how fragrant is his smell! One leaf of this fragrant rose is sufficient to perfume the whole creation. O let the rose come and perfume my ill-smelled heart, and ill-savoured performances, that God may not reject both me and them. Let the sweet savour of Christ's sacrifice, and the odour of his intercession, so diffuse itself and fill heaven, that the evil savour of my sins and my duties may not enter. Surely, if it were not for that sweet perfume, God would not suffer such a stinking dung-hill as I am, to approach so near him, and be as a smoke in his nostrils all the day. O if the wind of the Spirit would but blow the sweet smell of Sharon's rose on mine unsavoury affections and withered soul, it would soon revive and blossom as the rose, and the scent thereof be as the wine of Lebanon.

MEDITATION VIII.

HOW marvellous is it, that the glorious Bridegroom, Christ, whose beauty is surpassing, his kingdom mighty, and his riches infinite;—that such an one should offer to match with uncomely souls, and court a bride naturally as black as hell; yea, seek her through a sea of blood, through the pains of death, the torments of hell, and the horrors of the grave: That he should follow me in my wanderings, through the wilderness of sin, with his alluring invitations and gospel-offers: Yea, present me with rings and bracelets of his precious promises and Spirit's consolations, and all to win my heart, and gain my consent to him. "He is my Lord and my God." Can my heart be but ravished with his love; he took shame, and gave me glory; he took the curse, and gave me the blessing; he took death, and gave me life; he took my sins, and gave me his righteousness. O wonderful and happy exchange for my soul, that was ready to perish; my soul's blessing be evermore upon his head, that made this exchange with me. O that I may be more and more acquainted with him, and the way of salvation through his righteousness and strength. Let me still desire to go out of myself, that I may be found in him, not having my own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of him. Let me always sit under the shadow of this tree of life, which yields the richest fruits, and O let these fruits be sweet to my taste. Blessed Jesus, thou art my life, my strength, my wisdom, my riches, my light, my health, my joy, my glory, and mine all. Be thou never far from me; but give me faith always to live in thee, and depend on thee.

Lord, pity these poor souls who have been watching on the Son of David as he passed by in the ordinances; and yet are complaining their eyes have not seen the King in his beauty: O draw by the veil, and shew thyself to them. Lord, when thou shewest thyself, let me love thee; and when thou withdrawest thyself, let me follow thee, and lament after thee.

Lord, multiply the children of Zion, the sons born in thy house, even them who are begotten again to a lively hope. And when the Lord shall count and write up the people, may it be written of many in this land, this man and that woman was born there.

Alas, for the unsuccessfulness of sermons and sacraments in this age! O where is the power and life that used to accompany solemn ordinances? Where are these breathings, pantings, mournings, meltings, longings, and heavenly frames, that were wont to be seen at such occasions. The day was, that one sermon hath pricked some thousands to the heart; but now, many sermons are preached and sacraments dispensed, and scarce any pricked to the heart for sin.

Lord, hasten Antichrist's downfal. Remove that mother and mistress of abominations in the earth. Take graven images and superstition out of the way; and bring in the Jews in troops. Let the time come when this church shall sing for joy; the sun, and her sun, like the light of seven days in one. Come and lay her stones with fair colours, and her foundations with saphires: Make her windows of agates, and her gates carbuncles. Let the name of our cities be *Jehovah Shammah*, "The Lord is there:" and the inscription of the people's lives be, "Holiness to the Lord." O that the pleasant flowers may appear, and the time of the singing of birds may come. Amen.

AN ACTION-SERMON,

AND

SACRAMENTAL SPEECHES,

Before, at, and after Serving the Tables.

Let him that is a-thirst, say, Come: And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely, REV. xxiii. 17.

WE have here Christ, in the close of this book, owning himself to be the author thereof, verse 16. Moreover, he gives a description of himself, "the root and offspring of David;" the first, as he is God; the second, as he is Man; also the bright and Morning Star. As the morning star first brings light to the world, so Christ is the light of the world, the first publisher of the light of the gospel. And now, by this revelation, he gives a superadded light to his people, informing them what shall befal his church till his coming to judgment. He is the Morning Star that will shine bright in the morning of the resurrection, when he comes to gather all his saints, as so many stars round about him. And he hath twice told already in this chapter, verses 7, 12. and the third time he closes with it, assuring us that he was coming quickly. Here, in verse 17, we have the Spirit and Church answering, saying, Come. The Spirit or Holy Ghost in the bride, and the bride by the Spirit, bids Christ welcome.

Observation. All true believers long for Christ's second coming, for finishing the days of sinning, destroying the works of Satan, accomplishing the number of the elect, manifesting the glory of justice and mercy, and putting saints into the full and final possession of the kingdom. 2. We have a command to every one that hears and believes these things, to say, Come: we should all be in case to desire it. Every chaste spouse will long for her husband's coming. 3. We have Christ's call to us, in order to prepare us for his coming, and to put us in case to desire it, *i. e.* first to come to him. We must first come to Christ by faith, ere we can on good grounds desire and invite Christ to come in the clouds; and if ye once do this, ye need not care though his coming were to be this very day, but ye might chearfully answer, as John doth, verse 20, Amen, &c.

In these words we have a free and gracious invitation given, and welcome offered, to all poor sinners to come to Christ for mercy: where we have, 1. The mercy offered, and that is the water of life, *i. e.* Christ and all his benefits.

2. The persons invited, 1. The thirsty, *i. e.* those who are sensible of their wants and necessities, and have an earnest desire to come. 2. Whosoever will, which makes the offer more large and extensive. Some poor soul might say, Alas! I am not thirsty, my desires are not vehement. Well, then, are you but willing? O hast thou will? Come away. Ye must be willing. Salvation and mercy is not to be forced upon you against your wills.

3. We have the terms upon which this offer is made to us, upon our coming and taking freely. Christ is not selling himself and his purchase; for if he did, such is our poverty and want, that we could never buy them: Wherefore he says, Come and take freely, pay nothing. I am seeking no work or merit in you, only take it freely. O could the terms be contrived easier, when he says not, take of the wa-

ter, but take the water, as if he had said, it is all at your will.

Doctrine. That it is the royal will and pleasure of God, that Christ, and all the rich blessings of his covenant, revealed in the gospel, should be freely offered to all needy sinners that will come to take them. See Isaiah lv. 1.

Method. 1. I shall give a glance of these benefits and blessings here offered freely in the gospel. 2. Why they are called the water of life. 3. What the gospel would have us to do, in order to our having a right to them. 4. Give reasons 5. Apply.

As to the *first;* O! the blessings are unspeakable, though we could speak with the tongues of men and angels. Consider, 1. The same blessings that ever were bestowed on any saint since Adam's time, the same essential blessings offered to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Peter, Paul, &c. are offered to you; the same God that was Abraham's God shall be your God, the same Christ, the same Spirit, the same covenant, the same heaven, shall be yours: Ye shall come up to Abraham's bosom, and sit down to the same table and food with him. O it is in your offer, poor beggar, to be as rich, great, and happy as Abraham.

2. There are here in your offer all the blessings and benefits which are comprehended in the wide bosom of God's promises, which are rich, great, and precious. O we cannot number or weigh them; time would fail to repeat them; we cannot tell how to begin; or, if begin, where to make an end. Read the scriptures from end to end, and behold a dazzling and glorious sight: As the heaven is bespangled with stars in a winter night, so is the word with shining promises: and we may allude to that passage in God's covenant with Abraham, "If these stars can be numbered, so may thy seed be numbered." So may I say, if the promises can be numbered or weighed, so can the blessings here offered.

3. All that the blood and merits of the eternal Son of God could purchase and obtain, is here offered; and you may guess at the greatness of the benefits, by the greatness of the sum paid for them They must needs be rich, for Christ bespoke them for us very early, even in the morning of eternity: and O dear have they cost him! he must come down from his throne, cover himself with our dust, sweat blood, shed blood, suffer hell's torments, and die! Sure all this was not for a thing of nought; no, there is a great purchase like the price, called here the "water of life;" there is everlasting righteousness, deliverance from hell, pardon, reconciliation, access to God, peace of conscience, adoption into God's family grace for renovation and sanctification. There is a heavenly kingdom, the uninterrupted vision and fruition of God to all eternity; there is Christ's purchase, all offered here: yea, he offers not only his purchase, but his person; you have Christ himself in your offer, and with him all things.

Finally, In Christ you have all the persons of the blessed Trinity in your offer, and that is more than heaven and earth; and all is included in the water of life God the Father is hereby understood; we find him so calling himself, Jer. ii 13. "a fountain of living waters;" where he summons heaven and earth to wonder at the distraction of men in forsaking him. -Jesus Christ is also "a fountain opened," Zech. 13. 1. He is the rock smitten by the sword of justice that the water of life might gush out.—The Holy Ghost is also called a "river of water of life," Rev. xxii. 1. So that here in this water of life, we have God Jehovah in our offer, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and what can ye wish for more? You have God himself to be your God; so stands the covenant, Jer. xxxii. 33. "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." You have God to be your God, your inheritance, your stock, your portion; and may not ye say as David, Psalm xvi. 1. "I have got a goodly heritage?" God shall be your father, your friend, your counsellor; thy Maker is thy husband, and every thing thou canst desire.

As to the *second* head, Why called the water of life? Ans 1. Because of its properties and qualifications; 1. Water hath a purging and cleansing virtue, for taking away filth and pollution.—O, but the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.

2. Water is of a cooling and refreshing nature to the poor scorched traveller; O, but the benefits of Christ's death are refreshing to the poor thirsty soul, that is saying, I faint I languish, and die without thee. See Psalm xlii. 1.

3. Water is good to quench fire; so this blood quenches the fire of God's wrath, also of lust, pride, passion, &c.

4. Water is a softening thing to the hardened earth: O, but many a hard heart has been mollified into tears, and melted into compliance with God's will, saying with Paul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

5. Water is of a fructifying nature; it makes the dry withered herbs to be green and fragrant O, how many barren withered souls have been made hereby to bring forth the fruit of righteousness? Without water nothing would grow; what made Egypt so fruitful but the inundation of the Nile? And what makes a soul a watered garden, and a field the Lord hath blessed, but this water of life? O that there were many such in this place.

6. Water is the most necessary thing in the world; without it we could not live. O how miserably would we perish, if we wanted the water of life.

7. Water is cheap, and free to both poor and rich; it costs us nothing, all are welcome. So here, come without money and without price.

2. It is called the water of life, either, 1. Because it affords spiritual life to dead souls; 'tis the wine that makes the lips of those that are asleep to speak Yea, and it nourishes and preserves the soul to eternal life. Eternal life is a sure effect of it; the soul that drinks here shall never die. 2 'Tis so called, because it excels all other water Why? 'Tis better than common water, it is fountain water as called Rev xxi. 6. "The fountain of the water of life." O what a choice fountain is it? O it has a noble vent, many pleasant passages and conduits. O, the side, head, heart, and hands of Christ, were pierced to let this water distil more freely and plentifully to the world It hath choice conduits and pipes. O do not mistake them, it runs only in the conduit of the promises, the channels of the sanctuary. O how pleasantly doth it flow between the banks of ordinances? But mind these are only the ordinances of his own appointment. See Joel iii. 18. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the mountains shall drop down new wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the rivers of Judah shall flow with waters, and a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord, and shall water the valley of Shittim" It comes only from the house of the Lord. 3. It hath many pleasant chrystal streams that make glad the city of God, Psalm xlvi. 4. reviving, purifying, softening, sanctifying, fructifying, and medicinal streams, for healing all diseases and plagues whatsoever. Are there any diseased souls? come to these medicinal streams and bathe. What is your disorder and

wound, and it shall be cured? Is it spiritual blindness? O this opens the eyes of those who are born blind Is it deafness? it makes a man quick to hear God's call and counsel. Is it lameness? it causes the lame man leap as an hart. Is it weakness of hands, feebleness of knees? O this endows with life, strength and courage for duty. Is it a tympany, a swelling of pride? O it makes him low in his own eyes. Is it a spiritual consumption and decay of faith, love, repentance, zeal, &c. Is it the plague of the heart, earthly mindedness, backsliding, wandering, deadness? Is it hardness of heart? O come here, this water will soften the flinty rock, and make the hard heart tender and pliable. O come, lay open all your wounds and sores, and you shall be healed. 4 Other fountains may be locked or dry up, but here the wells of salvation never run dry in any season, and are open continually. Christ hath taken the stone away from the well's mouth, so that we may take of the water of life freely. 5. Other fountains are measurable and fathomable; but this is a deep, everflowing and overflowing fountain, like the water in Ezek. xlvii. 5.

As to the *third head*, how shall we get this water of life? See what is required here, "come and take," that is the condition required, faith in Christ. Consider, 1. When we say this is a condition required, we do not mean there is any thing necessary, in point of worth and merit, but only in point of order and of means. This is not a covenant of works, but of grace, a free covenant, all things are given here freely And who will say he pays any thing for water, when he comes to the well to take it, gets it for the taking, or putting out the hand? Will a beggar say he merits any thing by putting out his hand for his alms? Acceptance is a necessary and intrinsic condition in all gifts; if I take not a gift, it can never be mine. 2. This condition of coming on our part, doth not denote any power or grace in us to stretch out our hand, or open our mouth. No: though God requires it of us, yet it is his special grace that enables us; and he requires it, to let us know what is our duty, and to make us sensible of our insufficiency.

To "come and take," denotes and implies several things: 1. Our natural distance from this water Some folks look on themselves as having these things by birth right; but ye are all mistaken; for naturally you are strangers and enemies to God, and heirs of hell, aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, having no interest in Christ.

2. It denotes our sense of that distance and lost case by nature without Christ; that we are undone without this water. O did you ever see your distance, danger, and ruin, by reason of clouds of guilt and wrath hanging over your head? O mind, Christ came to seek and save that which was lost.

3. It supposes that the way is now patent to the tree of life. No angel, with a flaming sword, to keep the way. Christ now is not a well shut up or sealed: No; the fountains of life are broke up, the wells of salvation are now opened, the stone rolled from the well's mouth. The well is deep, but here is a bucket to draw with; the breasts of consolation are drawn out, wisdom's gates are cast wide open. O there is a free market of grace proclaimed, if ye hinder not yourselves, there is no hindrance on Christ's part. O needy souls, will ye starve in the house and the market so near, and a free market too? O will ye perish for thirst, and the well at hand?

4. It imports a discovery of the fitness and excellency of Christ for the soul; he is able, sufficient, suitable, and willing. You will never come till you see this, that Christ can satisfy all your wants, and answer all your objections. Art thou deeply indebted to justice, even drowned in debt?—Christ hath a ransom that can satisfy. Art thou under the heavy curse of God? Christ has become a curse. Art thou condemned to die? O here is sufficient righteousness to justify you. Art thou filthy and polluted with sin? O here is an open fountain for thy washing. Art thou poor? here is fine gold, the riches of grace and glory. Art thou starving? here is wine and milk, manna, the fatted calf, a full feast.—Art thou blind? here is eye salve. Art thou naked? here is white raiment. Art thou sick? here is a physician.—Wounded? here is the balm of Gilead. Art thou a slave? O here is the Redeemer and Ransomer. Art thou in prison? here is the jailor that hath the keys of David, that opens prison-doors. Art thou under iron fetters? here is the mighty lion, that can break the iron fetters, and cut asunder the gates of brass. O what canst thou say more? *Object.* I am a poor vile sinner, will he accept of me? I have no confidence to think he will. O he answers, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" *Object.* My sins are red as crimson. *Ans.* I will make them white as wool. *Object.* I am a leper and full of plagues. *Ans* The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. *Object.* O there is little hope of me, I am quite lost and undone.—*Ans.* I came to seek and save that which was lost *Object.* O there is no hope, for I seem to be past cure, I am dead in sin, rotten in the grave. *Ans.* "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believes on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." *Object.* I have lain long at the pool. *Ans.* Did he not heal an impotent man, that had an infirmity thirty-eight years? Though you have lain bound under sin, not only these thirty eight years, but even these eighty years, yet come, though it were at the last hour, as the thief on the cross, and he will heal you. and not cast you out.—*Object.* O but I have raised many high mountains in Christ's way. *Ans.* I am he that comes skipping upon the mountains *Object* I am deaf, I cannot hear his voice. *Ans.* I will open thine ears, and cause thee to hear the voice of thy beloved *Object.* I am lame, I will never be able to walk. *Ans.* The covenant runs thus. "I will write my laws in thy heart, and cause thee to walk in my ways." *Object.* But his ways are difficult, I cannot keep his laws. *Ans* "Take my yoke upon you,—for my yoke is easy and my burden is light," Mat. xi. 29, 30. "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace" Prov iii. 19. *Object.* I will break the covenant, and apostatize from Christ. *Ans.* The covenant runs, Jer. iii. 19, "Thou shalt call me thy Father, and shalt not turn away from me." *Object.* O but I will never hold out against Satan. *Ans* My grace is sufficient for thee. *Object.* But I will perish in the wilderness. *Ans* I am given to be thy leader, and thou shalt go up thro' it, leaning on me.

5. It imports the going out of the soul after the water of life, with spiritual desires and longings, saying, as David, O for a drink of the water of Bethel well, who will fetch me it? O who will bring me into the strong city! O when wilt thou come unto me? O that I knew where to find him. O my soul follows hard after him. O where will the well spring up in this dry valley of Baca.—None but Christ can satisfy the desires of my soul.

6. The soul turns its back upon every thing inconsistent with Christ; particularly, on our sins, the world, and their pleasures. O, saith the soul, there is no happiness there for me, these muddy puddles will not quench my thirst; it is

the water of life only can do it. Also on our own righteousness, duties, prayers, tears, repentance, reformation. O these will not do my business with the justice of God. Mine eye is only on Christ; this is his name, "The Lord our righteousness." In the Lord only have I righteousness and strength.

7. It implies a man's activity in bestirring himself in the use of all commanded means, to win at the water of life. O bestir yourselves, let not Christ complain of you, as Isaiah lxiv. 7. "There is none that calleth on my name, or stirreth up himself to take hold of me." O cry, Awake faith!—"Awake, O north wind, come thou south wind: Awake, O arm of the Lord!"

8. It mainly implies a going beyond all means and ordinances, and taking hold of Christ himself, the soul's receiving and embracing this bleeding High Priest on a cross, as our surety and propitiation, taking his blessed sacrifice in our arms, sprinkling our souls with the blood, dipping our guilty souls in the fountain, pleading this with God, and presenting it to justice, as our only shield and shelter. O come now under the covert of this blood, and shadow of this rock.—Comply with and acquiesce in this noble device. O where is the eye of faith to look to the water! O where the wings of faith to carry it! Where the hand of faith to reach it! The bucket of faith, the mouth of faith opened wide! O communicants, you must this day come near the foot of the cross, the clefts of the rock, close by the wounds; you must do as Thomas did, "Reach hither your hand, feel the prints of the nails;" thrust it into his side, into the fountain, and cry with him, "My Lord, and my God;" and with Paul, "My Christ, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

There must be particular appropriating and applying acts of faith this day, like the Spouse, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." This bargain must be transacted covenant ways; it must be sealed and confirmed with heaven's broad seal, and with a solemn oath in the sacrament. You must take Christ as a priest and atoning sacrifice, and also as a master whom ye will serve.

As to the *fourth head*, Why is the water of life offered to all freely?

Ans. It is offered to all, to shew that it is the duty of all to accept. The gospel-trumpet sounds a jubilee to all that will accept. This general offer is like a rope let down among drowning men, all are called to grip to it, and he that lays hold on it shall be pulled up. He offers to them freely, 1. To make all unwilling persons wholly inexcusable. It is without money and without price: what can you object against it? 2. The gospel-market is free, because all things are the purchase of Christ's blood; Christ has bought all these things at the adequate price; Christ has been at the market before us, and that makes all things the cheaper to us. 3. Because we are wholly unable to buy, we can give nothing for them; if there were nothing but one good word or thought required of us to purchase salvation, we could not perform it; we have totally lost our stock, and turned bankrupt. 4. To exclude all boasting or glory in the creature, Rom. iii. 27. "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay; but by the law of faith." 5. To glorify God's grace hereby. God will have believers on heaven for ever to exalt free grace, and cry, All is free, glory to free grace for all, our election, regeneration, sanctification, justification, communion, ordinances, sacraments, heaven, &c. All is free. Praise to none but God for these inestimable blessings.

Application 1. Let us fall in a rapture of wonder and admiration, because of the adorable mysteries and miracles of free love discovered here in the gospel. O worship and adore this contrivance! Do as the Israelites did, Exod. iv. 31. When they heard that a Saviour was come among them, "They bowed down their heads and worshipped" So do ye this day, O communicants. Do as Moses commanded the Israelites, Exod. xiv. 13. "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew you this day." O see it with wonder. You are fearfully and wonderfully made, but far more fearfully and wonderfully redeemed. O glorify him for the contrivance of salvation, for the eternal purposes of love, for the covenant of grace, and the revelation of it in the gospel. The terms of the covenant are wondrous, reasonable, and easy. The treasures of the covenant are wondrous, rich, and valuable. The whole covenant is wonderfully well ordered and sure But, for the glory of God and the comfort of believers, here God shews his marvellous loving kindness, Psal. xvii. 7. Wonderful to poor rebel worms, traitor dust and ashes. O it might have been expected that God, after the fall, would have sent a fearful message to the world, like that Rev. viii *ult.* "Wo, wo, wo to the inhabitants of the earth." But behold a surprising message, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent.—And whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely."

Exhortation to come. Here I offer to you, the worst of sinners, the water of life, the blood of Christ, and all his purchase. Here I make a general proclamation, in the King of Glory's name, of the freedom of his grace, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." And *whosoever will*, communicants and spectators, be what ye will, as if I did call every man and woman's name.

1. O carnal earthly soul, that has been a drudge to the world all thy days, "come to the water." 2. O prophane drunkard, swearer, sabbath-breaker, unclean sinner, black as hell! O will ye "come to the water of life, and be cleansed?" O are ye minded to die in your polluted case, and be purged no other way than by hell's flames? "O turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" O liars, cheaters, railers, revengeful, malicious, backbiters, that have been wallowing in sin's puddle, O will ye die in your sins, and the fountain so near? 3. O blind soul, born blind, that never saw thy sins, lost state, and sinking condition, and all the heavy curses of the law hanging over your head, O come to this healing and enlightening waters. O cry, with the poor blind men, Mat. xx. 31, 32, 33. "Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David. And Jesus stood still, and called them and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you? They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes be opened." See how importunate and sensible; their complaint is in their mouth, their petition in their hand, they tell their distress. 4. O prayerless-sinner, that never sought God's grace in earnest, scarce bowed a knee, or read a chapter, O will ye come? O ye that never had any serious desire after Christ before, ye that never had any concern for heaven and salvation before, I invite you to come. 5. O careless sinner, that never had any heart-love to God or his ordinances, to his way and service, O will ye come? 6. O sinners, that have slighted Christ all your days and the calls of the gospel; refused all his offers, and trampled on his blood hitherto, "come to the water" 7. O obstinate sinners, that would never be prevailed with to leave sin, that would never be persuaded by all the calls, warnings, and pains, God has used to reclaim you, by

his rod, conscience, afflictions, &c. O will ye come? I call you once more to come. 8. O condemned rebels, in the hands of Justice, and sentenced to die; will ye come? 9 O slaves to sin and Satan, that have been drudging after him all your lives, will ye come? 10. O ye that never kept one word to God since ye came into the world, though ye have sworn to him at baptism, in sickness, and at the Lord's table, will ye come? 11. O poor dry withered souls, that have been long watered by the ordinances, and yet bring forth no fruit, O come here, get your roots and branches watered. 12. O poor dead hearted souls, that have long laboured under deadness, O come with your cold, lifeless, be numbed souls to the water of life. 13. O diseased soul, that has many heart-plagues, here is healing. 14. Poor formal souls, lame sinner, that could not walk, unbelieving souls, backsliders, hypocrites, O come for once, and deal sincerely with God and your own souls. O take of the water of life.

Motive 1. O consider what is this day in your offer; all that the blood and merits of the eternal Son of God could purchase, everlasting righteousness, pardon, reconciliation, access to God, peace of conscience, sanctifying grace, adoption into God's family, a heavenly kingdom, and the vision and fruition of God for ever. In a word, you have all that can make you good, all that can make you great, and all that can make you happy. Some are so rich they know not what they have. O believer, you know not how rich you are, and how great your privileges are.

2. Consider the extreme need you stand in of Christ. O poor soul, the fire of God's wrath is burning against thee, if you get not this water to quench it, you must be a faggot for this fire through eternity, and "Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?" What will you do at a judgment-seat? You will stand speechless and Christless, helpless and hopeless, the executioner will drag thee to the pit without mercy. It will be in vain then to cry, Lord, mercy, mercy, if the blood of Christ be now despised. O if thou hast no need, come not: But a starving man needs not meat so much, as a wounded man a physician, a dying man breath, so much as thou needs the water of life. O for a stream to polluted souls.

3. Consider how fit and suitable Christ is for you. Art thou scorched and thirsty? here is drink. Art thou poor, miserable, blind and naked? here is blood to justify and water to cleanse. Hast thou plagues, leprosy? &c. here are noble baths. O ye need not say, "Who will ascend to heaven and bring the water? It is here on earth, in this church." Say not who will roll away the stone: For thy fountain is opened. O here is water that will restore thy soul again, renew thy youth like the eagle's, heal all thy diseases, and cure all thy wounds. O will ye be so near the well's mouth, and not step in? O will ye come to this healing water?

4. There is an offer made to you that was never made to fallen angels, Heb. i. 16. "He took not on him the nature of angels." Originally it may be rendered, he took not hold of them when falling, as a man takes hold of a glass, or any brittle thing falling, and keeps it from destruction. O put not yourselves, by your refusal, in the same case with them. If ye lose this opportunity, consider the remembrance of lost opportunities will be terrible to you in hell, like oil to your flames. O what would damned spirits give for this offer?

5. If ye come not presently, a sentence may be passed which shall not be altered, as Luke xiv. 24. "For I say unto you, that none of these men which were bidden shall taste of my supper." Ye shall not taste of the water of life, but drink of the cup of wrath. Perhaps many that saw the last communion here, and would not come to Christ, are now sinking or swimming in the brimless and bottomless ocean of God's wrath. And some, who joined with us formerly, are now drinking it new with Christ in his kingdom. O what a sweet song are they presently singing, and will continue to sing eternally, Rev. i. 5. "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." O will ye chuse to sing this song, or howl in the ocean of wrath.—It is like many of you will never see another communion here, and many never get another offer of the water of life. O chuse presently what ye will do. The offer comes close home to you, ye must either say, ye will take Christ or reject him.

6. Consider the vanity of all other fountains; the world is a poor rent cistern. Why will ye forsake the fountain of living waters that will never fail you?

7. Consider what way the offer is made to you, by loud and open proclamation, with great earnestness, repeating his offers frequently, he is laying out all his wares to tempt you, his wounds are speaking to and pleading with you, he is commending the waters of life to you, telling that they are good and suitable for you Oh! we are unskilful factors for Christ, O that he would commend himself to you, and say, "I am the rose of Sharon and the lilly of the valley." O consider now, Christ is ready, the Master is calling, and he has sent me out to call, "All things are ready." Come, Christ is just now waiting for an answer, I am peremptory with you, I cannot give you a day or an hour longer to advise. "It is to-day that you hear his voice." What then sayest thou? O give your answer presently. Whether will you come to the water of life or lie in the puddle of sin? In Christ my master's name, I charge you, man, woman, old and young, to give a present answer. O what shall I report to my master? O are there some saying, I will not answer thee but Christ himself. Well, you deal kindly with my master. O do I see any thirsting, coming, flightering with desire, and saying, Lord, give me Christ, or else I die: None but Christ. On the other hand, will ye make light of it, and say, we care not for the water of life; then we may stop, sit down, and cause draw the table. O but I am sure you cannot find in your heart to treat your Redeemer so, that hath come so far, and paid so dear for this water.—Well, do as you will, I take God to record, and call heaven and earth to witness against you, that I have offered Christ freely, and set life and death before you. Chuse whom ye will serve, and what pool ye will drink of. If ye accept not the offer, it had better that ye had never heard of it, for it will witness against you. You will say, cursed be the day that ever I heard a gospel-sermon. Cursed be the day that ever I witnessed a communion. Would to God I had been the son of a Pagan; Would to God I had been the daughter of a Mahometan.

Direct. O say ye, shall I win? and how shall I come to this fountain? The streams are running close by my door, O I am afraid I miss.

Ans. 1. Come humbly, under a deep sense of your pollution. Say that ye are the chief of sinners, and the least of saints. "He sends the springs into the vallies," Psal civ. 10. O humble yourselves very low, take a back look of all your breaches of vows and old sins, how numerous and black they are; and O behold their colour and hue in the red glass of

Christ's sufferings, and then the water of life will be welcome to you.

2. Cry that the Spirit of God may move on the water, that then ye may step in and be healed. Cry that the water of life may rise and overflow its banks, that multitudes may be cured.

3. Come thirsting and panting for the water of life; "let every one that is a-thirst come." O, are there any saying, I'll die if I get not a drink, one stream of this water, for Christ's sake: Then you shall be sure of this water, for you have the word of a king for it here, and Psalm lxxxi. 10. "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it."

4. Come with raised expectations; you need not fear that these waters, when you come thirsty to them, will prove like the summer brooks which disappoint the weary traveller, Job vi. 15. They are not like the flattering empty cisterns of the creature, that perform not what they promise: No, these are inexhaustible fountains of living waters, that never can run dry. O mind he is a great and rich King thou art coming to, he gives liberally and grudges not. O raise your expectations, not on account of any thing in yourselves, but on account only of Christ's merits, and God's mercy; then you have a good foundation.——As we oft wrong ourselves by expecting too much from the world; so we oft wrong ourselves, by expecting too little from God, "whose mercy is upon us according as we hope in him," Psalm xxxiii. ult. Christ, in conferring his goods, still saith, "According to your faith, so be it unto you." The King of Israel lost his advantage against the Syrians, by smiting thrice, and then staying, when he should have smitten five or six times, 2 Kings xiii. So we oft prejudice ourselves by the weakness of our faith; we receive little because we expect little; and are like those among whom Christ would not do many mighty works, because of their unbelief.

5. Come with joy and praise. O sinner, die not for thirst, when there is such a fountain of living water so near thee: but come with joy, and draw water out of the wells of salvation, Isaiah xii. 3. Do as David did, when he went to the altar of God, he went to God as his exceeding joy, Psalm xliii. 4. O this is the day which the Lord hath made; let us rejoice, and be glad in it. O bless God for Christ, bless him for his ordinances; bless him for the feast, the invitation you have to it, that you have not a feast of eternal torments in hell: Bless God that has made you willing to come, and has set so great things in your offer and view, and that he is willing to bestow them on such worms. Raise your hearts, O communicants, and say with David, Psalm ciii. 1. 2. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, and forget not all his benefits."

Object. 1. Alas! I am a sinful creature, shall I come? *Ans.* The greater is thy need, O come with thy crimson sins.—*Object.* 2 I have slighted these waters so long, I have no confidence. *Ans.* Be humbled for it, and make a present amends by coming. *Object.* 3. I am feared I be disappointed though I come. *Ans.* No, you have the word of a king for it; those "that come to me, I'll in nowise cast out." *Object.* 4. Alas! I have no strength to come, I have a dead heart. *Ans.* O come, make a mint; groan under thy deadness, lay a dead soul before God's promises. O hoist up the sails; and wait for the gales; look up to God for the accomplishment of his promise. O plead it, and put him to his word; act faith in God's promise in the text, and look up. Do as the Israelites did in the wilderness, Num. xxi. 16, 17, 18.—God hath called them to the place, and promised them water which was very welcome in that dry desart. Well, did they sit still and wait till it sprung? No, they digged, put to their staves, in expectation of God's accomplishing his promise, and sang, "spring up, O well." So do ye; O come, make the mint, put to your staves, weak and short as they are, and dig in expectation, and look up, pray and sing, "spring, O well." Come, bring all your empty vessels to this fountain, in expectation of a fill. Do as the poor widow did, 2 Kings iv. Bring not a few; have ye not many wants to be supplied? And I am persuaded the vessel will fail, ere ever the oil fail. *Object.* 5. Alas! I am blind, I cannot see the well springing, and O it is high time now. *Ans.* It may be, poor soul, the well is nearer than you apprehend:—you may be, like Hagar, ready to fall on a desperate resolution, when the well was just at hand, Gen. xxi. The Lord "opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water," &c. O that God may do so with you. O poor soul, take courage, rely on God's promise, and come thirsty, with raised expectations, and there is no fear. See that word, Isaiah xli. 17, 18. "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them." And mind that other word, Psalm ix. 18. "For the needy shall not always be forgotten; the expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever." O come with faith and hope, and God will be as good as his word.

SPEECH BEFORE GOING DOWN TO THE TABLE.

NOW we come to offer you the water of life, not only doctrinally, but in a visible sacramental manner: And ye are now to approach to the fountain of the water of life in this ordinance, which is the most solemn and august ordinance under heaven, and requires the most profound awe and reverence from us: But, before we go about it, we shall read our warrant from the eternal God for doing it, that so we may show that it is no invention of men or angels: And that we may keep as close to Christ's institution as we can, read with me, 1 Cor. ix. 23. "For I have received of the Lord, that which I also delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink of this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

Here we have one of heaven's broad seals appended to the covenant of grace, wherein you have not only Christ crucified, signified, and represented to your view, but also exhibited, offered, sealed, and applied to your souls, with all the purchase of his cross, and benefits of his blood. Christ left this ordinance as a special love-token behind him, when he was to die and leave us. Observe the time when he did it, in "the same night in which he was betrayed," even the last night of his life, when he saw his all at the stake; when he saw heaven, earth, and hell combining; justice, wicked men, and devils, ready to fall upon him; the black cloud of his Father's wrath just at the breaking over his

head; and his bitter agony in the garden and on the cross, just at hand: Was it not high time now to be providing for his own safety, when he had so short time for it? O but, in the first place, he will mind believers, and prepare a feast and a cordial for them to the world's end, when he was gone. O a famous night never to be forgotten; a sad night to Christ, but a sweet night to us; without which the day-light of the gospel and eternal glory had never dawned upon us. Christ would have you never forget that night; wherefore he leaves us these love-tokens and memorials of himself, to keep us in mind, bread and wine, which you are to eat and drink. These are no costly things; Christ would not be burdensome to his people with any of his ordinances. These fitly resemble the body and blood of our Redeemer, in respect of their qualities and effects. Bread, ere it be fit to nourish us, must be first sown and die in the earth; then it must be threshen, grinded, baked in the oven, broken, and eaten; and O it is a most nourishing thing for us. It is bread that strengthens man's heart, Psalm civ. 15. So Christ's body strengthens and nourishes the believing soul. Wine, ere it be fit for use, it must be squeezed out of the grape, trodden and bruised in the wine-press; and there is no liquor so fit for cheering of fainting spirits: So with Christ crucified, his blood cheers the drooping soul. This bread must be broken, that we may see his wounds, the print of the nails, and the spear, and may see into Christ's bleeding heart and yearning bowels of tender mercy, and hear them sounding towards you; and also see the clefts of the rock opened, which can only shelter you. Again, this wine must be poured forth, that ye may see the fountain of the water of life opened, his blood running freely to save you. O the wells of salvation are now opened, and the stone rolled away. Come, dead, hard-hearted, blind, lame, diseased souls, to the healing waters. Again, this bread and wine are to be offered to you, "Take, eat, drink," to let you see that Christ is not only to be represented, but to be offered and accepted. You must now strip yourselves to take hold of him, receive Christ, and all his benefits. O now is the time when you must flee in to Christ crucified, and close with him, and grip fast to him. O this is the main work of communicating. When ye hear these words, "Take, eat, drink," think with yourselves that ye see Christ at the head of the table, and ye hear him saying, Take me and all my benefits. O if ye do not this, ye will eat and drink damnation. This is your main work; come believing, confiding in, and relying on, Jesus Christ for life and salvation. Come confiding in his authority, ability, and promise to save. O come leaning and staying yourselves upon this rock. O come, weary soul, and cast thy burden here, and he shall sustain thee. O shelterless sinner, come thou and all thy concerns, into this ark, and here shalt thou be safe when the deluge comes. O terrified and pursued soul, flee to this city of refuge, and thou shalt be secured from the avenger of blood. O quit all other shelters and refuges, poor trembling dove, and take to the clefts of the rock alone, for there is no salvation in any other. O faithless soul, wilt thou come here, reach hither thy finger, and in this ordinance behold his hands, reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into his side, and feel the print of the nails, and the mark of the spear, and then say, with Thomas, "My Lord, and my God." Here I cast mine anchor, here I rest my soul. "It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again," to him I give up myself, as my Prophet, Priest, and King. Lord, I believe, help mine unbelief. And thus say to thy soul, O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, He is my God; then return, O my soul, unto thy rest, and be easy and safe. O communicants, consider that you are (if ye would communicate worthily) to cast your guilty sinful souls into the open bleeding arms of a crucified Saviour, and give up yourselves, soul and body, to him to be saved, taught, and ruled by him. You are to close a bargain and seal a covenant with him before angels and men. You must receive Christ to save, and give up yourselves to be saved by him, and to serve him. God offering the elements, and Christ in them, is a seal on God's part; and your taking them is a seal on your part. Now mind, when ye take the elements, that ye, with the arms of your faith, embrace and clasp about the bleeding High Priest, rest and rely wholly on his merits and ransom, apply his blood for washing away all your guilt; present it in faith's hand, and plead it with God. Say, Lord, I deserve to be sent to hell from this table. But, Lord, here is a ransom, a righteousness; a loud speaking meritorious blood. When you are eating and drinking, thankfully remember his dying love, and suffering for your sins. And look on him whom ye have pierced; and here covenant, vow, and resolve, that ye will pierce and grieve him no more, and my soul for yours ye shall not be unworthy communicants: Think with yourselves, in communicating, that ye hear Christ saying, "Do this in remembrance of me." O now think on me, your best friend in the world, who remembered you in your low estate, when there was none to do it. Think on me that came down from my glorious throne, and laid down my head on a block, for you, a poor rebellious worm. Think on me who paid all your debt, suffered death for you, and left you mine inheritance. Think on me that I am now absent from you, but am negociating your affairs, pleading your cause, and preparing your mansion. Think on me that am coming quickly again in the clouds to meet you, and take you to my palace, and put you in possession of all. O remember me, who am still remembering you, and have engraven you on the palms of my hands, and have you still in my heart and eye. And O when ye thus mind, see that it be with grief for, and abhorrence of your sins, that pierced and slew the Lord of life; and with love and thankfulness to him that came so chearfully to be your ransomer, "Lo, I come, in the volume of thy book it is written of me; to do thy will I take delight." O blessed be he that consented to the work. O had he refused, none other would have accepted, and we had all been sinking in the ocean of wrath. O bless him, bless him; O my soul, he had no better to give than himself and his heart's blood. O sinner, will that do thee good, thou shalt not want a drop of it. O communicants, come, take. Christ crucified is now ready for you; all things are ready, come away to the marriage and to the marriage feast. The bridegroom is ready, the servants and friends of the bridegroom are ready to attend you, the blessing to the feast is ready, the marriage-robes are ready, Christ's righteousness; the master of the feast is ready to bid you welcome; yea, the whole provision is ready. The Spirit is ready to apply the benefits, a pardon is ready, a laver for sanctification is ready, the wells of consolation are ready, our High Priest is ready to atone, our advocate is ready to plead, the mansions are ready to receive us, the crown is ready, the angels ready to convey us, all things are ready but your hearts and souls. O will ye make ready and come; the Spirit saith Come, the Bride saith Come, Rev. xxii. 17. Come first to Christ, and then come to the sacrament. The table of the great God is covered,

the water of life is ready, the fountain of life is broke up, the well is open, the stone is rolled away, the breasts of consolation are drawn out: O for hungering and thirsting this day. O for many a long piercing look through these clouds, that the master of the feast may come and feed us with the heavenly manna, and water of life. He is the heavenly Pelican that feeds his young ones with his blood, and we are starving supplicants, Lord, about thy hand. May we, therefore, come forward, exercising faith and love, that so we may be made partakers of Christ's broken body and shed blood, with all his benefits, to our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

But, my friends, I must first set a rail about the table, that none who have no right to the table, and children's bread, may come near it. And, therefore, I, in Christ's name, my master, and the master of this feast, excommunicate and debar from this holy table, 1. All strangers to God, and enemies to Christ, all those who are not content with the way contrived of salvation through a Redeemer; all who are not willing to accept of Christ as a Prophet, Priest, and King, and give up themselves to be saved, taught, and ruled by him. All who are living in any known sin, against light, and resolve not to part with it—particularly, all Atheists, who deny God in heart or life.—All ignorant persons, who know not God, their lost state by nature, their need of Christ, and what he has done for them. All prayerless persons, who worship not God in their families, nor in secret.—Ye who forget Christ all the year over, are not fit to remember him at a communion-table.—All who are slaves to the world, and put it in God's room.—All who are in compact with the devil, witches, charmers, and all those who deny God's providences, I debar.

2. All worshippers of images, or those who do invent any other way of worship than God has appointed, or approve of corruptions in God's worship, ordinances, and sacraments, which Christ the great King of the Church hath not instituted.

3. All blasphemers and profaners of God's name, all cursers, swearers, tearers of God's name, whether in oaths or vain prayers; all who invocate the devil in imprecating against themselves or neighbours, habitual swearers by faith, conscience, or their souls, presume not to take the bread of God in your polluted lips. All mockers of religion, or the scriptures, all perjurers, covenant-breakers, hypocrites, and apostates from God, come not near

4. All open and avowed sabbath-breakers, who obstinately continue to do unnecessary things on this day, walking unnecessarily in the fields, sitting and standing in the streets, when ye might be better employed in the church, or your houses.

5. All persons disobedient to lawful magistrates, to parents and ministers; all who disregard their parents, and give them no reverence, nor maintainance, when they are poor, &c. All parents who take no care of their children's education, and learn them not to read, pray, &c.

6. All murderers, envious, malicious, and revengeful persons.

7. All gluttons, drunkards; all adulterers, fornicators, unclean persons; all who have an immodest carriage, who speak obscene language.

8. All thieves, robbers, oppressors, unjust persons, cheaters of their neighbours.

9. All liars, backbiters, and slanderers.

10. All those who are not content with the lot God has carved out to them, but grudge at their neighbours prosperity, &c. Any who live in those sins unrepented of, I debar from the Lord's table.

On the other hand, I, in the same name and authority, invite all that are sincerely willing to part with their sins, turn their back on the devil and hell, and take on with a new master, Jesus Christ, and join in covenant with him. 2. All who are truly sensible of their lost and perishing state without him, and see a burden of sin and wrath ready to sink them. O drowning men, take hold of this plank of mercy, and come safe to land. All thirsty panting souls for Christ, that would give all the world for Christ, that would rather have an interest in his blood, and a blink of his face, than the best estates or dwellings on earth. All that truly love Christ, whose souls desires are towards him, and the remembrance of his name, come away. 3. All poor cloudy believers, who have many doubts and fears, come away to your Lord and Saviour. Reach hither your finger with Thomas, fear not ye, for I know ye seek Jesus. 4. All who are groaning under heart-plagues, and soul diseases, come away to the physician. All shelterless souls, come away to the ark. All heavy-laden souls come to your rest. All humble beggars come away to the king's feast; all that would have more strength of grace, faith, love, repentance, desires, thankfulness. All that would have their sins and lusts killed. O here is a feast and medicine, come to it, for it will prove life to your souls, strength to your graces, poison to your sins, and death to your lusts. In a word, all that are heartily willing to take Christ for their only Saviour, and bleeding High Priest, to ransom you from hell and wrath, and are willing to give up yourselves to the blessed Son of God, to be saved, ruled, and taught by him, and to take Christ and his cross with a resolution, that life nor death shall never part him and you. O come, come, lift up faith's hands, and the doors of your souls, to let in the King of glory, with the voice of joy and praise. O let your hearts flighter with desire and joy, and make him a wel come guest.

SPEECHES AT THE TABLES.

SPEECH I.

YOU have seen our commission and warrant, and we are come to our Redeemer's table; bread and wine are now set before us: but before they can be made use of, they must be solemnly set apart, and consecrate by prayer and thanksgiving, as our Saviour did. And that we may hold close to the institution, we, after our Saviour's example, first take the bread. And now let us join in our address to the king of heaven for the blessing thereon.

" Glorious Jehovah, we do here own ourselves, by Adam's fall, to be sunk in sin, and miserable heirs of wrath, slaves to Satan, and enemies to thee. Mountains of guilt and wrath lay heavy on us, the devils were waiting and hell gaping for us, and none could help us in our misery: Yea, we have still been going on in rebellion against thee since we were born, so that the hottest place in hell is our due: We have forfeited all happiness and favour: but, glory to free grace and redeeming love, that, though we have destroyed ourselves, in thee is our help; that God has found out a way for satisfying justice, and saving sinners, by the incarnation

and death of his dear Son. Glory to God the Son, for undertaking to be our surety, and to leave his throne, to wade through a sea of wrath, a sea of blood, a sea of sufferings, yea, through hell, to save us from perishing. O the height, O the depth, breadth and length, of the love of Christ, which passeth all knowledge. Glory to God, that hath both sent the news and offer of this glorious salvation to us, and by this sacrament hath set his bow in the clouds, as a token he will not drown us in the sea of wrath. O what would damned souls and fallen angels give for such a day as we have? Thou art raining manna on us, while thou art raining fire and brimstone on them. Glory to thee, this day, that we are not among Pagans on earth, or the damned in hell. What shall we render to thee, O Lord, for all thy benefits? O Lord, we do here profess before heaven and earth, angels and men, the hearty acquiescence of our souls in this wise and noble contrivance of redemption, and look to be saved by no other name than that of Jesus. Lord, we are content to take him as our Surety and Saviour, as offered; and to give up ourselves to him. Lord, come here and seal the covenant with us, poor lost sinners, and backsliding wretches. Lord, come to thy own table and bless our provision. Sanctify these elements of bread and wine, (which thou took, blessed, and brake, and distributed to thy disciples) that they may be the symbols of thy body and blood. O that we, in receiving them, may partake of Christ's body and blood, and share in all his benefits.

Lord, stamp and consecrate these creatures of bread and wine, that they may be the means of conveying life and salvation to our souls. Lord, grant that this ordinance may be a glass to let us see the evil of sin, the terribleness of divine wrath, and the love of Christ, and the worth of our souls.— Lord, let it be a knock to waken the sleepy, a spur to quicken the secure, a cordial to revive the faint, and food to strengthen the weak, physic to cure the sick, and a plaister to heal the wounded. Lord, bless the ordinance, and let wondrous changes be made on all: Let here the empty soul be filled, the starving creature fed, the poor beggar enriched, the hard heart softened, the cold heart inflamed, the dead soul quickened, the paralytic hand cured, the blind eye enlightened, the thirsty heart satisfied, the feeble knees strengthened, the straitened heart enlarged, the wandering heart fixed, the creeping desires elevated, the cloudy soul brightened, and the doubting soul resolved. Lord, let it be a blessed meal, let it prove life to our souls, death to our sins, strength to our graces, and poison to our lusts. Let here the smoaking flax be kindled into a flame, and the bruised reed find support. Let our souls be hereby fortified and prepared for trials and sufferings for Christ. Let us be fitted and prepared for passing through the valley of the shadow of death. Lord, let us meet with Christ in this ordinance, otherwise it will be a heartless feast. O there will be no life among us, unless the Lord of life be present. Lord, what better will we be than a company of dead carcases about thy table without thee? Lord, come into our hearts, King of glory come in. We here threw out of doors all the nails, thorns, gall, and vinegar, that afflicted Christ. Lord, come in, and make a rid house, room for thyself. Had we ten thousand hearts, they were all too little. Lord, help us to plead the body and blood of Christ, with thee. Lord, we are undone if thou mark iniquity, thou mayst justly send us from thy table to hell, or pour out a flood of curses upon us. Lord, we have no screen but Christ; we offer Christ to thee, and present thy beloved Son in whom thou art well pleased. O Lord, how shall such wretches as we dare to approach this holy table? We are dogs, how shall we presume to take the childrens bread? We have been feeding on husks with the swine, how shall we presume to take the spiritual manna, this food of angels? We have trampled these pearls under our feet, and yet are they in our offer. O Lord, our fearful guiltiness makes us tremble to come, and yet it also makes us not dare to stay away; for whither shall the sick come but to the physician, who has promised, that him that cometh, (be who he will,) thou wilt in nowise cast out? But, Lord, who so leprous and polluted as we? O will Christ come and feast with the like of us? Lord, we are not worthy or fit that thou shouldst come under the roof of the house of our hearts, it is so shattered, ruinous, and defiled. Thou hast not a fit place with us to lay thy head. But O thou, who didst not disdain to ly in a manger among beasts, and to be entertained in the house of Simeon the leper, Lord, come into our souls, and there repair and prepare an upper room for thyself, that we may keep the passover with thee. Speak the word, and thy servants hearts shall be healed, cleansed, and made lively, soft, and pliable. Lord, clothe all the guests with the wedding garment, and let them be accepted, that they do not eat and drink their own damnation, but that our pardon may be sealed, our weakness repaired, our wants supplied, our corruptions subdued, and our souls so inseparably united to thee, that neither temptations nor death may ever be able to dissolve the union. Lord, grant that in these holy mysteries we may not only commemorate, but effectually receive Christ and all his benefits. O let Christ's infinite love in dying on a cross for us, kindle in our frozen hearts that sacred fire of love to him, that no waters may quench, no floods drown it, and such as may burn up all our lusts and idols.

SPEECH II.

O Communicants, I would ask, Where are you? *Ans.* At the table of the Lord. *Quest.* What are you come for? what is your errand? O forget not this. Are you come to subscribe and seal a marriage-covenant with Christ, before the glorious Trinity and elect angels? Are ye come to join hands with him? O remember then, ye are just now upon the most awful and solemn transaction that ever passed betwixt God and the creature. And if ever you was in a concerned frame, now should be the time of it. Eternity depends on what ye are doing. O be as serious as if ye were just going to death and judgment; as if the trumpet were sounding, and your heart-strings breaking. O what would ye do, if God should cry from heaven just now, Rise, man or woman, come before my tribunal, and get your sentence? O what would ye do? Would not tears run down? Would not your groans pierce heaven? Would ye not say, Now if I want Christ's friendship, his blood to plead, I am lost and undone for ever? If I want faith, if I get not a sprinkling of Christ's blood for my pardon and paying my debt, I must presently go with the damned and devils, and be barred up in hell's prison In such a case what would be the sin ye would most bitterly bewail? would it be long slighting of Christ, giving the world his room, your forgetting eternity, and praying so seldom, and so formally? What mercy would you beg from God? Would it not be faith, an interest in Christ, pardon, evidence of grace, assurance of his love, a title to the kingdom? O would ye not cry, O that God would pardon me, and tell me that he hath pardoned my sins? O that he would

take me into his covenant, and tell me, that he is my covenanted God? O mourn and cry with the same earnestness now as if you were immediately to pass into eternity. Or what would ye do if God should cry, I will strike down every unworthy communicant, with the bread in his mouth and the cup in his hand? I will make them monuments of my wrath where they sit. Would not every one cry Lord forbid I be the person? God save me from communicating unworthily. O sirs, if your hearts be dead, dull, and formal; if they be hard, carnal, wandering, filled with lusts, the nails that pierced Christ, ye will be unworthy, and so be guilty of Christ's blood, and eat and drink damnation. O say ye, How shall I be a worthy communicant? O cry to your graces, "Awake, O north wind, and come thou south, blow upon my garden," &c. Are your graces awake, are your hearts flaming with love? Are the arms of faith stretched wide out to clasp hard and fast about a crucified Redeemer? and are you willing and ready to throw yourselves into his open bleeding arms? Are you clear to make and close the bargain, to give and receive; and say, "My beloved is mine and I am his? Let us put heaven's broad seal to the contract, before heaven and earth, angels and men, witnessing the same.

Bread given. Believing soul, I now deliver to thee the body of Christ; O now receive a broken Christ, and apply him by faith. Behold his wounds opened, and deep clefts made in the Rock of our Salvation, to hide and shelter a pursued trembling dove, that had no place for the sole of her foot, either in heaven or earth, to rest upon. O poor dove, come into the ark, that the floods drown thee not: Mercy has opened a window in the side of the ark, and is putting out a hand to pull thee in. O stay not out now, lest a wave of vengeance wash you from the sides thereof, and ye plunge in hell for ever.

Cup given. O see as the fountain runs, and follows poor sinners. O are ye not desirous to be bathed therein? O have ye no pollutions, no plagues, soul-diseases? Is there no blind or cripple here? weak hands, or feeble knees; no cold or hard hearts? Is there any doubting sinner here? O come, drink and bathe, and be made whole: Thou hast now a cure for all thy diseases and wants. O it is your own fault if ye miss a cure. O will ye not clasp about the Physician, when he is within reach of you; you will perhaps never be so near him again; hold fast grips, and quit him not: tell him all that ails you; table all your complaints before him: put up your requests: have ye no lusts that ye would have killed? no weak grace to be strengthened? Your King will not deny you any thing. Deep calleth unto deep, the depth of our misery for the depth of thy mercy. O now, communicants, ye have dedicated yourselves to the Lord; ye are now consecrate, as well as the elements were; ye are consecrate by Christ's body and blood, Christ has now taken infeftment of your soul and body, as his consecrated temple, for his service and residence. O keep his temple clean — You know how Solomon consecrated the temple of Jerusalem. Think with yourselves, what if Solomon, after his solemn prayer, and God's taking infeftment of it by the bright cloud, had driven in a herd of swine? O how provoking would this have been? So it is, if ye bring a herd of swine, devils and lusts into Christ's temple. O watch against temptations; ye will meet with many, but may God's grace be sufficient for you.

SPEECH [illegible]I.

O COMMUNICANTS, what brings you here? What came ye forth for to see? I suppose, some will answer with the Greeks that came up to worship at the temple, John xii. 21. "We would see Jesus." 'Tis a good errand, I make you sincerely welcome. I give you an answer in Pilate's words, John xix. 5. "Behold the man." O here a glass to let you see him. O behold a crucified Jesus, buffeted, scourged Jesus, a bleeding wounded Jesus; see him smitten and bruised for your iniquities. Behold the great gash and wide breach God made in his soul, and poured in a whole ocean of wrath upon him. He prays once, he prayed again, he prays a third time, 'till covered all over with his own blood in the garden But for all this he must die; his enemies apprehend him, scourge him with iron chains, pierce his temples with thorns, [illegible] a heavy cross upon his back; he bears till his strength is spent, and he faints under the burden of it, and another must help. O wonderful! he that upholds the universe, strengthens his people, overcomes his enemies, and doth valiantly, is now become so weak! O communicants, mourn and weep bitterly for the heavy cross ye laid on his back; your sins were the cursed load and dead weight. O behold how he bears till he faints, and at length must bow his head and give up the ghost. The storm was great, and this tall cedar must fall. Why? God broke him with breach upon breach, with one wave upon the back of another, 'till the whole sea billows of his wrath went over him; and your Lord was so mindful of you, O believing communicants, he would leave nothing for you to suffer. Had there been but one drop left in the cup for you, it would have poisoned and destroyed you all. O behold the man, this living and lovely Jesus.—I doubt not but there are several sorts of eyes here: 1. Some carnal eyes, like the Jews, who beheld him, reviled and cried, crucify him. Some like Herod and his men of war, who desired to see Christ; but when they saw him, they vilify and set him at nought. So I fear some of you think nothing of Christ when you see him, and are saying as Isaiah liii. You see no beauty in him why he should be desired. O, see ye no love nor loveliness in Christ? then you should not be here; ye are unfit guests. 2. There are eyes of faith that some have opened to see his beauty and loveliness, and their eye affects their hearts, their souls are full of love and desire to him; ye are welcome ones. O behold him with an eye of faith; and there are many things ye may see in him; ye may see a flame of love to sinners in his breast. I remember it was a very pleasant reflection the Jews had on Chri[illegible] carriage at Lazarus's sepulchre, "He wept" [illegible] they, "Behold how he loved him." Christ's [illegible] sign of his love; and if it be so, how much [illegible] shedding his heart's blood, a sign of his love [illegible] not cry, behold how he loved us, in taking [illegible]y and blood to quench the raging flames that would devour us? O do ye see his heart panting with love, and his affection streaming out in blood? and are ye wondering, prizing, loving and adoring him for it, and saying, "Whom have I in heaven but thee?" Then this feast is appointed for you, and so receive Christ and all his purchase.

Bread given.—Now take hold of the covenant and embrace Christ in it. Accept of a bruised Lord, a bruised friend: open your hearts to him, as he opened his side to you. O keep him not at the door now, when he knocks with his nailed hands, and his cross upon his back, and saying to

you, look to my hands, my head, my feet; look to my wounded body and bruised soul; look to my bowels laid open; look into my panting heart; look what justice hath done, what thy sins and the devil have done; look what the Romans, Jews, and bloody butchers have done; look what my own disciples have done, one betrayed me, another denied me, and all the rest forsook me. And O, wilt thou not give me harbour in thy heart, when I am thus used for thee.

Cup given—Will you see his blood shed? You are now upon mount Calvary, at the foot of the cross, near the wounds: He is saying, "Pray, believing soul, reach hither thy hand, feel the prints of the nails; yea, thrust into my pierced side, and feel my warm bleeding heart, and see if I love you not." Do it, and cry out with Thomas, "My Lord and my God;" and with Paul, "This is Christ, the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." O how shall I express my love to thee; O angels and saints bless him. O if ye now get faith's sight of him, there is another eye wherewith ye shall behold the man ere long, an eye of immediate vision. Thus the angels and saints see him, even as he is. O believer, it doth not appear now what he is; but ye shall one day see him as he is, and how mightily surprised will ye be with the sight? Ye will say, as the Queen of Sheba said of Solomon, "The half was not told me when in my own country." O long for this sight, and now live and walk as those who are daily looking for the coming of the Lord, and improve the present view for strengthening grace, and nourishing your soul. Elijah is twice wakened to take a double meal; so should you feed plentifully, ye know not what a journey ye have, and what storms ye must meet with; ye know not but the wind may blow to winnow the corn, and blow away the chaff. O flee to covenanted grace, to uphold and strengthen you in your pilgrimage through this wilderness, to the heavenly Canaan above, where the weary are at rest, and the wicked cease from troubling the just.

SPEECH IV.

O Communicant, you are set down at the table of God, mind the place where you are is holy. O do as Moses did, when he saw the bush burning, Exodus iii. 3. Turn aside and see this great sight, ye cannot see a greater. See the rock of your salvation smitten by the rod of justice; behold the spear piercing into his heart. O rock of ages, what made thee to rent and cleave so? O brightness of thy [illegible]er's glory, who hath thus disfigured thee? Alas! my [illegible] tormentors, my pride, covetousness, malice, ly-[illegible], &c. When he was smitten, it was I should [illegible] pierced. Alas! for my hard heart and dry eyes, [illegible]ks rent, and not I? I, the guilty criminal that [illegible] suffered all! And shall I see my Saviour smitten, and [illegible]t mourn? Shall I see his heart streaming with blood, and my eyes not stream with tears? O cursed sin! and O hard heart! that will not break nor kindle into a flame of love to Christ. O take a view of what he has done; he has quenched the flames of hell for you, stopt the lion's mouth, pulled out the serpent's sting, silenced the claim of the law, paid your debt, delivered you out of prison. O see that promise made by Jehovah to the Mediator, Zech. ix. 11. "As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water." O communicant, do you think this promise is yet accomplished in you, or not? Have you got the blood of the covenant applied to you, to draw you out of the pit, which is a state of nature, wrath, and damnation? O, if ye be not drawn out, if ye have not laid hold on the Lord of free grace, and on the blood of the covenant, ye are not fit to be here. O but, say ye, How shall we know if we be these prisoners that are brought out of the pit? 1. Wast thou ever a prisoner in thy own eyes? Did you ever feel your bonds, and was weary of your slavery? 2. Did you ever experience a strong power, determining you to shake off the yoke of sin, and take on Christ's yoke? 3. Did ye ever give longing looks to Christ through your prison-gates for relief? Did you cry, Who will deliver me? 4. Is your deliverance precious to you? Do you highly value the blood of sprinkling, that has opened the prison-doors. 5. Did you ever embrace and lay hold on your deliverer by the arms of faith?

6 Did you ever devote yourselves to him and his service and obedience, upon the loosing of your bonds? as Psalm cxvi. 16, 17. 7 Do ye sing the praises of your deliverer? 8. Are ye willing to suffer outward captivity and bondage for him? 9. Do ye long for an eternal and complete deliverance from captivity?

SPEECH V.

O Communicants bless God that has set you down at his table; bless him for a covenant of grace, and bless him for this seal of it. O be glad and rejoice to see the rainbow in the clouds, which was a sign of his covenant and promise to secure the world against a destructive deluge. O shall we not joy to see the sign of God confirming his covenant? If it still rained, and a rainbow never appeared, we might have reason to fear. So if we never saw this ordinance and seal, we might have reason to be afraid.—Well, you see God is willing to keep covenant, there is the rainbow appearing, are you willing to enter into covenant, or renew covenant, and take hold of the Mediator and Surety of it? Are your souls burning with desire to seal the covenant, and to get Christ in your arms like old Simeon? What hinders our concluding this bargain? O young communicants, this is the day of your espousals to the Lord Jesus; now are ye to join hands, and to be married to him. O happy day! O stretch out the hand of faith to him, and say, Even so I take him, "my Lord and my God. My beloved is mine and I am his." O let the marriage knot be cast sure, that death may not dissolve it. O the Bridegroom is ready, and waiting for your hearty consent, and if ye grant it, it will be a day of the gladness of his heart; yea there will be gladness in heaven for it. I hope there are some sinners saying with Rebekah, when they called her to know her mind, with respect to her matching with Isaac, Gen. xxiv. 58. "And they called, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said I will go." If ye be willing to go with him, then he is willing to take you: and in token of his willingness and faithfulness, here he has sent you his seal from heaven, whereon is written LOVE. Come, take the seal, and Christ with it.

Bread given. Heaven and earth, angels and men, are witnesses, the subscribers to this marriage contract, and sealing this bargain. O, with this bread receive a broken Christ, and open your hearts to your bruised friend, that met with all this for you. O here is brave food, excellent nourishment; hear bread that strengthens man's heart. Bread is called the staff of life: This is indeed the staff of life; a

staff that supports you, a staff that will defend you, a staff that will beat your enemies, if eaten by faith; it will be life to your souls, and poison to your lusts; yea it will rout them, and put them all to the flight. Cry with these, John vi. 34. "Lord, evermore gives us this bread." I mind a strange dream that one of the Midianitish host had, Judges vii. 13. when God was coming on them, "Behold a cake of barley bread came tumbling into the host of Midian, and smote a tent." Strange! a piece of bread overturn a tent! Lo! hear this dream interpreted in this sacrament; here a piece of bread, if eaten by faith, that will tumble into the host of thy enemies, strike down all their tents, and put them to flight. Surely a sight by faith of Christ's body, pierced and nailed by sin, will turn a believer's heart against it; Let sin flatter as it will, he will never forget what it has done to his dear Saviour. O believers, will ye have any further evidence of Christ's love? Well, here is his blood. "In like manner, after supper, he took the cup, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, dring ye all of it."

Cup given. O behold the water of life run and follows poor sinners. O believers, come and drink, and live for evermore. O is not this a rare feast? Be busy while you have it. O now be applying Christ's blood for strengthening weak graces, killing strong lusts, curing diseases, removing plagues. Ye have a wilderness to go through and know not what trials are before you. Would you have strength for your journey, and preparation for your suffering and trials; O here you may have it. Here is food more substantial, durable and nourishing, than Elijah's cake baken on the coals, and his cruse of water, who went in the strength of it forty days and forty nights, till he came to Horeb the mount of God, of which, see 1 Kings, xix. 6, 8. Elijah was twice wakened there to take a double meal. So should ye feed plentifully; ye know not if ye get another feast like this, till ye come to the mount of God above; and ye know not what winds and storms may blow by the way. A feast time is a time of granting requests. Have ye nothing to table before Christ at this feast? See what Ahasuerus said to Esther at the banquet of wine, Esther v. 3. "What wilt thou, Queen Esther? and what is thy request, it shall be given thee?" Have ye no lust to kill, nor grace to cherish. O table your complaints, your ails, before Christ. Seek a cast of grace for your own friends, and a cast of power to this corner of the land, and relief to the poor churches abroad, that want such a covered table. Mind the afflictions of Joseph: O put up a groan for Zion, "Lord, wilt thou yet arise, and have mercy on Zion, pity her rubbish, favour her stones."

O young communicants, mind what ye have been doing; ye have ratified your baptismal vows; ye are Christians by your own consent. It has been put to your own choice whom ye will serve. And ye have said, Nay, but we will serve the Lord. Ye have given up your names to Christ, and listed yourselves under his banner. O it is a sweet banner, a love banner. O desert not your captain, draw not back Tell satan and sin, when they tempt you that ye have changed masters; ye are no more what ye was, ye have opened your mouth to the Lord, and ye can't go back. Ye cannot swear, get drunk, lie, break the Sabbath, neglect prayer. No, that is the devil's drudgery, ye have chosen a new master. O communicants, ye have the sweetest work, the greatest wages, and the best of masters. O lean on his strength, and plead for covenanted grace to bear you up through the wilderness, that at last you may enter the promised land, and receive the reward of inheritance.

SPEECH VI.

CHRIST has undertaken a long journey to purchase salvation to you, dear hath it cost him, and now hath he brought it to your door. Can ye refuse him? O is he knocking at my door? 1. Whose door is it? That of a poor nasty beggar, as full of filthy ulcers and boils as Lazarus's body was, whose sores the dogs licked, or Job's body when he sat in ashes, and scraped himself. O is he come to his mortal enemy, who hates him, and has lodged traitors in his room? yea a mean creature, a worm, a moth, a grashopper, worth nothing, and worse than nothing; poor, deformed, hated of all, rebels, and Satan's slaves?

2. Who is it that stands and knocks? The King of glory, the Sun of righteousness, and brightness of his Father's glory, who is infinitely happy, self-sufficient, and needs us not; has all power in heaven and earth, has the keys of hell and death, in comparison of whom the sun is a lump of darkness, the heavens are but a span, and the inhabitants are but as grashoppers. A word, a look from him, could send us to nothing or hell.

3. What doth he offer? He offers his precious blood,—his blood that is more than crowns,—his blood, and all the purchase of it. It answers all thy complaints and grievances. Is wrath kindled against thee? My blood shall quench it. Is justice incensed? My blood shall pacify it. Is heaven shut against thee? My blood shall open it Is conscience a terror to thee? My blood shall sprinkle and speak peace to it Fearest thou any thing? My blood shall secure thee. Wantest thou any thing? My blood shall procure it for thee. Yea, if his blood be not enough, he offers himself to thee, and that is more than ten thousand worlds, to be thine in covenant,—thy God, thy Friend, thy Husband, thy Jesus, thy Saviour, thy Christ, thy King, thy Prince, thy Physician, thy Shepherd, thy Captain, thy Cautioner, thine Advocate. Art thou poor? The owner of heaven and earth will enrich thee. Art thou despicable? The King of glory will be thine to honour thee. Art thou deformed? The Son of righteousness will be thine to beautify thee. Art thou distressed? He will be thy Redeemer to relieve thee. Art thou weak? The Lord of Hosts will be thine to strengthen thee. Art thou diseased? The great Physician will be thine to cure thee. Art thou disconsolate? The God of all consolation will be thine to comfort thee. Art thou in darkness? The bright Morning Star will be thine to enlighten thee. Art thou miserable? The fountain of bliss will be thine to make the happy. Art thou dead? The fountain of life will enliven thee. Thou shalt not only be his servant, but his son; not only sit at his table, but sit on his throne.

4. How offers he himself? With great patience and long-suffering. Some shift him and others deny him, and yet he stands and knocks. How wonderful! he that has a throne of glory to sit on, to stand at your door; he to whom angels and saints bow their knees, and cast down their crowns; to stand at your door, and you sitting in Satan's seat, yea lying in the bosom of your lusts, and sleeping securely in the ways of sin:—yea, standing without, while lusts and Christ's enemies are welcomed in:—standing at the door, while Satan has the best room:—yea, standing after many repulses and affronts, till his locks be wet with due:—Wonder at Christ's patience, that he fires not the house about your ears! 1. Mind, he is standing on his feet, ready to depart 2. He is standing with great compassion. He lift up his voice and wept over obstinate Jerusalem, bewailing their unkindness

to him, and cruelty to their own souls, Luke xix. 41. O if one should have asked Christ, as he did the woman, John xx. 15. "Blessed Lord, what seekest thou? why weepest thou?" He might possibly have answered, "I seek not myself, I weep not for myself, I shall be infinitely and eternally glorious, though sinners be not gathered;—but this is my grief, that sinners will rather cast themselves into hell, than into my arms, and rather part with me than part with their lusts; it is bitter to me, because I see it will be more bitter to them in the end. I weep, because it will cost them weeping and gnashing of teeth for ever." 3. He offers importunately and stoops (as it were) on his knee, to beseech and intreat them to accept of pardon, salvation and happiness, 2 Cor. v. 20 He repeats his intreaties, Luke xiii. 34. "How often would I have gathered thy children, and ye would not?" He is loth finally to give us up, he knows not how to do it, Hosea xi. 8. "How shall I give thee up Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together."

5. Consider the danger of not opening to Christ: 1. Till then ye are shut up in darkness, the next room to hell. 2. Till then the heart is in posession of Satan. 3. The wrath of God is shut in, the house is on fire, and Christ shut out, who only can quench it. 4. If you open not to Christ now, he will shut you out hereafter.

6. Consider the advantage of opening to Christ. He will come in, for what end? 1. To marry thee 2. To express his love to thee. 3. To shine in the soul; the soul is but a dark dungeon, while Christ is shut out. 4. To adorn the soul; loathsome is thy soul while Christ is shut out. 5. To enrich the soul; Christ comes not empty handed; for "length of days is in his right hand, and in his left hand riches and honour," Pro. iii. 16. He would come in to pour out his treasures into the sinner's bosom; and his treasures are better than riches and all the things that may be desired, are not to be compared to them. 6 To reign in the soul to erect his throne there, and expel the tyrants who have so long oppressed the soul with cruel bondage. 7. To abide there, and dwell with thee for ever. 8 To feast with thee; and behold he brings his entertainment along with him.

7 Consider what a feast it is that Christ provides for his guests; it is not ordinary fare, it is not only satisfying, but begets stomach; it not only preserves life where it is, but begets it where it is not; it is hidden manna, angels food, bread from heaven, even the fruit of the tree of life, that grows in midst of the paradise of God. This tree is himself, he that eats of it shall never die spiritually nor eternally. He is also the water of life, if ye get but a drop of it, it shall prove an everlasting spring in your soul, you need not thirst after creature comforts nor carnal refreshments. You shall get the grapes of Canaan, the fruits that grow in the land of promise Behold clusters of these grapes at this table.—Indeed they are hidden manna to natural persons, strangers intermeddle not with their joy, Rev. ii. 17. Here the earnest of the Spirit, the peace of God, the riches of assurance, that joy that is unspeakable and full of glory, the hidden manna and water of life; and these enjoyments differ but in degree from heaven. You are now set at the table with Christ. O what saith Mephibosheth of such a Saviour, 2. Sam. 9. 8.—"And he bowed himself, and said, What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look on such a dead dog as I am?" O what blessed intimacy and familiarity does Christ allow his people, like his beloved disciple, John xv. 23. You may lay your head in Christ's bosom.

8 Make Christ welcome into your soul, rejoice in him, as Hannah did, 1 Sam. xi. 1. "Mine heart rejoiceth in the Lord, mine horn is exalted in the Lord, my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies, because I rejoice in thy salvation." O entertain Christ with that which he loves, 1. With a humble heart. O these that are vile in their own eyes, shall be exalted. 2. With a broken heart: a heart broken from sin, and broke for sin, a heart that melts and bleeds, when it remembers how it has wounded and dishonoured Christ. A heart stony, insensible, and hard against the word, is an abomination to God. 3. With a loving heart. 4. With a sincere heart, Psalm li 6. Christ loves not a divided heart.

9. Let him have good attendance, be not careless nor disrespectful of him, depart not from his presence, wander not after others, let him always have your company, lest he depart from you. Let your mind be with him, your thoughts be of him, your inclinations towards him, your affections on him, as the most lovely, desirable, and delightful object.—Walk with him in your daily converse, and entertain sweet thoughts of sweet Jesus. O give him your heart.

O communicants, ye are to say, I am the Lord's, and to subscribe this with your hand. O see that ye put on Christ. O that God would give commission now to take off your filthy garments, and give you change of raiment. Are ye returning prodigals, that were once lost, and now are found? O then the best robe will be brought forth to you. O there is great entertainment here, not only the wedding garment, but the fatted calf killed; also a ring to your finger, which is the manifestation of his love; he will put it on your finger, and ye may look to it when he is absent from you. Not only so, but there are shoes brought forth, the preparation of the gospel of peace, ye know not what rough steps ye have to go through; and not only so, but you shall have the whole armour of God, the girdle of truth, the breast-plate of righteousness, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, that ye may be able to stand in the evil day, and quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

SPEECH VII.

O Communicant, thou art now come to the communion-table, I would ask thee, Hast thou a communion frame? And you will readily say, what is that frame? I answer, 1. It is a humble frame. 2 A wondering frame. 3. A believing frame, assenting to the truth of the gospel, looking to Christ crucified for healing, fleeing to Christ's wounds for shelter, washing in his blood for cleansing, pleading his blood for pardon, and sitting down under his shadow. 4. A mourning-penitential frame, for piercing Christ by your sins, and especially those against light. 5. A covenanting frame, firmly resolving to take hold of the covenant of free grace. *Quest.* What is a true covenanting frame? *Ans.* 1. Are ye grieved for long distance and estrangement from Christ, and for long slighting his calls and offers, and for preferring Satan's drudgery to Christ's service? 2. Have ye got a discovery of your sinking perishing state, while on the bottom of the covenant of works, and resting on self-righteousness; and seen an absolute need of a borrowed righteousness; and that this is the only foundation of your hope? Have ye fled from the one bottom to the other? 3. Are ye sensible of your treacherous dealing in the matter of

your baptismal covenant, and that ye have left Christ's colours, and gone over to the devil's camp? 4. Are ye now come to an open rupture with all God's enemies? 5. Do ye now accept of Christ in all his offices? Do ye accept of the propitiation and atonement set forth, as the only ground of your justification, pardon, and acceptance? 6. Do ye come to give up yourselves to the Lord, all that you are and have? 7. Are ye come to engage in Christ's strength, to walk in newness of life all your days? Well, if this be the disposition of your soul, you may assure yourself that you are coming to the table of the Lord in a right covenanting frame.

I put it to thy choice, O communicant, O young man, young woman, as Joshua did to the children of Israel, "Chuse you this day whom you will serve." Chuse ye whom ye will take for your master, Christ or the devil, and whose disciples ye will be. Both are courting your hearts, which of them will ye yield to? Lay your hands to your hearts, and consider whether you will grant Christ's or the devil's desire? Whether shall the devil have you, soul and body, to all eternity; or shall Christ have you? O, are there any here so foolish or mad as to halt betwixt two opinions in this case? Any so mad as to stand in doubt, or hesitate whether to dwell with Christ or the devil for ever? whether to sing hallelujahs to the Lamb, or roar with the devils for ever? Now Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels, are fighting about your hearts. A cunning devil is holding, and a dying Saviour is drawing. Which of them do you incline to? The eyes of God and Christ are on you, the eyes of men and angels are on you, to see what will be the issue. O precious souls, never dying souls, I summon you to yield up to Christ: open the doors, lift up the gates of your hearts to the King of Glory, who is ready to enter; open your mouths wide, and Christ is ready to fill them.

SPEECH AFTER THE TABLES.

I SHALL address myself to several sorts of persons. 1. To those who have slighted the ordinance, and Christ's dying charge. Consider what ye have done, ye have slighted the blood of sprinkling, and despised the richest and choicest feast in the world; ye have been a grief to Christ's heart, and ye have given him cause to lament over you, as over poor Jerusalem, Luke xix. 41. You have lost an excellent opportunity. It may be you will never see another communion again, nor never get another call or knock like this again. And ye may fear he pass that sentence on you, Hosea iv. 17. "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone—He that is filthy let him be filthy still;" and that he say unto you, as to his drowsy disciples, "Sleep on." The gospel shall enter into your ear, but never into your heart. Well, you have sitten this call, but there is another call you shall not be able to sit. O but, say some, we are not prepared for it. *Ans.* Neither are ye prepared for dying; and will ye wilfully go on in sin, and make your sin your excuse? O, say they, 'tis dangerous to come unworthily. But is there no danger in staying away? Consider that threatening, Zech. xiv. 16, 17, 18, 19. against contemners of the feast of tabernacles, that is, gospel-feasts.

2. To those who, I fear, have been profaning the ordinance, and wounding Christ, by unworthy communicating; who have been pretending to join in covenant with God, while they are fast in league with the devil and the world. O your guilt is greater than ever it was; you have added this to the former, you have been drawing down more plagues on your head. O mourn and repent for piercing Christ. Can ye weep for the loss of worldly goods and enjoyments, and not weep for the loss of your soul, and your Saviour? O, flee straight to that blood which ye shed, and plead mercy for the sake of it.

3. To those discouraged souls, who came to the table, but are saying, alas, I was not taken into the banqueting house, I have not met with Jesus, as I expected. *Ans* 1. Blame not Christ for it, but yourselves. He is, perhaps, chastising you for some secret sins which ye are not humbled for. You have been either defective in preparation, or have slighted former calls. For these reasons he now hides himself, that you may seek him more earnestly. O lie still at his feet, and say, I will not go away, I will not let thee go till thou bless me. Hast thou but one blessing, O my Father? nay, thou hast many. 2 Wait on all the after diets, the banqueting house is not yet shut, your feast may be coming this evening, or to-morrow; or ye may find the advantage of this feast some days hereafter. 3. You may be mistaken, and say, ye have not got an alms, when ye have really got it. Do not think ye get nothing, but when ye get sensible joy, peace, and smiles of his face Have ye got a greater sight of the evil of sin than ye had? Have ye got any more sorrow for it? Any more esteem of Christ, or hunger after him? Can ye say, when ye came to the table, I was very dead, and had but little sense of my wants, but I came away hungry and pained for my want. Then it is a good sign; a fill of hunger and thirst is excellent communion chear: The Lord bless that hunger. O that ye may never be at rest, till ye get a fill. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

4. To those who have been taken into the banqueting-house, have got a Benjamin's meal, a sight of Christ, and tasted that the Lord is gracious, a word to you. 1. Wonder at God's kindness in treating an enemy and child of Satan so. 2. Bless God for it, that he hath visited you, and taken you in, when others were kept at the door. 3. Endeavour to keep what ye have gotten, walk humbly, watch against Satan and the world, that will seek to rob you. O go to Christ, to be surety for you, and beg that your hearts cool not, that ye fall not into a dull and sleepy frame. 4. Be putting in a good word for others that have not win your length, be filled with compassion for them; and be inviting and encouraging strangers to come to Christ, by saying, "Come, taste and see that the Lord is good." 5. Sit not down satisfied in what ye have got, but be longing for heaven, where the full feast is; these are but the first fruits and foretastes. 6. Ye must work for Christ in the strength of this feast. Go on in duty more vigorously, in strength of this meal; be more active in his service, and fight more courageously.

Remember, all of you that have been at the table, the vows of God are upon you; you have entered into an oath and curse to walk in God's way, as in Nehemiah x. 29. You have all swore allegiance to the King of heaven over the broken body and shed blood of Christ; so that if ye perjure yourselves, you will incur all the curses of the law.

and vengeance of the gospel also. If ye return to your ways, and say, Welcome, drunken cups, bloody oaths, lying, backbiting, neglect of prayer, &c. O ye will sink deeper in hell than many others; you will bring the curse of God and the Lamb upon you; it will make you say, Would to God I had been the son of a Pagan. O when will ye mind your vows, and walk worthy of the Lord. Let there be such a shining brightness in your life and conversation, that all may take knowledge of you, that ye have been with Jesus. Remember ye have covenanted against swearing, drunkenness, sabbath-breaking, neglect of prayer and family worship. Remember your engagements to prayer. Mind, the eyes of men and devils are upon you, and that more is expected from you than from others; and that if you join hands again with the wicked, you will thereby harden them the more in their sinful courses.

I would recommend to all of you to remember the sights ye have seen this day of the love of Christ, that passeth knowledge. And the influence it should have on you is to think, How I shall requite it? The question that all of you should be putting up to God at this time, on the back of a communion, is that, Psalm cxi. 12. " What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?" How shall I walk suitable to this love? O I am jealous I be unthankful. O base wretch, wilt thou forget his goodness? O what shall I render unto the Lord? I have David's answer and resolves to that question in that Psalm, which I hope are yours. What saith David?

1. He saith, verse 1. " I will love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplication." The world and sin shall never have my love any more. " Whom have I in heaven but thee?"

2. " Return unto God as your rest," verse 7. O let your souls center in God as your portion and rest: be well satisfied and contented herewith.

3. Resolve to " walk before God in the land of the living," verse 9. Quicken your soul to the performance of every known duty, and abstain from every known sin. Walk always under the sense of divine omniscience.

4. Resolve to " call upon the name of the Lord," verse 13. As soon as ye can get occasion, O retire for solemn prayer, and continue in prayer. O what shall we pray for now? Can God give any more than what he hath given in the sacrament? *Ans.* Pray that God may fulfil all the promises, and bestow all the privileges and blessings he hath sealed to you in this ordinance. So does David, 1 Chron. xvii. 23. " Now, therefore, Lord, let the things that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, be established for ever, and do as thou hast said." Also pray that God would enable you to keep your promise to God, and keep the sense of your vows and obligation on your spirits, and preserve your present frame, motions, and resolutions, as David prays, 1 Chron. xxix. 18. " O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people." Satan has a design upon you; you had need to pray.

5. Tender yourselves wholly to God, as his servants, verse 6. " O Lord, truly I am thy servant." He repeats, " I am thy servant;" I give up myself, soul, body, time, strength, talents, means, &c. all to serve thee.

6. Offer " the sacrifice of thanksgiving," verse 17. Say with David to your soul, " Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name." 1. Admire God's condescension to thee who art a worm, that he should give thee angel's food; and though thou art a vile worm, that should be sent to hell with devils, art yet set at the table with his children. 2. Let the high praises of God be in your mouths, as Deut. viii. 10. " When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee." Allude to it, bless him for a Goshen on earth, that ye have a land of light, and valley of vision to dwell in, and bless him for the prospect of a Canaan above. The song above is, " To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood," Rev. i. 5. O begin this song here. 3. Be encouraged to go on cheerfully in your Christian course, and go about all duties with pleasure.

7. Pay your vows, as in verse 18. Ye have vowed against swearing, drinking, sabbath-breaking, neglect of prayer, &c. dishonour not God, by proving perfidious to him.

8. Set the Lord always before you as your Judge, your Pattern, your Witness, and your Portion, Psalm xvi. 8.

9. Watch against Satan's wiles and temptations. 10. Long for heaven, to be with Christ. 11. Guard against divisions, love one another as brethren, and banish malice. Mind Christ praying on the cross for his enemies. 12. Be more charitable to the poor.

THE END.

CONTENTS

OF

THE SACRAMENTAL CATECHISM.

AN APPENDIX;

AN

EXAMPLE

OF

PLAIN CATECHISING

UPON THE

Assembly's Shorter Catechism:

HUMBLY OFFERED

AS AN HELP FOR INSTRUCTING THE YOUNG AND IGNORANT IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE

PRINCIPLES AND DUTIES

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION;

With the Grounds thereof, and that in a very comprehensive manner.

WITH

A PREFACE,

BRIEFLY DEMONSTRATING THE TRUTH OF THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION,

AND THE

UNREASONABLENESS OF INFIDELITY.

BY

THE REVEREND JOHN WILLISON, LATE MINISTER

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1816.

AN
EXAMPLE OF PLAIN CATECHISING.

THE PREFACE.

IN Scotland, the ministers are obliged, by their church rules and constitutions, to be much employed in the work of catechising; and the good fruits of it do appear; for there the people (comparatively speaking) are generally knowing and orthodox: whereas, in those places where catechising is neglected, ignorance and error do wofully prevail. It is found by experience, that there is more knowledge diffused among the ignorant and younger sort by one hour's catechising than by many hours preaching: for, by the method of catechising, the attention is provoked, as well as the understanding instructed, and memory gratified; whilst many excellent sermons are lost through the non-attention of the hearers, or the weakness of their memories.

In the primitive church, catechising was very much their work. They had many ministers set apart for it, called *Catechists*; and sundry of their most eminent lights were so called, for their excelling and diligence in this good work. Before persons were admitted to the full communion of the church, they were from time to time to be catechised, and kept under trial; and, till such time as they were judged fit to partake of the sacrament, they were called *Catechumeni.*

Our Lord doth enjoin all his ministers to be careful to feed the lambs of his flock, as well as the older sheep, John xxi. 15. And accordingly we find his apostles took care to feed the babes with milk before they were able to receive stronger meat, 1 Cor. iii 1, 2. Heb. v. 12. As we have our catechisms, so they had forms of instruction, in which the young and weak were catechised, called a "Form of knowledge," Romans ii. 20. "a form of doctrine," Romans vi. 17, "the form of sound words," 2 Timothy i. 13. "the first principles of the oracles of God" Hebrews v. 12. and "the principles of the doctrine of Christ," Hebrews 6. 1. In these were both Theophilus and Apollos catechised, Luke i. 4. Acts xviii. 25. in both which texts the word in the Greek is catechised, which we have here rendered instructed. The apostle Paul doth require the people of Galatia to give all encouragement and support to those who laboured in the work of catechising among them, Gal. vi. 6. "Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things." In the original it is, let him that is catechised communicate to him that catechiseth. This office is not below the most learned divines, seeing Christ sets himself a pattern to us in it, by catechising his disciples, Matthew xvi. 15, 16.

We in this national church, through the Lord's mercy, are provided with excellent Catechisms, both Larger and Shorter, for our help in catechising. And the Assembly's Shorter Catechism, established in this church about ninety years ago, (which both we and the body of Protestant dissenters in our neighbour nations do receive, and teach our children by) is judged the most excellent summary we ever had, in so small a compass, of the great principles of the Christian religion, extracted from the word of God. It hath been greatly esteemed in foreign parts also, and upon that account hath been translated into Latin and Greek. In the hand of divine providence, it proves a noble fence against error, wherever it is received; and therefore the adversaries of truth are not a little displeased with it.

There was a very wild attempt lately made by an anonymous author to alter our Shorter Catechism, which was printed at London in the year 1735, under the title of *The Assembly's Shorter Catechism Revised.* But the alterations therein made, being visibly designed to favour several errors now spread among us, several of the judicatories of this church judged themselves bound to give warning against the poison of it. Besides, there were remarks made upon it by a very judicious author at London, (to whom we stand much obliged,) which have been dispersed both there and here, as an antidote against it.

By the foresaid attempt I have been excited to consider our Shorter Catechism more closely than before, and must now own, the more I view it, I am the better pleased with it, and desire to bless God for raising up such noble instruments in the last age to frame it for us, and settle it among us; and do reckon it a great mercy that we have not a Catechism of this kind to settle and *frame* among us in this degenerate and licentious age.

This Shorter Catechism being evidently founded upon the word of God, and a part of our standards to which we stand solemnly engaged; it becomes the lovers of truth to adhere firmly to it, and contend for it as a most valuable attainment in our Reformation, and always to wish and pray that it may be preserved entire to us and our posterity, and that generations to come may be trained up in the use of it to the latest ages.

We have had many *Explanatory Catechisms* upon it published, which have been most useful for increasing knowledge among us; but having observed, in those which I have seen, that either the answers are too prolix for the memories of learners, or else too short to explain the nature and reason of things, I have humbly made an essay in the following Catechism, to observe a medium between the foresaid extremes, and likewise to take in many things omitted by others.

It is highly the concern of us all to be well seen in the knowledge, and fixed in the belief, of the great truths of our holy religion, summed up in the Shorter Catechism; especially in this shaking time, when the winds of error are

blowing, and the most sacred fundamental truths are openly attacked by Deists, Socinians, Arians, and others. As it is surprising to observe how fast erroneous books are spread and bought up at this day, so it is astonishing to behold to what height infidelity and damnable heresies are arrived in our age; while we who profess Christianity do wrangle with one another, alas, infidelity doth prevail against us all! and it may cause us tremble to think what shall be the issue, if the God of truth do not in mercy arise and stop its career.

Whence is it that *infidelity* abounds, and the Christian revelation hath so many enemies? Alas! many are so bent to indulge themselves in vicious practices, that they cannot endure Christ's holy laws, which check them therein; and, therefore, study by all means to darken those truths and facts upon which these laws are founded, that they may render Revelation doubtful and uncertain; and, further, that they may make it quite needless, they labour to advance *reason* as a sufficient guide in matters of religion, and as that which may conduct us in the way to happiness.

But if the bias of such persons to sensual lusts and pleasures would allow them freely to think upon this subject, and impartially to view the noble design and convincing proofs of Christianity, the more fully would they be satisfied of the necessity and excellency, as well as of the truth and certainty, of the gospel-revelation, and of its divine original. And if my testimony thereunto could have any weight, I can say, after the most serious enquiry, I have full freedom to give it, and which I here offer, with all humility, upon the following grounds:

Although my natural light or reason be sadly corrupted, yet the remains of it tell me that there is a God, and that he ought to be believed in what he saith, and obeyed in what he commands. And by the clearest evidences I am assured, that the mind of God, with respect to my salvation, is only now discovered to me in the Christian revelation, which I see is the completion of the Jewish institution. And this revelation, I find, doth confirm and perfect the religion of nature, seeing it corresponds with the dictates of natural reason and religion, and comes seasonably unto me to supply the great defects thereof.

Though the light of nature intimates to me, that my life should be just and virtuous, and that I should shun what is offensive to God, and that he ought to be worshipped and glorified by me his creature, yet it leaves me ignorant of the right way and manner of doing it: But the Christian revelation doth both inform me how God is to be worshipped and served, and also with the strongest arguments enforces that which is the design of natural religion, namely, the abandoning of sin and vice, and the practice of virtue and piety. This is the scope and aim of all its mysteries, precepts, promises, threatenings, examples, miracles, &c.

I find those who have had no more but *reason* to guide them, had but faint discoveries of divine things, and these notices had but small influence on their minds and practices; hence they generally entertained unworthy notions of God, and run into gross idolatry, and the practice of the greatest abominations: But the Christian revelation gives us a noble description of the perfections of God, and of the worship and service he requires as suitable thereunto; and withal offers us grace to conform our souls unto them.

Natural reason can give no satisfying account of the creation of the world, the original of mankind, nor in what state our first parents came out of their Maker's hands; nor can it tell us how human nature fell from its original rectitude into the present state of guilt and impurity, nor how it can be recovered from it; nor can it account for the conduct of divine providence in the government of the world: But in the Christian revelation we find all these duly accounted for.

Natural religion, which is altogether founded upon *reason*, or the light of nature, cannot find out a way to ease the conscience of a convicted sinner, nor can it assure us that there is *forgiveness with God* for criminal creatures: It cannot shew us how God may exercise *mercy* to them without the violation of his *justice;* nor point out any thing that can be a proper propitiation to God's justice, when injured and provoked by men: Nature's light cannot tell how to make the pardon of sin consist with the wisdom of his government, the honour of his laws, and his hatred of sin. But we see how all this can be done by the *Christian* institution.

Again, it is but dark and uncertain views which *natural religion* gives us of the immortality of the soul, and of a future life. Sense and reason bring us to the grave, but cannot penetrate into the regions beyond it: But the *gospel-revelation* discovers to us the eternal mansions prepared in the heavens for the spirits of just men made perfect, and also the way leading to them.

In the Bible, which contains this Revelation, we see the defects of natural religion nobly made up: We have a great Mediator set forth, that satisfies offended justice, removes the guilt and power of sin, and brings sinners into favour with God, and to eternal felicity; and in him all men are called to believe and trust for obtaining these blessed ends. And this is the Lord Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament he is foretold and promised as the Messiah that was to come; in the New Testament he is revealed as come, and the time and manner of his coming narrated. He came in due time, according to the Old Testament predictions, exactly answering all its types, prophecies, and promises, in his divinity and humanity; in his threefold office of prophet, priest, and king; and in his twofold state of humiliation and exaltation. So that, if Jesus Christ were not the true Messiah and Saviour of men, the glorious promises of the Old Testament, concerning the Messiah, must be all delusion, seeing their fulfilment was limited within periods of time which are long since past.

Our Messiah came not in the grandeur of an earthly monarch, as the carnal Jews expected, but as King of Zion, intending a spiritual monarchy in the world; and to instruct his sovereignty and power in the kingdom of grace, he shewed his dominion in the kingdom of nature, (which earthly kings cannot do) by opening the eyes of the blind, the ears of the deaf, and the mouth of the dumb; by raising the dead, casting out devils, and miraculously healing all sorts of diseases: Yea, he gave power to his disciples to do the like, and to speak all languages of a sudden, without learning them; and to preach in them with such promptness and convincing energy, that their words pierced the consciences, and changed the minds and lives of men. Their doctrine did not favour the lusts and corruptions of men, nor had the force of human laws or arms to promote it, like the Mahometan religion; but, on the contrary, Christianity had all these against it: Yet, in opposition to all these, it spread with astonishing success and rapidity through the world; so that, before the death of the apostles, there was not a corner of the Roman empire but had store of its professors.—And though all the powers of earth and hell contended with

fire and sword against the Christian religion, yet within less than three hundred years, the whole known world was conquered by it. And seeing this triumphant success was not owing to the might, art, or eloquence of man, we must conclude it was brought about by the extraordinary power of that mighty God, who is the Author of this holy religion.

Such was the evidence of the apostles testimony, and their successors in the primitive times, that not only the vulgar, but many, of the best sense, wisdom and learning, were overcome by it, and heartily embraced their doctrine, even when they had no prospect but of the greatest sufferings for so doing: Such were Dionysius, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Tertullian, Origen, Clemens Alexandrinus, and many others. Surely nothing but the power of truth, which they evidently saw was countenanced by heaven, and confirmed by miracles, could have prevailed with such learned and curious enquirers, to hazard the loss of all things dear unto them, by embracing Christianity.

But, that I may come more closely to that proof which is most convincing of all, let it be considered, that the truth and verity of the Christian religion (of which our catechism is a compound) doth depend on the truth of a matter of fact, which (blessed be God) is better vouched and attested to us, than any fact in the world, that we have not seen with our eyes. Wherefore, if the fact be true and certain, that such a person as Jesus Christ was born at Bethlehem in the reign of Augustus the Roman emperor, when the sceptre of power was departing from Judah; and that about thirty years afterwards, in the reign of the emperor Tiberius, this person Jesus Christ began to preach in Judea, where he travelled some years, lived a most holy life, wrought great miracles, foretold many events, and amongst others his own death and resurrection; and, according as he said, so he died, and rose again upon the third day: I say, if all this be certain fact, what reason have we to question but this person had a divine mission, and was the very person he gave out himself to be, and that the doctrine he taught, and instructed his disciples to teach, was the very truth?

That the facts above related are certain, we have the best evidence: for they are attested by many persons of great probity and candour, who were eye-witnesses to what they assert; and these witnesses all agree in the same testimony, and continued adhering thereto unto their last breath, notwithstanding of the sufferings and cruel deaths they were exposed to for owning these things. And not only they, but also several Jewish and Pagan writers, who lived in or near these times, do confirm the truth of the principal facts concerning Jesus Christ which we have recorded in the New Testament: nay the fiercest enemies of Christ, in the ancient ages, never presumed to deny the facts So that for any person to call in question the truth of facts so well attested, would be to destroy the truth and credibility of all history.

As the facts contained in the New Testament have the fullest testimony that any ancient history can have, so it is very confirming to us, that all the eight writers of the New Testament do agree so exactly in their testimony without variation or contradiction Though those of them who write the historical part do relate different circumstances of facts and of miracles not mentioned by others (which only shews they did not write by concert) yet they all agree in the matter: they give all the same account of Christ's birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension: They agree with all the rest in their account of Christ's doctrine, and of the way of sinners salvation by faith in Christ's righteousness, and by the virtue of his blood.

To confirm this doctrine, many miracles were wrought by Christ and his Apostles; and that there might be no suspicion of fraud, these were done openly in sight of all the people, and in presence of learned men, Christ's enemies: and these miracles were oft repeated, and that for many years, and had lasting effects on those upon whom they were wrought.—And as for that great confirming miracle which Christ frequently referred to in his life, for proof of his Messiahship, viz. his rising from the dead,—it was well attested by his many appearances after it to his disciples assembled together, yea, to five hundred of them at once, to whom the apostle Paul in his writings appealed for the truth of it, whilst most of them were alive. Yea, he not only appeared to them, but also taught them after his resurrection; and for their fuller satisfaction, he ate and drank with them, nay, he shewed them the print of his wounds, and caused them to touch and handle his body.

It is to be observed, that Christ's disciples began openly to preach his resurrection, within a few weeks thereafter, in that very city where it happened, and even in face of those who put him to death; and no man attempted to disprove what they said, which his violent enemies wanted not will to do if they could Nay, the truth of Christ's resurrection was so notour in that country, that many thousands presently believed the disciples testimony, embraced their doctrine, and became Christians. And as the disciples proclaimed Christ's resurrection every where, so they confirmed the truth of it with miracles wherever they came, and kept always the first day of the week in remembrance of it. These things being certain facts, do clearly demonstrate to me, not only the truth of Christianity, but also the amazing unreasonableness of infidelity; and that, instead of free or just thinking, it doth argue the greatest thoughtlessness in those who give place to it.

Object. We in this age never saw Christ or his apostles, nor any of their miracles; no man now hath the gift of tongues; we have none of these miracles now repeated for our confirmation.

Ans. 1. The only wise God thought Christ's bodily presence and these miracles to be necessary at the first planting of Christianity, when its doctrines were new to the world, and things opposite to it were to be abolished; but doth not think fit to continue them now, when no new doctrine or way of worship is proposed, but only the very same inculcated which Christ and his apostles had taught.

2. If miracles were ordinarily repeated, they would lose the use and force of miracles, which lies in their being extraordinary; for, if they were frequently repeated, they would become God's ordinary works, and not be much regarded by us.

3. Though Christ at his ascension left the earth, and his apostles are gone, so that we see them not, nor the miracles they wrought for the confirmation of our faith; yet by the evidences which remain, we may be as well assured of them as if we had seen them; and, in regard we are so much attached to things visible, our ascended Jesus, in his gracious condescension to the weakness of our faith, hath left us seven or eight visible testimonies or ocular demonstrations of the truth and certainty of these doctrines and facts, which are the foundations of our faith; as Christ's *incarnation, his living and teaching in this world, with his crucifixion and resurrection.* And to confirm us the more in the belief of these

blessed truths, God in his mercy continues still before our eyes several standing witnesses of them; namely, 1. The writings of the Apostles and Evangelists, who were eye and ear witnesses of what they testify. 2. The honourable name which we bear of CHRISTIANS, being that which the followers of Christ soon got after his leaving the world.—3. The beginning of the Christian æra, or computation of years from the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, is directed by wise providence to put us in mind, every time we write, read, or mention the present year 1744, or any other year, that it is just so many years since our glorious Redeemer came in the flesh to save lost sinners.—4. The continuance of a gospel-ministry, according to Christ's institution, to declare the foresaid truths and facts to the world.—5. The frequent dispensing of baptism, for the initiation of his disciples, as Christ hath appointed.—6. The administration of the Lord's supper, in commemoration of his death and sufferings.—7. The weekly observation of the Lord's day, in remembrance of his resurrection.—These seven lasting monuments, being as old as the profession of Christianity, have continued, by the providence of God, descending through all ages for these seventeen hundred years past, as visible witnesses of the truth of it, that all men, having them daily before their eyes, may consider them as so many pledges of the facts, doctrines, and institutions of the New Testament.

To all which I may add an eighth visible witness, viz.; the present scattered condition of the Jewish nation over all the world, and yet never mixed with other nations so as to be lost among them. This strange preservation of them these 1700 years as a distinct people, amidst their many direful calamities, sufferings, and scatterings, is a wonderful instance of the interposition of divine providence, that keeps them as a standing memorial every where to the world, of the certainty of scripture prophecies and miracles, and particularly, of the New Testament history of the incarnation, life, and death of Jesus Christ, and of the truth of his prediction concerning that people. Likewise, the long continuance of the Jewish nation, in such a dismal distinguished situation, doth point them out to the world as a lasting monument of the divine anger, for their woful rejecting and crucifying of the blessed Messiah and Saviour of the world. Now, all these outward visible things God in his wisdom and mercy hath placed before our eyes, to confirm us the more in the belief of the facts and doctrines contained in the books of the New Testament.

Quest. How do we know that the books of the New Testament are written by the apostles and evangelists, and that they are still the same as they wrote them, without alteration?

Ans. We are well assured these books are written by those whose names they bear, and that they are still the same they were at first, not only because of God's watchful providence over them, but in regard of those clear evidences: 1. The writers of the first and second centuries, as Justin, Iraeneus, Clemens, &c. do cite these books under the names they still bear; they quote texts from them as they stand in our bibles, and make use of them in the same sense that we do; yea, Tertullian sometimes appeals to the original manuscripts of these books, which were preserved to his time (being then about the two hundredth year of Christ) and long after, as other writers attest. 2. These books could not be altered, because of the vast number of copies that were transcribed, and that in different languages, and soon dispersed with Christianity itself through all parts of the known world; and yet still we find all these copies, however distant in place, or different in language, exactly agreeing together in sense. 3. Soon after the Apostles death, there arose many different sects of Christians of opposite sentiments, who yet all appealed to these writings for the support of their opinions: And to be sure these would never agree together to falsify them; neither did one side ever accuse the other of doing it.

And for the books of the Old Testament, which greatly support the facts and doctrines of the New, and were themselves also confirmed by miracles; the Jews were careful, even to superstition, to preserve these pure and uncorrupted, placing much of their religion in numbering how oft such and such words and letters recurred in the particular books. And though Christ reproved that people for many things wrong among them, yet he never accused them of falsifying any thing in these writings.

Moreover, we have such visible marks of the divine original of the whole Bible, in the antiquity of its histories, the accomplishment of its prophecies, the purity of its precepts, the harmony of its different parts, and the excellency of its design, as cannot but be very convincing and satisfying to all thinking persons. Whence could we have had such a book as the Bible, written by so many different hands, and yet all aiming at the same design, namely, to glorify God, to lead souls to Christ, to promote holiness, and to root out all sin and vice? Who else but God could be its author? A bad man or angel it could not be, seeing all the books and parts of it declare most warmly for truth and virtue, and against all lying and dissimulation: A good man or good angel it could not be, seeing it could never consist with their grace and goodness to dissemble and counterfeit God's name in such a way, by putting *Thus saith the Lord,* to a book of their own devising.

Lastly, Beside these convincing external evidences, there are many thousands in the world who have satisfying inward evidence, and experimental demonstration of the truth and excellency of the gospel-revelation, from the effects of it in their souls, through the concurrence of the Spirit of God; For thereby their proud minds have been made humble: their revengeful spirits made meek and forgiving, their carnal hearts made to love God and mind heaven above all things, their loose and uncircumspect lives have become just, holy, pious, and devout; and, in attending upon Christ's institutions, they have attained to great peace and joy in believing on him. And, for mine own part, I would not exchange the inward satisfaction and complacency I have sometimes had in going with the gospel-method of salvation, and resting my soul upon a crucified Jesus, with any king's crown in the world. And what can be more confirming than feeling or taste? It will not be easy to persuade a man that honey is not sweet, who hath tasted it once and again. If the Holy Spirit would please to come and concur with the gospel-revelation by his gracious operations on the soul, it would be the most effectual way to establish us in the belief of the truth of the Christian religion, and to fortify us against all tempations to infidelity. Wherefore, that truth may prevail and error evanish, may the Spirit be poured out from on high, as in former times! Amen.

A WORD TO CHRISTIAN PARENTS, AND ALL WHO HAVE THE CHARGE OF CHILDREN, OR SERVANTS, ESPECIALLY THOSE IN DUNDEE.

My Dear Friends,

THE care of precious souls is a great trust committed to you by God, and to him you are accountable for it. The instruction of youth is not to be left wholly to ministers, to school-masters or mistresses. No; parents ought to be instilling good principles into children, and masters into servants, as they have occasion, which might serve to leave abiding impressions on them many years thereafter; and so ye would become "fellow helpers of the truth," as in 3 John 8. Pray do not think this is left to your option, to do it or not as you please: No; you are under an express divine command, O parents, to bring up your children "in the admonition of the Lord;" that is, in teaching them the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, Eph. iv. 4. The word translated *admonition* properly signifies *catechising*. Likewise, the word which is rendered *train up*, Proverbs xxii. 6. signifies to *catechise* a child when he is young. The command which God gave to the Israelites, to teach his will and statutes to their children, is still binding on you, Deut. vi. 7. "Thou shalt teach them unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Abraham had a strong sense of his duty in this respect; and therefore he not only taught, but commanded, both his children and servants, to keep the ways of the Lord, Gen. xviii. 19. And can we expect to land in Abraham's bosom, if we tread not in Abraham's footsteps?

O fellow Christians! Your listing yourselves and your children at baptism, under Christ's banner, obligeth you to use your best endeavours to enlarge the borders of his kingdom, and to ruin the empire of darkness. You pray that his kingdom may come; and this binds you to choose the best means to obtain what you pray for, namely, to instruct the rising generation in the knowledge of Christ. This would make your piety extend to ages to come; for your example herein may be a motive to them to tread in the same steps, and so one generation will thus teach another. Do you yourselves know the joyful sound of salvation through our glorious Surety, and will ye not desire to make others know it too? You ought to say with the four lepers, when they found plenty in the Syrian camp, "It is a day of good tidings, we do not well to hold our peace," 2 Kings vii. 9. This is a godlike disposition, and would make you resemble God himself; for, when he saw the world perishing in darkness, he pitied them, and came himself in our nature to teach them the way of salvation.

For your help in this work you have the Shorter Catechism of this church, which contains an excellent scheme, both of the principles of religion which you are to believe, and of the duties of religion which you are to practise. And though the smaller one, such as the Mother's Catechism, may be useful as introductory to it, yet, when children and servants are capable, it is necessary that they get our Shorter Catechism by heart, which you may cause them to do, by prescribing so much of it to them every week, until they come to have it throughout. And, because it is short and most comprehensive, I have framed the following Explanatory Catechism upon it, for your assistance in catechising those under your charge, whereby you may be helped to open up to them at large the precious truths of our holy religion, and so prepare them the better for the public catechising, which would make the work of ministers pleasant and delightful to them.

And, because the answers in the following Catechism are generally short, it will not be a very hard task for young persons of good memories to get the most of them by heart, and to repeat them. And for those whose memories are weaker, it would be very instructing to them frequently to read over this book; for thereby they might soon be capable to answer satisfyingly most of the questions in it, though in other words than those in the book. It would also make children better acquainted with the scriptures, if their teachers would require them to give account of some of these texts cited therein, which have not the words set down.

If heads of families would convene their children and servants every Sabbath-evening, and make use of this book, or the like explication, going over at one time two questions of the Shorter Catechism, or thereby, with the explanatory catechising thereupon, you would go over the whole book thus once every year. And the following method may be observed: Let the master or the mistress of the family ask the question of the Shorter Catechism, and let the answer be returned, without book, by one of the family; and then let that person take the book, and ask the first explanatory question upon it at his next neighbour, who may read the answer from the book, if he cannot repeat it; and then let him who answered ask the second explanatory question at his neighbour, who is to answer it as before; and then ask the next question at his neighbour, and so on; the rest in the meantime attending and going alongst with the person reading or repeating, with their several books, if they have them, or else making use of their neighbour's, by which means their thoughts, which are apt to wander, will be the more fixed and intent upon what they are about.

And, to conclude, let me likewise humbly intreat young persons, diligently to improve all such helps and means of instruction in the season of youth, and carefully to prepare for and attend all diets of catechising, whether in private or public, and hearken with delight to parents, masters, or ministers, who would teach them the things which concern their everlasting peace O consider how many young people are hurried into eternity before they know and lay these things to heart! Believe it, dear sirs, there is no heaven without Christ, no interest in Christ without faith, and no faith without knowledge. May therefore "the earth be filled with the knowledge of Christ, as the waters cover the sea!" Amen.

Dundee, 12th April, 1737.

QUESTION I.

Quest. WHAT *is the chief end of man?*

Ans. Man's chief end is, to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.

Q. What do we mean by man's chief end?

A. The main thing which a man should intend and aim at in his living in the world, and look upon as the great design of his creation.

Q. What is that great and chief end?

A. In the answer it is branched out into two parts, the

principal end being to glorify God, and the less principal to enjoy him for ever.

Q. Can man add any thing to God's essential glory?

A. No; for, that being *infinite*, no addition can be made to it.

Q. How then can we glorify God?

A. By declaring and shewing forth his glory before the world.

Q. How may we do that?

A. By acknowledging God's perfections; by adoring and trusting in him; by praising him with our lips, and ordering our conversation according to his word, Psalm l. 23.

Q. How are we said to give glory to God by confessing our sins? as in Josh. vii. 19.

A. Because, by so doing, we own God to be infinite in knowledge, from whom no secrets can be hid; and in justice, though he should proceed to punish us for our sins.

Q. Wherefore should we make it our chief end to glorify God?

A. Because of the infinite obligations we are under to God, as being our almighty Creator, our gracious Preserver, and merciful Redeemer.

Q. When is it that we eat and drink for the glory of God, as the Apostle directs, 1 Cor. x. 31.

A. When we do it in obedience to God's command, for preserving life and health, that we may be capable to honour and serve God here below.

Q. May not other creatures declare the glory of God, as well as man?

A. Yes, the heavens do it, Psalm xix. 1. as they shew forth the glory of God's wisdom and power in an objective and passive manner; but none can do it actively but rational creatures.

Q. Do all men make it their chief end to glorify God?

A. No; for many men, instead of glorifying God, do wofully dishonour him.

Q. Who are those?

A. Those who forget God, or disobey his laws.

Q. Who are they that forget God?

A. They who do not pray to God, nor praise him for his mercies; and they who are formal in his worship, and do not remember his word.

Q. What will become of those who forget God?

A. It is said, Psalm ix. 17. They "shall be turned into hell."

Q. Did God make all things for his own glory?

A. Yes.

Q. If men do not make this their end, will God lose his end in making them?

A. No; for if God be not glorified by them, he will glorify himself upon them, even his justice, in their destruction, Prov. xvi. 4.

Q. Is it not lawful to aim at lower ends than God's glory, as for a man to be diligent in his calling, for the end that he may provide for himself and his family?

A. Yes; but these lower ends must be intended in subordination to man's chief and ultimate end, the glory of God.

Q. Do we promote our own happiness, by making God's glory our chief end?

A. Yes; and therefore glorifying God, and enjoying him for ever, are connected in the answer.

Q. Must we study to glorify God on earth, if we would enjoy him in heaven? A. Yes.

Q. Are we able of ourselves to glorify God?

A. No; the fall hath disabled us; but by Christ and his grace we may be strengthened to do it in some measure.

Q. What is it to enjoy God?

A. It is to possess God's love and favour, or to be blessed with his gracious presence.

Q. And doth man's true happiness ly in this?

A. Yes.

Q. May not a man thus enjoy God upon earth?

A. Yes; the saints have God's gracious presence in some measure in his ordinances here below, but they will enjoy God in another manner in heaven.

Q. What is the difference betwixt our enjoying God here, and hereafter?

A. Our enjoyment of God here is very short and imperfect; but in heaven it will be everlasting, full and immediate. It is there the saints shall "see him as he is," and "be like him," and "be ever with the Lord," 1 John iii. 2. 1 Thes. iv. 17.

Q. Why doth our chief happiness ly in the enjoying of God?

A. Because God, being the chiefest good, and infinite in his perfections, can only satisfy the boundless desires of our immortal souls. He is a portion that suits both their spiritual nature, and perpetual duration, Psalm lxxiii. 25, 26.

Q. How shall we attain to the enjoyment of God?

A. We must receive Christ the mediator, live the life of faith and self-denial, study purity of heart and life, and be much in the exercise of prayer and praise.

Q. What is the chief end or design of wicked men?

A. To gratify their sensual appetites, and to enjoy the best things this world affords.

Q Can the enjoyment of the world's good things make us happy?

A. No; for, as they suit not the soul's demands, so they are too short and uncertain to afford us any solid satisfaction.

Q. Can wicked men expect to enjoy God hereafter?

A. No; for they who shall enjoy God above must be made meet for it here below.

Q. Who are meet to enjoy God?

A. Those who are sanctified.

Q. What will become of those who miss the enjoyment of God in heaven?

A. Their portion will be in hell with hypocrites and unbelievers.

Q. When should a man begin to think seriously of his chief end?

A. In the days of youth, Eccl. xii. 1.

Q. May we not delay it until some convenient time afterwards?

A. No; for there is no time so convenient; and the time which we propose may never come, seeing death surpriseth very many, Luke xii. 20.

Q. When must we have done glorifying God?

A. Never.

Q. Will that ever be thought a tedious task?

A. No; for it is the delight of gracious souls to do the will of God; and therefore in the most happy place, it is said, "There his servants shall serve him," Psalm xl. 8. Rev. xxii. 3.

QUESTION II.

Q. *What rule hath God given to direct us, how we may glorify and enjoy him?*

A. The word of God (which is contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament,) is the only rule to direct us, how we may glorify and enjoy him.

Q. How is this question connected with the preceding?

A. As the former shows the end of our creation, so this points out the rule or means for attaining to that end, viz. the Scriptures.

Q. Why do we call the word of God the Scriptures?

A. We call God's word, the Scriptures, that is, writings, by way of eminence; because they are the most valuable and useful writings in the world.

Q. Why are these writings called the word of God?

A. Because God either spake them himself, or ordered men to write them.

Q. Is not Christ called the Word likewise?

A. Yes; but Christ is the essential Word of God, and the Bible is only the written Word of God?

Q. Why is Christ called the Word of God?

A. Because he is the express image of the Father, as our words are the image or picture of our hearts.

Q. Seeing the Bible is mostly spoken and written by men, is it not more properly the words of men, than of God?

A. No; for though it be spoken and written by holy men, yet they did it, not according to their own will or wisdom, but as they were inspired and moved thereto by the Holy Ghost, 2 Peter i. 21.

Q. Who was the first penman of the holy Scriptures?

A. Moses.

Q. What part of them did he write?

A. The first five books, to wit, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

Q. What remarkable things doth his first book contain?

A. The history of the creation of the world, of man's fall, of the world's destruction by the flood, and many signal transactions with respect to the church for above two thousand years before Moses was born.

Q. If there were no writings before him, how could he be certified of the truth of these things?

A. By divine revelation, as well as human tradition.

Q. Why did God order his word to be written?

A. That his church might have a fixed and standing rule of faith and practice for all future ages, and might not be imposed on by uncertain traditions.

Q. How could the church subsist, and religion be kept pure for so long a time before Moses, when there was no written word?

A. By reason of the few families to which the church was then confined, the long lives of the godly patriarchs, and the frequent appearances of God unto them in dreams, visions, and audible voices; and also by sending his angels unto them.

Q. By what arguments do you prove that the scriptures are the word of God, and that they are written by divine inspiration?

A. By the holiness of the matter of them, the heavenliness of the stile, the harmony of the different parts, the efficacy of the doctrine on the soul, the many miracles wrought in confirmation of them, and the joyful sufferings of martyrs for them.

Q. Is there not something else, that is more effectual to persuade us of the divinity of the scriptures than all these arguments?

A. Though these be sufficient to convince men of reason, and to stop the mouths of gainsayers; yet it is the Spirit of God bearing witness by and with the scriptures in our hearts, that only can establish us in the belief of the scriptures being the very word of God, John xvi 13.

Q. How are the scriptures divided?

A. Into two parts; to wit, the scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

Q. Why are they called a Testament?

A. Because they contain God's will concerning the salvation of sinners, as it was revealed and confirmed by Christ the Testator. And this will is either called a Testament or Covenant.

Q. Do the scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain two different testaments or covenants?

A. No; they both hold forth one and the same covenant of grace for substance, seeing we find the same Mediator, and the same way of salvation through faith in him, pointed at in both. But the circumstances and forms of administering this covenant being so very different, it is distinguished into the Old and New Testament, or the Old and New Covenant of Grace.

Q. Why are the scriptures in the former part of the Bible called the Old Testament?

A. Because they contain the old dispensation of the covenant of grace before Christ's coming in the flesh, which was by manifold rites, prophecies, types, and sacrifices, all prefiguring the Messiah then to come.

Q. Why are the scriptures in the latter part of the Bible called the New Testament?

A. Because they set forth the new dispensation of the covenant, by Christ's coming in the flesh to fulfil the types and figures of the Old Testament, and instituting a more spiritual worship in the room thereof, and revealing his grace more clearly and extensively to the world.

Q. How could the first part of the bible have the force of a Testament, while it was not confirmed by the death of the Testator?

A. It was confirmed by Christ's death typically in slain sacrifices, on which account Christ is called the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." And the blessings of the Old Testament, being disponed to believers, in view of the actual death of the Testator prefigured by the slaying of the sacrifices, were upon their believing made good to them.

Q. Are the scriptures of the Old Testament a part of our rule, as well as the New?

A. Yes; for they express much of Christ and his gospel; they contain the moral law, and are often cited in the New Testament, Mat xxii. 29, &c. John v. 39. Acts xvii. 11. Rom. xv. 4. 1 Cor. x. 6. Heb iv. 2. Gal iii. 8.

Q. Are the writings in the Apocrypha books to be read and received as the word of God?

A. No; for though they are useful, as many other human writings, yet they are no part of holy scripture; seeing we find they are not written in the original language of the Old Testament, nor by any of the inspired Prophets, but after Malachi, that was the last of them: Nor were they owned as canonical by the Jews, to whom of old were committed the oracles of God.

Q Doth the authority of the scriptures depend upon the testimony of the church?

A. No; for the church herself is built on the scriptures as her foundation, and whatever the church teaches is to be

tried by them, Ephesians ii. 19, 20. Isaiah viii. 20. Acts xvii. 11.

Q. Is there nothing else to be received as a rule to direct us in the way to happiness, but the Holy Scriptures?

A. No: not our natural reason, as Deists assert; not unwritten traditions, as Papists teach; not the light within, or spirit without the scriptures, as Quakers and Enthusiasts pretend to, Isaiah viii. 20. Galatians vi. 16. 1 John iv. 1, 6.

Q. Why is not the light of nature or reason sufficient to direct us in the way to happiness?

A. Because, though it teach us that there is a God, and that he is to be worshipped; yet it cannot discover to us the wonderful work of redemption through Jesus Christ.

Q. But is the word of God sufficiently plain, full, and perfect, to be a rule to us?

A. Whatever Papists object against it, to make way for their traditions and papal decrees; yet, the rule of God's word is sufficiently plain and complete, as it contains the whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for us to know or believe for promoting God's glory and our salvation. And this we have, either in express words, or in just and necessary consequences, obvious to the weakest understanding, 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16, 17. Psalm xvi. 7, 8, 9. Psalm cxix. 105, 130.

Q. Do the scriptures then contain the whole revealed will of God to the world? A. Yes.

Q. Are we to believe nothing but what we have written in the word of God?

A. Yes, many things, though not as necessary to salvation.

Q. Is the word of God to be observed as our rule of worship, as well as of faith? A. Yes.

Q. Is it not lawful for us to add some decent inventions to the worship of God, as the sign of the cross in baptism, kneeling at the Lord's supper, bowing to the altar, the organ in praise, &c.

A. No: not a pin should be added to the tabernacle but what is of God's own appointment, Heb. viii. 5.

Q. What doth the Apostle call such inventions and additions?

A. Beggarly elements and will-worship, Galatians, iv. 9. Colossians ii. 23.

Q. What will God say to those who add them?

A. He will say to them, as to the Jews, Isa. i. 12. "Who hath required these things from your hands?"

Q. How should we value the scriptures?

A. We should reckon it a great mercy and privilege that we have God's will revealed in them, as a light to guide us in the way to heaven; and therefore we should dearly love them, and daily use them

Q. Are they not in a miserable case who want the scriptures?

A. Yes; for where there is no vision, the people perish, Proverbs xxix. 18.

Q. Will the word save any without the Spirit's influence? A. No.

Q. What will become of those who have the word, and yet despise it?

A. They will be destroyed, Proverbs xiii. 14.

QUESTION III.

Q. *What do the scriptures principally teach?*

A. The scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man?

Q. What are the two great lessons which the scriptures teach us?

A. The scriptures teach us, *first*, The truths we must believe. *2dly*, The duties we must perform.

Q. Why is faith put before obedience?

A. Because faith is the spring and principle of all true obedience, and no duty can be performed acceptably without it, Hebrews xi. 6

Q. What do the scriptures teach us to believe concerning God?

A. Three things; as, 1. That God is; 2. What God is; 3. What God doth. And therefore we should aim to grow in the knowledge and belief of the being, the nature, and the works of God.

Q. Ought we not, in the first place, to study to be established in the belief of the being of a God?

A. Yes.

Q How doth it appear that there is a God?

A. This is evident, not only from the bible, but also from the light of nature, the works of creation, the being of the heavens, earth, and sea, with the various creatures therein; the beautiful order and motion of the luminaries of heaven, the regular ebbing and flowing of the sea, the wonderful frame of man's body and soul, the miracles which have been wrought, the prophecies which have been fulfilled, the consent of all nations to this truth, and the conscience of man, which accuses him when guilty, and excuses him when innocent: All these do plainly declare the being of God, to the confounding of all those who would oppose this most clear and evident truth.

Q. How do we call those who think there is no God?

A. We call them Atheists.

Q. What doth the Spirit of God call them?

A. Fools, Psalm xiv. 1.

Q. Why are they called fools?

A. Because what they imagine is contrary to the rational dictates of their own souls, and the common sentiments of all the wise and sober part of mankind, and also against the testimony of every creature; seeing the being and wisdom of God may evidently be seen in every thing we set our eyes upon; as a bird, a fly, a tree, a flower, and every pile of grass.

QUESTION IV.

Q. *What is God?*

A. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

Q. Is it possible for creatures to give any perfect definition of God? A. No.

Q Are not all our uptakings of the nature and essence of God most imperfect? A. Yes.

Q. Why are they so?

A. Because the nature of God, being spiritual and infinite, is so exalted above us, that he cannot be declared by human speech, perceived by human sense, or conceived by human understanding, Job xi. 7, 8, 9.

Q. What sort of substance is God?

A. God is a Spirit, John iv. 24.

Q. What is a spirit?

A. An invisible being, or substance, that hath understanding and will, without a body or bodily parts, Luke xxiv. 39.

Q. Are not angels and the souls of men spirits too?

A. Yes.

Q. What difference is there between God and these spirits?

A. These are but finite spirits, created by God, and dependent upon him; but God is an uncreated Spirit, infinite and independent, who made all things according to his pleasure.

Q. If God be a Spirit, how doth the scripture ascribe face, eyes, ears, mouth, hands, and other bodily parts unto God?

A. These are not proper, but only figurative expressions of God: for if God should speak in his own language, and describe himself to us, as he really is, we could not understand him; therefore he is pleased to speak of himself to us after the manner of men, in condescension to our weak capacities, who cannot conceive of the divine perfections and operations without such shadows and resemblances Wherefore we must understand all these bodily parts in a spiritual sense.

Q. What ought we to understand by them?

A. By the face of God, we are to understand the manifestation of his favour; by his eyes, his omniscience and watchful providence; by his ears, his readiness to hear our prayers; by his mouth, the revelation of his will; by his hand, or arm, the greatness of his power; by his heart, the sincerity of his affection; by his bowels, the tenderness of his compassions; by his feet, the ubiquity of his presence.

Q. If God be a Spirit, how was man said to be created after the image of God?

A. The image of God in man did not consist in any bodily shape or likeness, but in the spiritual faculties and excellencies of his soul, in regard of its being a spirit, invisible, immortal, knowing, righteous, and holy.

Q. Is it lawful to represent God, who is a Spirit, by any image or picture, as the Papists pretend to do, for an help in worship?

A. No: For, as it is impossible to do it, so it is most sinful to attempt it; seeing such mean representations are a great disparagement to the majesty of an infinitely glorious God, and also a manifest contempt of his laws, which strictly forbid any such practice, Deut. iv. 15, 16. Isaiah xl. 18. Acts xvii. 29.

Q. How is it that God is described to us in the catechism?

A. By his essential properties, or excellencies, which we find ascribed to God in scripture, commonly called his attributes.

Q. How are the attributes of God divided?

A. Into two sorts; some being incommunicable, and others called communicable.

Q. What are the incommunicable attributes of God, mentioned in the answer?

A. They are three, to wit, his infinity, eternity, and unchangeableness.

Q. Why are these called incommunicable?

A. Because they cannot be communicated to any creature; and there is no resemblance of them to be found in creatures.

Q. What are those attributes of God which are called communicable?

A. They are six, to wit, his wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

Q. Why are these called communicable?

A. Because there are some faint rays or resemblances of them to be seen in some creatures, as in good men and good angels; and hence they are called wise, holy, just, good, &c.

Q. What is it to be infinite?

A. It is to be without all measure, bounds, or limits.

Q. In what respect is God said to be infinite?

A. 1. In respect of his essence, greatness, and glory; and so he is immense, unsearchable, and incomprehensible. 2. He is infinite in his wisdom, power, and all the other perfections of his nature; no bounds can be set unto them. 3. In respect of place, being every where present, and unbounded by any place. 4. In respect of duration, being eternal, and bounded by no time.

Q. What understand you by God's being eternal?

A. That he is without beginning, and without end; which no creature can pretend to; for though angels' and men's souls have no end, yet they had a beginning; but God, who made them, is "from everlasting to everlasting," Psalm xc. 2.

Q. What do ye understand by God's being unchangeable?

A. That he is still the same, and subject to no variableness or change, either with respect to his essential perfections, or his counsels and designs, or his love and favour towards his people, Psalm cii. 27. Isaiah xlvi. 10. Romans xi. 22. James i. 17.

Q. If God be unchangeable, how is repentance attributed to him in scripture, as Jeremiah xviii. 8. and other places?

A. Not properly, but improperly. God there speaks of himself after the manner of men, because he doth the same thing which men do when they repent and change their minds; he alters the course of his dispensations, but still without any change of counsels. For, whatever change appear in God's outward conduct, it is exactly according to his infallible prescience and immutable will; and doth not import any change of mind in God, as it doth in us.

Q. What is meant by the wisdom of God?

A. That essential perfection, whereby he perfectly knows all things, and skilfully orders and disposes all things to their proper ends, for his own glory.

Q. Wherein doth the wisdom of God most brightly appear?

A. God's wisdom shines forth both in his works of creation and providence; but the brightest discovery we have of it is in the contrivance of our redemption by Jesus Christ, in a way that both satisfies justice in the punishment of sin, and magnifies mercy in the salvation of the sinner, Psalm civ. 24. Col. ii. 3.

Q. What is the power of God?

A. The essential property of God, whereby he is Almighty, or able to do all things that he pleaseth to have done, Genesis xvii. 1. Jeremiah xxxii. 17.

Q. We read of God, that he cannot lie, repent, or deny himself: How then is he able to do all things?

A. These things are not objects of power. The doing of them, being contrary to God's holy nature and veracity, would argue imperfection and weakness, but not power.

Q. Wherein is God's almighty power discovered to us?

A. In creating the world by his word, and upholding all things in it, in conquering the power of hell by Christ's death, in working miracles, raising the dead, converting sinners to himself, preserving his church, and subduing his enemies, Rom. i. 20. Heb. i. 3. 1 Cor. i. 24. Eph. i. 19. Mat. xvi. 18.

Q. What is the holiness of God?

A. That essential perfection, whereby he is infinitely pure, and free from all iniquity, loveth righteousness, and abhorreth all sin and impurity, Heb. i. 13.

Q. Wherein doth God's holiness, and hatred of sin appear?

A. In making pure and holy laws, encouraging men to obey them; threatening and punishing sin, which is contrary to them; and especially in sending his eternal Son to assume our nature, and live in it, to be a pattern of holiness to us; and also to die, that he might root out sin and impurity, and purchase perfect holiness for us, Rom. vii. 12. 1 Thess. iv. 3. Eph. v. 25, 26, 27.

Q. What is the justice of God?

A. It is the perfect equity of his nature, which inclines him to will what is just and right, to render to every man his due, and to deal righteously with all his creatures.

Q. What discoveries have we of the justice of God?

A. In sending terrible judgments upon men for their sins in this world, and executing eternal vengeance upon the wicked in hell; and in rewarding the righteous upon the account of Christ's merits, Rom. ii. 5, 6, &c. 2 Thess. i. 7, 8, 9. 2 Tim. iv. 8.

Q. What is the greatest evidence of the justice of God, that ever he gave to the world?

A. His pouring out the vials of his wrath upon his own Son, when he stood Surety for us; and exacting full satisfaction from him for all the debts or sins of an elect world, without abating him one farthing, Isaiah liii. 4. Rom. iii. 25, 26. Rom viii. 32.

Q. Doth God's infinite justice hinder him from being merciful?

A. No; for, through Christ's mediation, he exerts his infinite mercy and goodness to the world, as well as his justice.

Q. Wherein doth the goodness and mercy of God appear?

A. In our daily preservation, and supplying the wants of all his creatures; in sparing his enemies, and chiefly in providing Christ to be a Surety for them; in offering them salvation through him, and particularly in pardoning, sanctifying, and giving eternal glory to all who believe in him.

Q. What is the truth of God?

A. That essential property which always inclines him to be sincere and true in what he saith, and to be faithful in fulfilling his word.

Q. Wherein doth the truth and faithfulness of God appear?

A. In accomplishing the predictions recorded in his word, in executing his threatenings against the wicked, and in fulfilling all his promises to his people, Matthew xxiv. 35. Zechariah i. 6. Hebrews x. 23.

Q. Wherein doth these perfections of wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, which belong to God, differ from these we find in angels or men?

A. These perfections being essential to God, he is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in them: but any inferior degree of these perfections we see in creatures, the same is communicated from God to them, and is subject to change.

QUESTION V.

Q. *Are there more Gods than one?*

A. There is but One only, the living and true God.

Q. In what respect is God said to be one?

A. God is one, *1st,* In opposition to mixture and composition, he being a most pure and simple essence. *2dly,* In opposition to multitude, he being numerically one in essence and nature, and no other like him.

Q. Why is God said to be the one only God?

A. To shew that, though there be others that bear the name of gods in the world, yet there is none really God, but he alone, 1 Cor. viii. 4, 5, 6.

Q. Why is this one God called the living God?

A. To distinguish him from the dead idols of the nations, and to shew that all life, natural, spiritual, and eternal, is originally in him, and from him only, Psalm cxv. 4, 5. John v. 26. 1 Tim vi. 13.

Q. Why is he called the true God?

A. To distinguish him from all the false and imaginary deities that are in the world, Jeremiah x. 10, 11, 15.

Q. Who are these mentioned in scripture that bear the name of God, besides the true God?

A. We find severals called gods, as the heathen idols, the Devil, Antichrist, and Magistrates, 1 Cor. viii. 5. 2 Cor. iv. 4. 2 Thess. ii. 4. Psalm lxxxii. 6.

Q. Why are the Heathen idols called gods?

A. Not that there is any thing of true divinity in them, but because their deluded worshippers fancied that they were gods, and reputed them so.

Q. Can any of the gods among the Heathen give rain?

A. No, Jeremiah xiv. 22.

Q. Can they create a world, or know the heart?

A. No, they cannot, and, therefore, ought not to be worshipped, Jeremiah x. 11.

Q. How is the devil called God?

A. He is called the god of this world, because he rules over the unregenerate world; he usurps divine homage, and is actually worshipped in many parts by the heathen, 2 Cor. iv. 4. Deut. xxxii. 17. Rev ix. 20.

Q. How is Antichrist called God?

A. In respect of his usurping the titles, homage, and prerogatives, which are only due to God, 2 Thess. ii. 4.

Q. How are Magistrates called Gods?

A. Only improperly, and by participation; they being God's vicegerents on earth, to minister justice to others, Psalm lxxxii. 6.

Q. Do not some make the world their God?

A. Yes; and hence covetous men are called idolaters, Ephesians v. 5. Colossians iii. 5.

Q. Why are they called so?

A. Because they set their hearts upon the world more than upon God.

Q. Do not some make a God of their belly?

A. Yes, Phil. iii. 19.

Q. How are they guilty of this?

A. By studying to serve and please their belly more than God.

Q. How do ye prove that there is but one God and no more?

A. *1st,* From holy scripture, that doth frequently assert this; as in Deut. vi. 4. Mal. ii. 10. Mat. xix. 17. 1 Cor. viii. 4, 6. *2dly,* From reason; for, seeing God is an infinite, omnipotent, independent, and most perfect Being, and also the first cause of all things; reason must certainly conclude that there can be but one such being, and no more, and that there cannot be a plurality of infinites and first causes.

Q. Who are they that are guilty of multiplying gods to themselves?

A. Both the Pagans and the Papists; seeing they actually worship and pray to others besides the one true God; so do the Papists to saints and angels.

Q. But may not professed Protestants be chargeable with multiplying gods to themselves?

A. Yes; for though they profess to own and worship the one true God only, yet many set up idols in their hearts, and study to serve and please other things more than God, Ezek xiv. 3. Phil. iii. 19.

Q. What is incumbent on us, when others will not worship and serve this one true God?

A. We should, with Joshua, resolve and say, that we and ours will serve the Lord, Joshua xxiv. 15.

Q. Doth any man serve God for nought?

A. No; for he rewards all his faithful servants with a crown of life, Rev. ii. 10.

QUESTION VI.

Q. *How many persons are there in the God-head?*

A. There are Three Persons in the God-head, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

Q. What is meant by the God-head?

A. The divine nature or essence.

Q. Is this word *God-head* to be found in scripture?

A. Yes, in Acts xvii. 29 "We ought not to think the God-head is like unto gold or silver," &c.

Q. Are there three essences or natures in the God-head?

A. No, but only Three Persons in one divine essence.

Q. How do ye prove that there are Three Persons in the God-head?

A. *1st,* From that express assertion, 1 John v. 7. "For "there are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the "Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are One."— *2dly,* From the institution of baptism, Matt xxviii. 19. "Go "ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the "name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy "Ghost." *3dly,* From the apostolical benediction, 2 Cor. xiii. 14. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of "God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you "all." Amen.

Q. What do ye think of that proof of the Trinity which is brought from Christ's baptism at Jordan? Matt. iii. 16, 17.

A. It is most clear; for there the Father is manifested by a voice from heaven, the Son by his bodily appearance upon earth, and the Holy Ghost by lighting on him in shape of a dove.

Q. Well then, is the Father God? the Son God? and the Holy Ghost God?

A. Yes, each one of them is God.

Q. Will not that make three Gods?

A. No; these Three Persons are but one God; because the same divine nature or essence is in all the Three.

Q. What mean you by a person in the God-head?

A. It is the divine nature subsisting in a different way, and distinguished by different personal properties.

Q. What are the different personal properties of the Three Persons in the God head?

A. It is proper to the Father to beget the Son, and send out the Holy Ghost: It is proper to the Son to be begotten of the Father, and to send out the Holy Ghost: It is proper to the Holy Ghost to proceed by emanation from the Father and the Son. All which appears from these scriptures,— Psalm ii. 7. Heb. i. 5, 6, 8. John i. 14, 18. John xv. 26. Gal. iv. 6.

Q. Is none of these persons before another in order of time?

A. No; for they are all co-eternal.

Q. Is one of them before another in order of dignity or greatness?

A. No; for they are all equal in power and glory.

Q. Why then are they named in this order, the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost?

A. To denote the order of subsisting and working which they have among themselves: The Father subsisting and working from himself; the Son subsisting and working from the Father; and the Holy Ghost subsisting and working from the Father and the Son, John v. 19. John xvi. 4.

Q. Which of these Three Persons made the world?

A. Each of them made it, as is evident from the scriptures, which ascribe the works of creation to all the Three, Gen. i. 1, 2, 26. Isa. lxii. 5. Heb. i. 2. John i. 3. Col. i. 16. Job xxxiii. 4. Psalm xxxiii. 6. Isaiah xl. 12, 13.

Q. Which of the Three Persons became man?

A. The Son, who is the second Person of the glorious Trinity; and since his incarnation he is called the Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. How doth it appear that Christ the Son is God equal with the Father?

A. From the holy scriptures, in which we find the same names, titles, attributes, works, worship and honour ascribed to the Son, as they are to the Father.

Q. What are those essential names and titles which are ascribed to the Son equally with the Father?

A. Even those which are most eminent and glorious, such as, God, The Lord God of the prophets, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, The great God, The mighty God, The true God, The only wise God, God over all blessed for ever.— And also, he is called JEHOVAH, which is the peculiar incommunicable name of the only true God. For all which see these plain texts, John i. 1. 1 Tim. iii. 16. Rev. xxii. 6. Rev. xix. 16. Tit. ii. 13 Isa. ix 6. 1 John v. 20. Jude 25. Rom. ix. 5. Zech. ii. 10. Jer. xxiii. 6. Psalm lxxxiii. 18.

Q. What are the divine attributes which are ascribed to the Son equally with the Father?

A. The holy scripture asserts, that he is the Eternal, Unchangeable, Almighty, Omniscient, Omnipresent, Infinite in holiness, justice, goodness, and truth; as in these texts, Mic. v. 2. Heb. vii. 3. Heb xiii. 8. Rev. i. 8. John ii. 24, 25. John xxi. 17. Rev. ii. 23. Mat. xviii. 20. Isa. vi. 3. Rev. iii. 7. 2 Tim. iv. 8. Eph. iii. 19. Rev. i. 5.

Q. What are those divine works ascribed to Christ the Son, which prove him to be the true God?

A. The scripture ascribes to him the creation of the world, the preservation and upholding of all things, the working of miracles by his own power, the forgiving of sins, the working of faith and repentance, the quickening of dead souls, the opening of the understanding, bestowing of the Spirit,

raising the dead at the last day, judging of the world, and giving of eternal life, John i. 3, 10. Col. i. 16, 17. Heb. i. 3. Mark v. 41. Mark ii. 5. Heb. xii. 2. Acts v. 31. John v. 21, 25, 28, 29 Luke xxiv. 25. John xx. 22. Acts ii. 33. 2 Tim. iv. 1. John x 28.

Q. What is that worship and honour ascribed to Christ the Son, which prove him to be the true God?

A. We find the same religious divine worship and adoration given to him as to the Father, both by angels and men. As also, he is made the object of faith, of prayer, of praise, and of sacramental dedication, equally with the Father; as we see in these texts, Heb. i. 6 Mat. viii. 2. Mat. xiv. 13. John xiv. 1. Acts vii. 59, 60. 1 Cor. i. 2. Acts ix. 14. Rev. v. 12, 13. Mat. xxviii. 19. Acts xix. 5.

Q. Is it not the Father's express will, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father?

A. Yes, as in John v. 22, 23.

Q. Doth not God the Father call Jesus Christ his fellow or equal?

A. Yes; as in Zech. xiii. 7.

Q. Did not Christ think himself to be equal with him?

A. Yes; for it is said, "He thought it not robbery to be equal with God," Phil. ii. 6.

Q. If the Son be God with the Father, how saith Christ, "My Father is greater than I?" John xiv. 28.

A. Christ doth not speak there of his divine nature, for in respect of that, he and his Father are equally great: And therefore he saith, "I and my Father are one." And it cannot be otherwise, since one and the same infinitely great God-head is the undivided nature of them both: But in the place objected, as the context shews, Christ doth speak of his mediatorial office to which he is appointed by the Father, and in which respect he is the Father's servant.

Q. Is there not great absurdity in maintaining the Son to be inferior to the Father in respect of his divine nature?

A. Yes; for it would lead us into polytheism, or the setting up of two Gods, and two objects of worship, the one supreme, and the other subordinate; besides, it would make Christ no God in a proper sense: For inferiority or dependency is inconsistent with the notion of the Deity.

Q. How doth it appear that the Holy Ghost is God equal with the Father and the Son?

A. By the same arguments that prove the divinity of the Son: For the Holy Ghost hath the same names, attributes, works, worship and honour ascribed to him, which the Father and the Son have: He is called God, Jehovah: He is eternal, omniscient, omnipresent: He created the world, miraculously formed and furnished Christ's human nature, and inspired the prophets and apostles: He raises the dead, regenerates and sanctifies his people: And he is the object of divine worship, of prayer, and sacramental dedication.— For all which, see these texts, Acts v. 3, 4 Ezek. iii. 24, 26. Heb. ix. 14. 1 Cor. ii. 10. Luke ii. 26. Psalm cxxxix 7, 8. Psalm xxxiii. 6. Job xxvi. 13. Mat. i. 18. Luke iv. 18. 2 Pet. i. 21. Rom. viii. 11. John iii 6. 2 Thes ii. 13 Cant. iv. 16. 2 Cor. xiii 14. Mat xxviii 19

Q. Do we not receive distinct blessings and benefits from these glorious Persons?

A. Yes; the Father contrived the ransom, and sent the Ransomer; the Son undertook and came to be our Redeemer; and the Holy Ghost applies the redemption to us

Q. Ought not then a distinct glory to be given to each of the Blessed Three?

A. Yes; and this will be the work of the redeemed with the angels for ever, Rev. i. 4, 5, 6 Rev. iv 8. &c. Rev. v. 9 &c

Q. How are we to worship one God in three persons?

A. We are to worship God in Christ the Son, by the Spirit. We must ask of the Father in the name of the Son, and by the assistance of the Holy Ghost, John xvi 23 Eph. v. 20. Jude 20.

Q. Could ever the doctrine of the Holy Trinity be known by the light of nature?

A. No; and this should make us thankful for the light of revelation

Q. Can this mystery of One in Three, and Three in One, be comprehended by human reason?

A. No; the shallow capacities of men cannot fathom the deep things of God. This great mystery is what we should believe, reverence and adore, seeing we have the most plain and positive assertions in God's word of a Trinity of persons in an unity of essence.

Q. Is there any thing in religion contrary to reason?

A. No

Q. Are there not many things in it above the reach of human nature?——A. Yes

Q. Is it just to reject what our nature cannot account for?

A. No; for then we should deny every one of God's essential perfections, for each of them doth infinitely transcend our thoughts; nay, we should deny that we have immortal souls, and many other things in nature that our reason cannot search out, such as the motion of the wind and tide, &c.

Q. What shall we think of those who deny the Trinity, or refuse the divinity of the Son or Holy Ghost?

A. That they are blasphemers and damnable heretics, seeing they deny such great and fundamental truths of God so clearly revealed in his word.

QUESTION VII.

Q. *What are the decrees of God?*

A. The decrees of God are, his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby for his own glory, he hath fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass.

Q. What do you understand by God's decrees?

A. His eternal purpose and appointments concerning the things that shall be in time and through eternity.

Q. Were all God's decrees framed from eternity?

A. Yes.

Q. Doth God purpose nothing, upon new emergents in time, but what he has before decreed?

A. No; Acts xv 18 Isaiah xlvi 10.

Q. And doth nothing fall out in time but according to these external decrees?

A. No, Eph. i. 11.

Q. Would it be blasphemy in one to say that God is the author of sin?——A. Yes.

Q. Would it make God the author of sin to say that he had decreed sinful actions?

A. It would indeed be blasphemy to say that he had decreed to effectuate sin; but it is not so to say that he hath decreed to permit sinful actions, and to over-rule them to his own glorious purposes

Q. How doth it appear that God may have such a holy hand about the sinful actions of men?

A. From several instances of scripture; particularly that in Acts ii 23, where Peter chargeth home upon the Jews their crucifying of Christ with wicked hands, and yet at the

same time says, That he was delivered up for that end by the determinate counsel and fore knowledge of God. See also Acts iv. 27, 28 where we may see that God's designing the crucifixion of Christ from eternity, and bringing the greatest good out of it to mankind, was no manner of excuse for the wicked part the Jews acted in it; seeing it flowed from a wicked principle in them, and was their own voluntary act and deed.

Q. What counsel had God in fore-ordaining all things?

A. The counsel of his own will, which was according to infinite wisdom, and the highest reason, Eph i 11. Isa xl 13.

Q For what end did God decree all things?

A For his own glory, Rom xi 36.

Q. What perfections of his did he design thereby to glorify?

A. His wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

Q Can nothing fall out in time to alter God's decrees?

A. No

Q How appears it that his decrees are unchangeable?

A Because changing would import weakness, and that he did not foresee the letts and stops in the way of his purposes

Q. Do the many changes that fall out in time, such as God's making the world, and afterwards destroying it, import any alteration in God's counsels or decrees?

A. No; for God from eternity, by his immutable decree, did fore-ordain all these alterations.

Q Doth the immutability of God's decrees take away the free will of rational creatures in performing their actions?

A No; but rather doth establish it; because God hath decreed to bring about his purposes in a way agreeably to the nature and liberty of free agents without any constraint upon their will, it being easy for infinite knowledge to foresee how they will incline and determine in every different situation.

Q. Are there not many casual things that fall out in the world, which may be ascribed to chance?

A. No; for though there be many things casual or contingent in respect of second causes or instruments, as falling out without or beyond their design; yet there is nothing that falls out by chance, or is casual in respect of God, that foresees and determines every thing that comes to pass.

Q. Hath not God predestinated some to eternal life?

A. This is plainly asserted in scripture, Eph. i. 4, 5, 6. 2 Thess. ii. 13.

Q. Was their foreseen faith, repentance, or good works, the cause of this decree?

A. No, but only the effect of it: For God decreed all these as necessary means to eternal life, as is clear from the forecited texts, Eph. i. 4, 5, 6. 2 Thess. ii. 13. and from Acts xiii. 48. "We are chosen that we should be holy, not because we are holy."

Q. What then was the cause of God's decree of election?

A. Nothing but his good pleasure and free love, Romans ix. 11, 13, 18. No man hath any ground of boasting; for God hath past by one, and pitched upon another, according to his sovereign will and pleasure.

QUESTION VIII.

Q. *How doth God execute his decrees?*

A. God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.

Q. What do you understand by God's executing his decrees?

A. His bringing to pass the things which he had before-ordained.

Q. Are God's decrees brought to pass in his works in time? A. Yes.

Q. What are these works of God?

A. His works of creation and providence.

Q. Are these all the works of God, which he hath decreed to bring to pass? A. Yes.

Q. Is not the work of redemption a part of God's works which he had decreed from eternity?

A. Yes; but this is here included in God's work of providence; and indeed his work of redeeming lost sinners is the most glorious part of his providence towards men.

Q. What is the difference between God's executing or bringing to pass his works of creation, and his works of providence?

A. The former he executed in six days, but the latter he continues still to execute; the one without means, but the other usually by means.

Q. Are there not many of God's decrees yet to be executed?

A. Yes; but they all shall be executed in due time, in the order God hath appointed, Isaiah xlvi. 10. Rev i. 1. Rev. xxii. 6. Rom. xi. 25, 26.

QUESTION IX.

Q. *What is the work of creation?*

A. The work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.

Q. What is it to create?

A. It is to make something out of nothing; and likewise the making of a thing out of matter wholly unfit for it, as man's body of the dust of the ground, is termed creating.

Q. Who is the Creator of all things? A. God.

Q. Out of what did God make all things?

A. Of nothing.

Q. How can that be said, seeing man was made of the dust of the earth?

A. Because God made that dust out of nothing.

Q. Can none else create, or make a thing out of nothing, but God?

A. No; neither man or angel can create the least atom.

Q. Cannot an angel make a living creature?

A. No, not so much as a flie.

Q. Can an angel turn any thing into nothing?

A. No.

Q. Can God do this?

A. Yes, he could annihilate the whole world as easily as he created it.

Q. Did God employ angels as his instruments in the work of creation? A. No.

Q. By what means then did God make all things?

A. By the word of his power: "He spake, and it was done," Psalm xxxiii. 9.

Q. What was the word of power he made use of?

A. That in Genesis i. Let it be; as "Let there be light, Let there be a firmament," and the like.

Q. In what time did God make all things?

A. In six days.

Q. Could not God have made them in less time?

A. Yes.

Q. Why then did he take so long time to do it?

A. To give us a more distinct view of the order of the creation, and to set us an example of working six days, and resting the seventh.

Q In what state did God make all things?

A God made all things at first very good, Genesis i 31

Q. What is the meaning of these words, " All very good?"

A. That, of all the things that were made, there was none of them marred in the making; all of them answered the Creator's design, and were fit to shew forth his glory.

Q If all God's works are very good, then whose work is sin, that is so very evil?

A. Sin is none of God's works; it is only the work of the devil, and of man that was tempted by him.

Q. And whose workmanship are the devils, or who made them?

A. God made them angels of light, but they made themselves devils by sin

Q When were the angels created?

A Certainly within the space of the six days mentioned by Moses; for in that time we are told that God finished the creating of the heavens with their hosts, Gen ii. 1, 2. which must include the angels, which are expressly called the heavenly Host, Luke ii. 13. And many think they were created on the first day, with the empyreal heaven, Gen. i. 1. Job xxxviii 6, 7.

Q Why was not Moses more express and particular with respect to the creation of angels?

A Because, it being his great design to give a history of the church, and its original, from the creation of the world, he judged it sufficient for this purpose to give us no more but a short account of the visible creation, to which angels do not belong

Q For what end did God make the world?

A The Lord hath made all things for himself, and for the manifesting of his glorious perfections, Proverbs xvi 4.

Q What are the attributes of God which do most gloriously shine forth in the works of creation?

A His infinite power, wisdom, and goodness.

Q. How is the glory of God's power displayed in making the world?

A. In his bringing all things of a sudden out of the womb of nothing by his bare word, Romans i 20

Q How doth the glory of God's wisdom shine forth herein?

A In the amazing variety of creatures, and the beautiful order and harmony of all things; the view whereof made the Psalmist cry out, Psalm civ. 24 " O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all."

Q. How is the glory of God's goodness manifested in creation?

A. In providing such a commodious habitation for man before he gave him a being, and making all the creatures subservient to him, Psalm viii 3, 4, &c. Psalm xxxiii 5.

Q On which day of the creation did God make light to shine?

A. Upon the first day?

Q. Were the sun, the moon, and stars, made the first day?

A No; they were not made till the fourth day of the creation.

Q. How could there be light made before the sun?

A. It was easy for the great Creator to form a bright luminous body, and carry it about to enlighten the world for the three first days, and afterwards place that light in the sun, moon, and stars, when they were created.

Q When were the fishes created?

A. On the fifth day

Q When was man created? A. On the sixth day.

Q. What did God do on the seventh day?

A. He rested from all his works, and sanctified it for his Sabbath

Q Was God weary with his work, that he rested after it?

A. No; the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary, Isaiah xl. 28.

Q What is to be understood then by God's resting?

A His ceasing from work.

Q. What doth God teach us by this example?

A. To cease from the labour of the week, and keep a seventh part of our time holy to the Lord.

Q. Is it not evident, from sense and reason, as well as scripture, that the world did not exist from eternity, but was created some few thousand years ago, according to Moses's account?

A Yes; it is clearly evident from the lateness of the invention of arts, the foundation of cities, the erecting of states, and the writing of histories, none of which do we find so ancient as the time of the creation fixed by Moses. Besides, the being of mountains and valleys is a plain demonstration that the earth was not from eternity; for, seeing the rain still washeth down some earth from the heights, if the smallest quantity should but come down once in a thousand years, it is certain the mountains would have been entirely levelled in an infinite course of years, so that no height had now appeared.

Q. Would it not be profitable for us to meditate much upon the beautiful and stupendous Creation?

A. Yes; it would make us little in our own eyes, raise in us an awful sense and veneration of God's power and majesty, cause us hate sin, that brings disorder into this beautiful frame, and help us to trust to our Maker's power and goodness in all our straits and difficulties.

QUESTION X.

Q *How did God create man?*

A. God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.

Q Which is the principal creature upon this earth?

A Man.

Q Why then was he made after all other creatures?

A Because God thought fit to make the world as an house ready furnished for him, before he would create man to inhabit it.

Q What sort of a creature is man?

A A compound being of soul and body, created male and female.

Q What is male and female?

A. Man and woman.

Q How many men did God create at first?

A. Only one man and one woman.

Q What are the two constituent parts of man?

A. Soul and body.

Q. What is the soul of man?

A. It is a spirit, rational, invisible, and immortal, by which a man exerts all vital and intelligent acts, lives, moves, understands, and wills.

Q. How was man's soul made?

A. God breathed into him, and he became a living soul.

Q. Of what was man's body made?

A. Adam's body was made of the dust of the ground, and Eve's was made of a rib from Adam's side.

Q. Can the body live without the soul? A. No.

Q. Can the soul live without the body? A. Yes.

Q After whose image did God create man?

A. After his own image

Q Did this lie in man's body, or in any bodily shape or likeness?

A. No, but in man's soul, which is a spirit endowed with natural faculties, and moral qualities, that bear some resemblance of its Maker

Q. Wherein doth the soul resemble God in its natural faculties?

A. As it is an immortal spirit, endowed with understanding, will, and memory.

Q Wherein did man at first resemble God in immortal qualities?

A. In his knowledge, righteousness, holiness, and dominion over the creatures.

Q. What knowledge was man endowed with at his first creation?

A. He had a vast knowledge of God, of his law and will, of his works and creatures; and these in the lower world he knew well how to use and govern. And, as an instance of his knowledge, he gave names to all the living creatures, suitable to their natures, at the first sight of them, Gen. ii. 19, 20.

Q. What was that righteousness which man had at his first creation?

A. He had an upright and righteous will, which inclined him to do justice to all his fellow-creatures.

Q. Wherein did his holiness lie?

A. In the purity of his soul and its affections, whereby he was inclined to hate all sin, love what was pure and pleasant to God, and study a perfect conformity to his holy law, both in heart and life.

Q. Did not this holiness of nature fit man for communion with God, and enable him to keep his law perfectly?

A. Yes.

Q. Was not holiness the principal part of God's image in man?

A. Yes; and still it is the excellency of man in any state, whether in earth or heaven, seeing it is by this that he resembles God.

Q. Doth not knowledge beautify a man too?

A. Yes; very much, if attended with holiness; but knowledge without holiness is rather the resemblance of the devil than of God, Gen. iii. 1. Acts xiii. 10.

Q Was the dominion man at first had over the creatures any part of God's image in man?

A. Yes; for by it he resembled God in his authority and government.

Q. What was that dominion which man had at first over the creatures?

A. It was that authority which was given him over the fish of the sea, fowls of the air, and beasts of the earth; with power to rule, use, and dispose of them at his pleasure, they all being subject to his orders.

Q. Hath not man now lost his dominion in a great measure?

A. Yes; for, with respect to the most part of creatures, man now is either a terror to them, or they to him, which is one of the bitter fruits of the fall. Since man hath rebelled against God, no wonder the creatures prove rebellious and disobedient to him.

QUESTION XI.

Q. *What are God's works of providence?*

A. God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful, preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

Q. How doth it appear that there is a providence that governs the world?

A. From plain scripture assertions, and from the exact accomplishment of scripture prophecies; as also from natural things obvious to all; such as the exactness of the sun's motions, diurnal and annual, that produce the most uniform revolutions of day and night, the different seasons of the year, in order to provide us of the necessaries and comforts of life; and likewise the regular ebbing and flowing of the sea; the remarkable care for preserving and propagating all the different species of living creatures, whether rational, sensitive, or vegetable. Besides many other surprising observations and occurrences; all which convince us of the being of a wise providence that rules the world.

Q. What are the objects of God's providence, or the things about which it is concerned?

A. It reacheth all the creatures, and all their actions, Psalm ciii. 19. John xv. 5. Acts xvii. 28.

Q. Is God's providence concerned about the meanest as well as the highest creatures?

A. Yes; there is nothing so high that is without its reach, and nothing so mean that it is below its notice; for, as he rules in the armies of heaven, so he takes care of the very ravens, sparrows, lilies, grass, and hairs of our head, Daniel iv. 35. Mat. x. 29, 30. Mat. vi. 30. Luke xii. 24.

Q. If God take care of such mean creatures, will he not much more take care of the household of faith?

A. Yes.

Q. What are the acts of God's providence about his creatures, and their actions?

A. They are chiefly two, to wit, his preserving and governing of them.

Q. How doth he preserve his creatures?

A. By upholding them in being, defending them from evil, and providing them means of sustenance, Heb. i. 3. Psalm cxix. 91. Psalm cxlv. 15, 16.

Q. Will not the creatures continue in their beings without God's upholding of them?

A. No; they would sink into nothing again without it; and, in this respect, Providence is as a continued creation, Acts xvii. 28.

Q. Could not such creatures as the angels live and subsist without God's providence?

A. No; no more than a fly, or any such creature.

Q. How doth God govern all his creatures and their actions?

A. By directing them to their proper ends according to their natures, producing events by them according to his pleasure, and over-ruling all their actions to his own glory, Psalm cxlvii. 15, 16, &c. Prov. xvi. 9, 33.

Q. Did not God some times make his creatures act contrary to their natural course and force?

A. Yes, when he pleaseth to act miraculously; as in di-

viding of the waters, causing iron to swim, and restraining the force of fire, the fury of lions, &c.

Q Doth the providence of God extend to all the actions of men?

A. Yes, to them all, whether they be good or bad, natural, moral, or casual, Acts xvii. 28. John xv. 5. Exodus xxi 12, 13

Q. What hand hath divine Providence about sinful actions?

A. He hath a holy hand, in permitting them, limiting and restraining them, and directing them to holy and wise ends beyond the intentions of the actors, Acts xiv. 16 Psalm lxxvi. 10. Isaiah x 5, 6, 7.

Q. How doth God permit men to fall into sin?

A. He, in his just judgment, leaves them or gives them up to their own hearts lusts, and the instigations of Satan, Psalm lxxxi. 11, 12.

Q. Why doth God permit sin, when he can hinder it?

A. In this he acts as a holy and just judge; when men refuse his calls, and despise light and love, he justly punisheth them by leaving them to themselves. yet he is pleased to temper justice with much mercy and wisdom; for hereby he shews men what evil is in their hearts for their conviction and humiliation, and how wonderfully he can turn about the worst things to his own glory and the good of his church, 2 Chron xxxii. 31. Neh ix. 28.

Q. Can you illustrate this by any instances from scripture?

A. Yes; it is evident, not only in the betraying and crucifying of Christ mentioned before upon the *seventh question*, but also in the selling of Joseph in Egypt: The actors meant it for evil, but God turned it about for great good, Genesis l. 20.

Q. Who are those about whom the providence of God is most especially concerned?

A. The Church, and all who are true believers; when others have only God's common and general providence to look to, these have his special providence to depend upon, seeing he hath promised to make all things work together for their good. Rom viii 28.

Q. What are the properties of God's providential acts?

A. There are three mentioned in the answer: 1. They are most holy, without spot or blemish 2. Most wise, without mistake or error. 3. Most powerful; they cannot be stopt or resisted, Psalm cxlv. 17. Romans ix. 33 Daniel iv. 35.

Q. If God doth govern the world so wisely, why doth he let his people be afflicted, and his enemies prosper in the world?

A. God's wisdom is hereby glorified: For these dispensations, however crooked they seem to us, are wisely ordered to carry on the salvation of his people, and destruction of his enemies.

Q. Are there not many who practically deny God's providence?

A. Yes; such as those who do not consult with God in their undertakings, nor seek his blessing thereupon; and those who ascribe their success more to second causes than unto God; and those who are impatient under afflictions, distrust God in their straits, or betake themselves to unlawful shifts to obtain what they want.

Q. What regard ought we to shew to the providence of God?

A. We ought by prayer to interest providence in all our affairs, and depend upon its care: We ought seriously to observe its steps, and humbly submit to its determinations.

Q Ought we not to put a remark on all the gracious steps of God's providence towards us? A. Yes.

Q What are those we ought especially to remark?

A. Such as the care of providence in preserving us in the womb and from the womb; watching over us in our helpless infancy; ordering our lot to fall in a land of gospel light, and not among infidels; allowing us a religious education, and good examples; giving us wakening ordinances and dispensations for our conversion to God; preserving our lives so long amidst so many dangerous diseases and accidents, and keeping us from many snares and temptations to sin.

QUESTION XII.

Q *What special acts of providence did God exercise towards man in the estate wherein he was created?*

A When God had created man, he entered into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of perfect obedience; forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, upon pain of death.

Q What did God with man after he had created him?

A He entered into a covenant with him.

Q What do you mean by a covenant?

A A mutual paction or agreement betwixt two parties.

Q How many covenants hath God entered into with man?

A. Two; viz. the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace

Q. Which of these two covenants did God make with Adam at first

A It was the covenant of works, which in the answer is called a "covenant of life"

Q Why is it called both a "covenant of works" and a "covenant of life?"

A It is called a covenant of works, from the condition of it; and a covenant of life, from the promise or reward of it.

Q. How doth it appear that God and Adam did really enter into covenant?

A. From this, that God required Adam to obey his will, promising him life if he should do it, and threatening death to him if he did not. And doubtless Adam, who was made after the image of God, consented to this his Creator's will, when first intimated to him.

Q. Had this covenant a condition in it?

A. Yes; to wit, works, or obedience to the will of God.

Q. What do you mean by the condition of a covenant?

A. A special article or term, upon the fulfilling of which the promised blessings of the covenant only are to be bestowed.

Q What sort of obedience did this covenant require as the condition of it?

A. Perfect obedience to the whole will of God.

Q. When may obedience be reckoned perfect?

A It is so when a man continues in doing all things commanded by God, without any defect in matter or manner, principle or ends.

Q. Was there no grace in the covenant of works?

A. Yes, there was much grace in God's condescending to enter into covenant with his own creature, and promising him great rewards to encourage him to obedience, when he was absolutely obliged to it by his creation, though nothing had been promised at all.

Q. What was the reward promised in this covenant for man's obedience?

A. Life.

Q. What sort of life was it?

A. A threefold life, natural, spiritual and eternal. The natural and spiritual life, given to man at his creation, was to be continued with him; and in due time he was to be translated to eternal life in heaven, without dying.

Q. What account can you give of the nature of that threefold life?

A. The natural life consists in the union of soul and body; the spiritual life in the union of the soul with God; the eternal life in the happiness of the whole man in the immediate vision and fruition of God in heaven for ever.

Q. Was this covenant made with Adam for himself alone?

A. No; it was made with him, not only for himself, but in the name of all his posterity.

Q. Had Adam sufficiency of strength and grace given him at first, to perform the condition of this covenant?

A. Yes.

Q. Did not this covenant require obedience to the whole moral law? A. Yes.

Q. Where was that law written?

A. In the hearts of our first parents.

Q. Was there not something else that God required of them as a present trial of their obedience?

A. Yes, namely, That they should not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Q. Why did God deny them that one tree?

A. To try their subjection and obedience to their Sovereign Lord, of whom they held all comforts; and to teach them that their chief happiness did not lie in the enjoyment of temporal things, but of God's favour, and that they ought to prefer his will and pleasure to all the delights of sense.

Q. Had that tree any virtue in it to make men knowing and wise?

A. No, it had none, though satan deluded them with this temptation.

Q. Why then was it called the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil?

A. It was so called, to assure them, that, if they did eat of it, they should know, to their sad experience, both what good they would forfeit, and what evil they would bring upon themselves and their posterity.

Q. What good were they to forfeit and lose?

A. Both the image and favour of God.

Q. What evil were they to feel?

A. The wrath and curse of God.

Q. Was this penalty plainly intimated to them, when the covenant was made with them?

A. Yes; for God said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Q. What sort of death did God threaten them with?

A. A threefold death, answerable to the life promised; to wit, death temporal, spiritual, and eternal.

Q. What account can you give of the nature of that threefold death?

A. Temporal or natural death consists in the separation of the soul from the body; spiritual death in the separation of the soul from God, and the loss of his image; eternal death lies in the separation of both soul and body from the comfortable presence of God for ever.

Q. Did Adam die naturally that very day he ate this fruit?

A. No; for he lived till he was 930 years old.

Q. How then was the threatening of God accomplished?

A. On the day he did eat, he died spiritually, and became liable to temporal and eternal death.

Q. What do you understand by these words, "He died spiritually," &c.

A. I understand, that Adam lost the image and favour of God; that he became mortal, and liable to all afflictions in this life, and to the torments of hell hereafter.

Q. Why was not the sentence fully execute upon him presently?

A. We have ground to believe he was saved from eternal death by the mediation of Christ; and, for the elect's sake, who were to spring from him, he got a reprieve as to natural death for a time: yet sin gave his body the death's wound, of which he died at length.

Q. May we not read much of sin's evil in that awful threatening?

A. Yes; for sin is an evil that deprives man of the happiness of a threefold life, and exposes him to the misery of a threefold death.

Q. Was there any place in that covenant for a Mediator or Surety?

A. No; for it required personal obedience or suffering from every man, for himself.

Q. Would it not accept of repentance from sinners, and sincere endeavours after obedience, though imperfect?

A. No; for it required obedience absolutely perfect, and sentenced the transgressor to wrath for the least failure, without any hope of mercy to the penitent.

Q. Ought not all believers to bless God that they are not under this covenant? A. Yes.

Q. Is not the case of unbelievers sad, who still remain under it? A. Yes.

QUESTION XIII.

Q. *Did our first parents continue in the estate wherein they were created?*

A. Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God.

Q. What was the estate wherein our first parents were created?

A. It was a state of innocence, and of great happiness.

Q. Wherein did their happiness lie?

A. They were free of all sin and misery; they had all earthly felicity in paradise, and enjoyed sweet communion with God.

Q. How did they fall from this happy state?

A. By sinning against God.

Q. Were they not made upright, after the image of God, and how then could they sin?

A. Though they were made upright, yet they were not confirmed in that estate like the elect angels; but created mutable, being left to the freedom of their own will.

Q. Were they created with any will or inclination to sin? A. No.

Q. What do you mean by the freedom of will that they were left to?

A. That they were not under constraint from any, but had a liberty in their will to chuse or refuse either good or evil.

Q. Had they not a sufficient liberty in their will, and

power to have obeyed God in all things, and to have resisted all temptations to sin?

A. Yes, if they had used it well, as they might have done: But, having their stock in their own hand, without any confirming grace from God, they might also fall, if they would.

Q. Hath fallen man the same freedom of will to what is good, that Adam had had at first?

A. No: Though some relics of that freedom to things naturally or morally good be found in unregenerate men, in some more, in some less; yet they have no freedom of will to things spiritually good, being dead in sins and trespasses, Ephesians ii. 1.

Q. Do regenerate persons attain to Adam's freedom of will to good?

A. Not altogether in this life, though they recover it in a good measure; but being only renewed in part, and the image of God imperfect in them while here, their wills are not entirely free to what is good, there being still a sad mixture in them of inclination to what is evil.

Q. What freedom of will have the saints in glory?

A. They have a freedom of will only to what is good, and a perfect freedom too, and, by virtue of confirming grace, they cannot will any thing that is evil.

Q. What do you mean by God's leaving our first parents to the freedom of their will?

A. His suffering them to make their choice, when both good and evil were in their offer, and not giving them any new supplies of grace to prevent their will from yielding to temptations to sin.

Q. Why did he not give these new supplies?

A. Because he was not bound to do it, and he had glorious designs to bring about by not doing it.

Q. What temptation had our first parents to sin against God?

A. *First,* The devil tempted the woman to eat of the forbidden tree; and, *next,* he put her on to tempt Adam to do the same.

Q. Could Satan have used any violence to cause them to sin?

A. No; all he could do was to tempt them to it in a subtile manner.

Q. What method did he take in doing it?

A. He made use of the serpent, and spake out of it; he shewed them the desirableness of the fruit, and persuaded them that by eating it they should become wise as God, and should escape the punishment threatened; he attacked Eve when she was alone, and then made use of her to prevail with her husband.

Q. Is it not upon this account that Christ calls the devil a liar and murderer from the beginning?

A. Yes; for it was by lies and falshoods that he murdered our first parents and their posterity.

Q. Was it not a dreadful sin in them to believe the devil more than God?

A. Yes; and it is what Adam's children are much inclined to do still, according to their example.

Q. What would become of the best of men now, if God should leave them to themselves and to Satan's temptations?

A. They would surely be ruined, considering that we have lost our strength by the fall. No man here attains to Adam's perfection in grace, there is still a mixture of corruption in the best.

Q. Should we not always pray against God's leaving us to our free will?

A. Yes; for if perfect holiness, without new aids and confirming grace from God, be no security against total apostacy, as is evident from the example of the angels and our first parents; our ruin must be inevitable, if God should leave us, who are weak and corrupt, to ourselves.

Q. Are not believers now safe from any such fall?

A. Yes, though that is not owing to themselves, but to the gracious promise of God through Jesus Christ.

Q. What were God's wise and gracious ends in permitting Adam's fall?

A. He designed to glorify his infinite wisdom, and likewise his justice and mercy, in saving lost sinners of mankind by a surety of his own providing.

QUESTION XIV.

Q. *What is sin?*

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God.

Q. What mean you by the law of God?

A. The commands or precepts which God hath given to man to be his rule to walk by.

Q. Where is this law written?

A. At first it was clearly written on Adam's heart, but by the fall this writing became dark, and therefore God has written it most plainly to us in his word.

Q. How many kinds of laws hath God written there?

A. Three; the judicial, the ceremonial, and the moral law.

Q. What is the judicial law?

A. That which related to the civil constitution, and contained the municipal statutes of the Jewish nation; which do not bind other nations any farther than they are founded upon moral equity.

Q. What is the ceremonial law?

A. The statutes relating to the Jewish worship, their sacrifices, washings, and rites, which were typical of Christ and his benefits, and are now fulfilled and abrogated by Christ's coming.

Q. What is the moral law?

A. That which is the rule of our manners and practice, and is perpetually binding upon all men, which we have briefly summed up to us by God himself in the ten commandments.

Q. Ought all men to study a conformity to this law?

A. Yes; for every want of it is a sin.

Q. What do you understand by conformity to the law?

A. A suitableness in us to what it requires.

Q. What sort of conformity is due by us to God's law?

A. Both an internal conformity of the heart and thoughts, and an external conformity of the words and actions; and, if the first be wanting, we are guilty of sin, be the latter never so exact.

Q. What is meant by the transgression of the law?

A. It is a going beyond the bounds and limits which God doth set to us by his law, or doing that which is contrary to it.

Q. Why are both these expressions made use of to describe sin, namely, want of conformity to the law, and transgression of the law?

A. The *first* of these is made use of to include *Original Sin,* which is a want of conformity of *nature;* and *sins of omission,* which are a want of conformity of *life* to God's law.

The *second* is used to comprehend all sins of *commission*, either in thought, word, or deed.

Q Must not sin be a great evil, which breaks such a holy, just, and good law?——A. Yes.

Q. Wherein doth the prodigious greatness of this evil appear?

A. In these; that sin shakes off the sovereignty of God, despiseth his power, offends his holiness, grieves his Spirit, defaceth his image in the soul, and brings damnation to it.

Q What is the glass that represents the evil of sin in the most lively colours?

A. We see much of sin's evil in the glass of God's holy law, and very much of it in the glass of hell's torments, but most of all in the glass of Christ's sufferings and death.

Q Can we ever repair the injury that sin doth to God's holy law?

A. No; but Christ our Surety hath given full satisfaction for all the sins of those who believe in him.

QUESTION XV.

Q. *What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?*

A. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit.

Q. Why did God forbid the eating of this fruit?

A. To shew his dominion over man, and to make trial of man's obedience to his Maker's will and authority, in keeping a command for which he saw no reason but purely the will of God.

Q. Was there no evil in eating this fruit if God had not forbid it?——A No.

Q. Were our first parents guilty of no sin before actual eating of this fruit?

A Yes; they sinned in hearkening to the devil, and believing him, before they did eat.

Q Why is their eating the fruit called then their first sin?

A Because it was their first sin finished, as expressed in James i. 14, 15.

Q. Who was first in the transgression?

A. The woman.

Q. Was our first parents eating of the forbidden fruit a great sin?

A. In several respects, it was the most heinous sin ever was committed

Q. How doth that appear?

A In regard it was a complicated wickedness, including many atrocious sins in it, such as renouncing the authority of their Creator, unthankfulness for his great bounty, aspiring to be equal with God, believing the devil before God, and joining in rebellion with him, murdering themselves and all their offspring: and all this guilt was attended with the most terrible aggravations that ever were heard of

Q What are these aggravations?

A. They committed this sin soon after they were made after the image of God, when they had no corruption within to incline them to it, nor temptation from without, but what they could easily resist: yea, they were guilty of it in paradise, in the presence of God, and in the place where they had been lately taken into covenant with God: they well knew the glorious advantages of keeping this covenant, and the fearful consequences of breaking it; nay, they sinned against the clearest light and illumination of God's Spirit, that ever any mere man had: So that we should not think of this sin without horror.

Q. Did it not heighten their sin, that they durst offend so great a God for so small a temptation as a little fruit?

A. Yes, very much.

Q By what door got sin access to our first parents hearts?

A. By the door of the eyes, Gen iii. 6. " The fruit was pleasant to the eye "

Q. Should we not learn from this to set a watch upon this door, that sin may not enter by i ?——A. Yes.

Q. Have we not the example of saints set before us who did so?

A Yes; we have the example of Job, who made a covenant with his eyes, and of David, who prayed to turn away his eyes from beholding vanity, Job xxxi 1 Psalm cxix. 37.

QUESTION XVI.

Q *Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?*

A. The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression.

Q Was the covenant of works made with Adam for himself only?

A. No; it was made with him for his posterity also.

Q What mean you by Adam's posterity also?

A. His children or offspring that should come after him, to the end of the world.

Q. Are we included in that covenant, who live now near six thousand years since it was made?

A. Yes, seeing we are of Adam's posterity.

Q. How could the covenant be made with us who had not then a being?

A. We had a being virtually in Adam's loins; and Adam transacted with God, not as a single person, but as a common head and representative of all his posterity; and so the covenant was made with Adam in our name.

Q Is it upon that account we are said to sin in him and fall with him?

A Yes, according to Rom. v 12. 1 Cor. xv 22.

Q How came Adam to be our head and representative in this covenant?

A God appointed him.

Q How can Adam be held as our representative, seeing we never consented to it?

A Could we have existed, we would have consented to so just a choice, Adam being our natural head and affectionate parent, made after God's image, with sufficient power to obey him And seeing it was God's will, we are bound to consent to it as a holy and just law Besides, it is warrantable, in human transactions and covenants, for parents to represent children unborn; as in making bargains, selling lands, contracting debts, &c. And why then was it not just for Adam to represent us in transacting with God?

Q Is it just that parents should make covenants for their children, whereby they may be involved into guilt and misery, and made to suffer for what they never committed?

A If a man make a covenant for himself and his posterity, in a thing just and lawful, men do judge his children bound: As in the case of our allegiance to a king: The rebellion of a Father may justly affect his posterity, stain their whole blood, and forfeit their inheritance. And, if this be

reckoned just among men, Why is it not also just betwixt God and man?

Q. Was it right to put our stock into the hands of those who improved it so ill?

A. They might have improven it well if they had pleased, and none of their children could have been thought better hands than they were Neither is there place for us to complain, who approve of their ill management, and apostacy from God, by our sinning daily after the similitude of Adam's transgression.

Q. If Adam had stood, would we not have been happy with him?

A. Yes; and therefore, seeing he fell, it is just we should be miserable with him.

Q. Are we partakers with Adam in all his sins?

A. No, but in his first sin only.

Q. Why only in his first sin?

A. Because then he represented all his posterity as a federal head; but after he once brake the covenant, he was no more trusted as such, but reckoned to act as a single person only for himself.

Q. Is it not as just to impute Adam's first sin to his posterity for their condemnation, as it is to impute Christ's righteousness to us for our justification?

A. Yes, it is equally just, because of the covenants their being made both with the first and second Adam in our name, Rom. v. 18, 19.

Q. How soon is Adam's sin imputed to his posterity?

A. As soon as they have a being, and stand in relation to Adam.

Q. If one sin hath thus defiled and destroyed all mankind, should we not look upon sin as of a most mischievous nature?

A. Yes, and avoid it more carefully than we would do the plague.

Q. Should not our woful fall by the first Adam, stir us up to seek recovery by Christ the second Adam?

A. Yes, we should be restless till we get it, that, as we have born the image of the heavenly, and be taken to dwell with him at last.

Q. Did never any of Adam's posterity es ape the imputation of Adam's first sin?

A. None, but Jesus Christ only.

Q. Was Christ one of Adam's posterity?——A. Yes.

Q. How doth that appear?

A. In regard he is the seed of the woman, and had the substance of his flesh from Mary that descended from Adam.

Q. If Christ descended from Adam, how could he escape Adam's sin?

A. He escaped it by descending from Adam not by ordinary generation, but in an extraordinary way.

Q. What was that?

A. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of a virgin, without any earthly father.

Q. Why was Christ conceived in this wonderful manner?

A. That he might be kept free of the guilt and pollution of Adam's sin.

Q. Was this sufficient to keep him free of it?

A. Yes, because the Holy Ghost, by his infinite power, did sanctify and keep pure and spotless so much of the virgin's substance as was needful to form our Saviour's body, Luke i. 35.

Q. Are all the rest of mankind defiled with Adam's sin?

A. Yes, and infants as well as others.

Q. Are all men equally guilty and sinful before God?

A. Yes, they are so in respect of nature, but not in respect of practice.

Q. How comes there to be any difference in respect of practice?

A. Because some are more left of God, and some are more beholden to free grace than others, 1 Cor. iv. 7.

QUESTION XVII.

Q. *Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?*

A. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

Q. Who of Adam's race were brought into a state of sin by his fall?

A. All mankind, excepting Jesus Christ.

Q. Did the fall bring mankind into a state of sin only?

A. Into a state of misery also.

Q. Can man be in a state of sin, and not in a state of misery?

A. No; for the one still followeth upon the other: Misery is the necessary consequence of sin.

Q. Was there ever such a fall as that of the first man?

A. No.

Q. How so?

A. Because so many men fell with him, and fell from such a height of happiness to such a depth of misery?

Q. Was Adam able to raise himself to his former state after his fall? A. No.

Q. Why so?

A. Because Adam and all his posterity were so bruised and disabled by that woful fall, that they could do nothing to raise themselves up, but must lie in their miserable case till divine mercy move for their relief.

Q. Are we not defiled as well as disabled by the fall?

A. Yes; our fall is like that of a man into a pit among stones and mire, which both bruises and defiles him at once.

QUESTION XVIII.

Q. *Wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?*

A. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin, together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it.

Q. What are these two evils mentioned in the answer, which make up the sinfulness of our fallen estate?

A. They are original and actual sin.

Q. What are these evils which make up original sin?

A. They are three, to wit—the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption on our whole nature.

Q. What do you mean by the guilt of Adam's first sin?

A. Our liableness to wrath or punishment by reason of that sin of Adam's.

Q. How doth that guilt become ours?

A. By the imputing of Adam's sin to us; he having been our representative in the covenant of works which he brake.

Q. What is meant by the want of original righteousness, which we now lie under by the fall?

A. It imports, that we are now deprived of that perfect rectitude, purity, and holiness, implanted in man's nature at

his first creation, which was the image of God upon his soul.

Q. How is it that we have lost that original righteousness, or the image of God in our souls

A. God is now provoked to withhold it, as a just punishment of Adam's fall.

Q. Doth it make God the author of sin, to say that he withholds original righteousness from us?

A. No; for he is not bound to restore that to us which we have lost through our own fault, but may justly deny it as a punishment of Adam's first sin. We are bound to have it, but God is not bound to give it.

Q. Doth not the want of original righteousness make way for the corruption of our whole nature.

A. Yes.

Q. What do you mean by the corruption of our whole nature?

A. That our whole constitution, both in soul and body, is infected, defiled, and depraved by sin, and that from the very womb.

Q. Wherein doth this corruption of nature appear?

A. In our impotency and enmity to what is good, and in our proneness and inclination to what is evil.

Q. What parts of our nature doth this corruption infect?

A. Our whole nature and constitution, every sense and member of our bodies, and every power and faculty of our souls; to wit, our understandings, will, consciences, memories, affections, and thoughts.

Q. How are our senses and members corrupted by original sin?

A. They are now become ready weapons and instruments of unrighteousness, Romans vi. 13.

Q. How is the mind or understanding corrupted thereby?

A. It is so blinded and darkened that it cannot discern spiritual things.

Q. How is the will corrupted?

A. It is turned crooked, and perverse, backward to good, and inclined to evil.

Q. How is the conscience corrupted?

A. It is become sleepy, dead, partial, biassed, and unfaithful: It doth not perform its office uprightly, by warning, challenging, and speaking for God, as his deputy ought to do; but is either silent or faint in God's cause.

Q. How is the memory corrupted?

A. It is become weak, deceitful, and false: It is apt to forget what is good and necessary for us, and to retain what is evil, vain, and unprofitable to us

Q. How are the affections corrupted?

A. They have gone into sad disorder, and are naturally set upon improper and wrong objects; we love what we should hate, and hate what we should love; we rejoice in things which are matter of sorrow, and we sorrow for things that are ground of joy.

Q. How are the thoughts of the heart corrupted?

A. God is not in our thoughts, but they are apt to run out upon the vanities of the world, or sinful objects.

Q. How is this corruption of the nature conveyed from Adam to his posterity? Is it from the Author of our being?

A. It is not from God, who is the Author of all holiness and purity, but of no sin or corruption: God justly withholds original righteousness from us, but doth not communicate sin or corruption to any of his creatures: but it is conveyed to us by natural generation, Psalm li. 5. Job xiv. 4. Job xv. 14.

Q. How is original sin conveyed by natural generation?

A. By sinful parents their producing sinful children like themselves; as we see the parent's leprosy infects the child, and treason stains the blood of posterity.

Q. Though the body be corrupted by this way, how can the soul be thus infected, that is not begot by natural generation?

A. By reason of the intimate union and close conjunction of the soul with the body; the soul, being destitute of original righteousness when joined with the corrupt body, is also tainted with corruption, as liquor is tainted by the vessel it is put into. Though the manner of propagating original sin to the soul be difficult to explain, yet the certainty of the thing itself is most evident

Q. How doth the certainty of this appear?

A. From the word of God, and our woful experience.

Q. How doth it appear from the word of God?

A. From many passages in it; such as those which assert that we are conceived and born in sin; that a clean thing cannot be brought out of an unclean; that what is born of the flesh is flesh, that we are dead in sins and trespasses, and transgressors from the very womb. And likewise it is asserted of Adam, who was made after the likeness of God, that, after his fall, he begat a son in his own likeness, after his image: For all which see the following plain texts, Psalm li. 5 Job xiv. 4 John iii 6. Eph. ii. 1. Isaiah xlviii. 8. Genesis v 3.

Q. How doth the truth of original corruption appear from experience?

A. In regard every man may feel that there is in him a natural antipathy to what is spiritually good, and a woful proneness to what is evil, besides many other bitter fruits of it.

Q. What are these bitter fruits of original corruption?

A. Such as these; our blindness of mind, hardness of heart, hatred of God and goodness, misplacing of our affections upon wrong objects, and falling into daily sins.

Q. Doth not this original sin and corruption make us odious to God, and deserving of hell, before the commission of actual sin? A Yes.

Q. How doth that appear?

A. By these two things: 1 The infinite purity of God's nature, that cannot but abhor sin and corruption, especially such corrupt natures as we have, which contain the seeds and principles of all sorts of sins that ever were, or shall be, committed in the world 2. By the miseries, sufferings, and death, which we see inflicted upon infants, which never committed actual sin, Romans v 14.

Q. Is it not reasonable to think that children pro-created by sanctified parents, should be free of original corruption?

A. No; for the natures of the best saints are not perfectly sanctified, but remain still corrupt in part And this corruption is natural to them, whereas grace is supernatural and adventitious.

Q. Cannot gracious parents convey grace to their children?

A. No; for it is freely bestowed by God upon whom he pleaseth.

Q. Are they not bound to pray much for grace to their children?

A. Yes, because they have propagated much corruption to them.

Q. Is there any remedy for this original sin or corruption?

A. Yes; there is the blood and the Spirit of Christ, the one to pardon it, the other to change the nature by a work of regeneration.

Q. Doth the work of regeneration remove it wholly in this life?

A. Not wholly; for we find the best complaining while they are here, Romans vii. 14, 18, 23. James iii. 2. James iv. 5.

Q. What names doth original sin get in scripture?

A. It is called the Old Man, the Flesh, Lust, and indwelling Sin, Romans vi. 6. Romans viii. 5. James i. 15. Rom. vii. 17.

Q. Why is it called Original Sin, seeing this word is not in scripture?

A. To denote three things: 1. That we derive it from Adam, who is the original of all mankind. 2. That it is in us from our original or first having a being. 3. That it is the original of all actual sins or transgressions.

Q. What is the difference between original and actual sin?

A. Original sin is the sin inherent to our nature, which we bring into the world with us; but actual sin is that which we commit after we come to the use of reason.

Q. What do you mean by an actual sin or transgression?

A. Every breach of the law of God, whether by omitting duty commanded, or committing sin forbidden by it

Q. Are there not many different kinds of actual sin?

A Yes, very many; such as sins of omission and of commission; sins against the first table, and sins against the second; sins of the heart, and of the life; of the words, and of the actions; of ignorance, and against light; of infirmity, and of presumption, &c.

Q. Whence do all these actual sins proceed?

A. From original sin, or the corruption of our natures.

Q. May it not be thought that they proceed more from the evil example set before us?

A. No; for we see Cain's murdering his brother proceeded out of his heart, and not from any uch example; according to Mat. xv. 19.

Q. How do the sins of life proceed from the evil heart or nature?

A. Even as evil fruit from a corrupt tree, or unclean streams from a polluted fountain, Matthew vii. 17. James iii. 11.

QUESTION XIX.

Q. *What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?*

A. All mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever.

Q. What are the three heads of man's misery by the fall pointed at in the answer?

A. There is, 1st, The happiness we have lost by it. 2dly, The evils we are presently under. 3dly, The miseries we are further liable to.

Q. What are these three more particularly?

A. The happiness we have lost is communion with God: The evils we are presently under are God's wrath and curse, and all the afflictions of this life: The miseries we are further liable to, are both the first and second death.

Q. Hath man lost no more happiness than communion with God?

A. He hath also lost the image of God upon his soul; but that was mentioned in the former answer, under the want of original righteousness, which is the same thing with the image of God.

Q. What do you mean by that communion with God which man hath lost by his fall?

A. It is that sweet intimacy, acquaintance, and fellowship with God, which man had in the enjoyment of God's gracious presence, and comforts in the garden of Eden.

Q. How doth it appear that man enjoyed such sweet communion with God there before his fall?

A. From this, that there was no sin nor guilt then to stop man's free access to God, or to eclipse the light of God's countenance towards man; and therefore he was under the continual smiles of his Creator. God conversed familiarly with him, conferred high favours upon him, transacted with him by covenant, brought all the living creatures to own their subjection to him, and receive names from him, Gen. i. 28, 29, 30. Gen. ii. 15, 16, 19, 22.

Q. How did our first parents lose all that sweet communion with God?

A. By their sinning against God, and breaking his holy laws.

Q. Is not the loss of communion with God a very great misery?

A. Yes; for, seeing the happiness of heaven lies in having communion with God, who is the soul's chief good and portion, the want of that communion must be our greatest loss and misery, and therefore it is justly put before all the rest of our miseries mentioned in the answer.

Q. Is not the eternal loss of communion with God the chief part of the damned's misery in hell?

A. Yes; for depart from me is the first word of the sentence against them.

Q Did not man first forsake God, before God withdrew his gracious presence from man?

A. Yes; it is evident that man fell from God before he lost communion with him.

Q. How doth it appear that our first parents were deprived of communion with God after their fall?

A. By their hiding themselves, and fleeing from God, in whose presence they formerly rejoiced; and by God's frowning upon them, driving them out of paradise, and placing a flaming sword to guard the entry to it, Gen. iii. 8, 17, 23, 24.

Q. How doth it appear that all Adam's posterity have also lost communion with God by the fall?

A. From this: That we have a natural aversion to God's presence, and to the means of attaining to it, such as meditation, prayer, and attending upon the word and sacraments.

Q. Must not sin be a great evil, that deprives us of so great a happiness as communion with God? A. Yes.

Q. Why cannot sinful creatures have communion with God?

A. Because he is a holy God, and of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; he cannot look upon sin where it is harboured or allowed.

Q. Have unregenerate sinners any desire after communion with God?

A. No; for the presence of God is both hateful and

frightful to them? And hence it is they say unto God, "depart from us," Job xxi. 14.

Q. Why do they hate God's presence and communion with him?

A. Because, being unregenerate and sensual, their carnal mind is enmity against God; and, being guilty criminals, they dread the presence of their judge, who has power to condemn them.

Q. Is the loss of communion with God by Adam's fall, an irrecoverable loss to us?

A. No; for God hath found out a way for recovering lost sinners to a state of communion with himself again.

Q. What is that way?

A. By appointing Jesus Christ to be our Redeemer; for taking away our guilt, and purchasing communion with God for us, by his blood; that so believers may have free access to his throne of grace here, and to his throne of glory hereafter.

Q. Will not the believer's communion with God in heaven, be far more sweet than Adam's was in Paradise?

A. Yes; for the believer will have greater discoveries of the love of God, than Adam had; he will have God dwelling with him in his own nature, and be immutably fixed in a state of bliss for ever, Eph. ii. 5, 6.

Q. Are we not infinitely bound to Christ for recovering to us what Adam lost?——A. Yes.

Q. Where is communion with God to be enjoyed here?

A. In the use of these ordinances which God hath appointed; to wit, the word, sacraments, prayer and praises.

Q. When is it that we have communion with God in his ordinances?

A. When he allows us the gracious influences of his Spirit upon our souls: That is, when we have the communications of light, life, strength, or comfort from God; and when our graces of faith, love, repentance, or spiritual desires, are drawn forth to a lively exercise.

Q. Besides loss of communion with God, are we not likewise brought under his wrath and curse by the fall?

A. Yes; we are all by nature children of wrath, and under God's curse; according to these plain texts, Eph. ii. 3. Gal. iii. 10.

Q. What is meant by the wrath of God?

A. God's anger, or sin-revenging justice, which burns fiercely against sin, and is still ready to break forth in terrible judgments against sinners.

Q. What is meant by the curse of God?

A. The sentence of God's law, denouncing wrath and judgments upon the transgressors of it.

Q. Do the wrath and curse of God ly upon all men whatsomever?

A. Yes, as long as they are in the state of unbelief: but by Jesus Christ all true believers are delivered from God's wrath and curse, and inherit his favour and blessing, 1 Thes. i. 10. Gal. iii 9.

Q. Are not those, who are under the wrath and curse of God, liable to all sorts of miseries?

A. Yes, and particularly to these named in the answer; to wit, all the miseries of this life, death itself, and the pains of hell for ever.

Q. What are the miseries of this life which the fall makes us liable to?

A. They are very many, both in soul and body.

Q. What are the soul miseries which we are liable to?

A, Such as unbelief, blindness of mind, strong delusions, hardness of heart, weakness of memory, the bondage of sin and satan, evil imaginations and vile affections, stupidity and searedness of conscience, or else horror and despair,—Rom. xi. 8. Eph. iv. 18, 19. 2 Thess. ii. 11. Rom. ii. 5. Rom. i. 26, 28 2 Tim. ii. 26. Gen. vi 5. 1 Tim. iv. 2. Isa. xxxiii. 14 Heb. x 7.

Q. What are the bodily or external miseries we are liable to by the fall in this life?

A. Both private afflictions and public calamities, such as diseases in our bodies, reproach in our names, decay in our estates, loss of relations, poverty, crosses, disappointments, sore toil and labour; as also, famine, sword, pestilence, captivity, exile, persecution, and the like, Deut. xxviii. 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 30, 37. Gen. iii. 17. Ezek. v. 17.

Q. Should a living man complain of these his miseries?

A. No; for they are justly inflicted, and his sins deserve worse, Lam iii. 39.

Q What worse miseries are we liable to by sin?

A Death and hell.

Q. What is meant by death in the answer?

A. The separation of soul and body, at the end of this life.

Q. Hath the fall brought death upon all men that ever lived in the world?

A. By the fall it is appointed for all men once to die; and never were any exempted from that sentence, save Enoch and Elijah, who were translated into heaven without tasting of death.

Q. Is death the same thing both to the wicked and the godly?

A. No; for it is a punishment to the one, and a purgation to the other.

Q. What kind of punishment is death to the wicked?

A. It is the king of terrors, or beginning of hell to them: it is a serpent with a fearful sting, or a messenger sent to seize and carry them to everlasting torments.

Q Is not death a punishment to the godly also?

A Not properly: for though it be the consequent of sin, yet to believers, through Christ, its nature is changed, and its sting and terror removed; yea, it becomes a friend and servant to them, to pluck up sin by the roots, and carry them home to their Father's house

Q Doth not death put an end to the miseries of all men?

A. No; for though it put an end to all the godly's misery, yet in some respect it only begins the miseries of the wicked.

Q What miseries are they liable to after this life?

A To the pains of hell for ever.

Q. What do ye mean by hell?

A. A place of torment, which God hath prepared for devils and wicked men; where they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord,—2 Thess. i. 19.

Q. Wherein do the pains of hell consist?

A. In the pain of loss, and the pain of sense.

Q. What is it you call the pain of loss in hell?

A. The loss of heaven, with God's glorious presence and the society of saints and angels there for ever, Mat. xxv. 41. Psalm xvi. 11. Luke xiii. 28.

Q. What do you call the pain of sense of hell?

A. The dreadful pains and torments which the damned will suffer there, both in their bodies and souls.

Q. What will be the torments of their bodies in hell?

A. They will be cast into a lake burning with fire and

brimstone, where there shall be weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, Matt. xiii. 42. Rev. xxi. 8.

Q. Why are these torments called the second death?—Rev. xxi. 8.

A. Because the damned there will still be, as it were, in the agonies of death; but that death will differ from the first in this, that they will be ever dying, but never able to die.

Q. What will be the torments of the soul in hell?

A. The souls of the wicked there will be immediately liable to the strokes and lashes of God's wrath, and the worm that never dieth, which will fill them with eternal anguish and horror, Heb. x. 31. Mark ix. 44.

Q. What is meant by the worm that dieth not?

A. An awakened conscience, that will gnaw, bite, and sting them for ever.

Q. How will it do that?

A. By upbraiding them for their bypast sins, and for slighting the remedy offered to them: by throwing up to them the happiness they have lost, and the miseries brought upon them by their folly; and ever telling them what more is acoming God's wrath in hell will be still "wrath to come." All which reflections, improven by a despairing conscience, cannot but distress the guilty soul with such cutting thoughts, bitter anguish, and tormenting stings, as cannot now be imagined, Luke xvi. 25. Heb. x 26, 27, 29.

Q. What sort of wrath is the wrath of God, which will be poured out upon the wicked in hell?

A. It is called in scripture *great wrath, anger, fury,* and *vengeance,* which will be fierce, powerful, irresistible, insufferable, unmixed, eternal, and unquenchable; and is oft exprest by fire, which is the most terrible element, Zech. vii. 12. Rev. vi. 17. 2 Kings xxiii. 26. Neh i. 9. Psalm xc. 11. Psalm lxxvi. 7. Ezek. xxii. 14. Isa. xxxiii. 14. Rev. xiv. 10. Mark ix. 43, 44, 45, &c. Heb. x. 30, 31.

Q. How doth it appear that the wrath poured out on the damned is so great and terrible?

A. In regard it is poured out upon every power and faculty of the soul, and upon every sense and member of the body; and both their souls and bodies are made capacious and strong to receive and underly much of it, And hence they are called "vessels of wrath fitted for destruction,"—Rom. ix. 22.

Q. Why is it called unmixed wrath?

A. Because it is without any mixture of mercy. They have no sympathy or pity from any hand, no drop of comfort to relieve them, no ground of hope to support them, no interval of rest under it day nor night; but "the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever," Rev. xiv. 10. 11. Mark ix. 44 Luke xvi. 24, 25. John iii. 36.

Q. How is it agreeable to justice to punish the wicked with eternal sufferings for temporary sinning?

A. It is just, because they provoke an eternal God, and despise an infinite good, for which finite or temporary sufferings can never satisfy. It is just for God to punish the wicked as long as he can, seeing they sin as long as they can; and, when they can sin no longer here, they carry their sins to hell with them, and continue sinning there for ever, whereby they still add oil to the flame, and keep it burning for ever.

Q. Is not this wrath so terrible, that the very devils are afraid of it?

A. Yes; for the dread they have of it makes them to tremble and cry out at the approach of their Judge, —James ii. 19. Mat. viii. 29.

Q. Did the Man Christ Jesus suffer this terrible wrath in the room of an elect world?——A. Yes.

Q. How was he able to bear all that was due to them?

A. His Godhead supported the human nature under it.

Q. Had it not terrible effects upon him while he was suffering it?

A. Yes; it cast him into dreadful agonies, caused him to sweat forth blood in great drops, and make that fearful outcry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Q. Will not one spark of this wrath let fly into the conscience, drive a sinner to despair amidst all the world's comforts?

A. Yes; as hath been verified in the instances of Cain, Judas, Spira, and many others.

Q. Do all the wicked in hell suffer equal punishment there?

A. No; some have hotter places in hell than others, according to the different measures of their guilt, Mat. xxiv. 51. Luke xii. 47, 48.

Q. Must not there be an unspeakable evil in sin, that exposeth men to all this wrath and misery?

A. Yes; we may see much of sin's evil in the glass of hell's torments.

Q. What ought we to learn from the scripture-doctrine concerning the wrath to come?

A. To bless God for contriving a way, and providing a Saviour, to redeem us both from sin and hell; and highly to esteem and love Jesus Christ, that willingly undertook and came to bear our sins, and suffer all this wrath for us,—2 Cor ix. 15. 1 Thess. i 10. 1 Peter ii. 7, 24. John i. 29.

QUESTION XX.

Q. *Did God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?*

A. God having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer.

Q Are all men left to perish in their fallen estate?

A No: blessed be God, who hath provided a remedy for us

Q. Doth God deliver all men from perishing in their fallen estate?

A No, but only some.

Q Who are these?——A The elect.

Q Who are these you call the elect?

A These whom God hath chosen out of Adam's fallen race.

Q What hath God elected them to?

A To everlasting life.

Q When did God make this choice of these persons?

A. From all eternity.

Q. What was the cause of God's chusing some, and passing by others?

A God's own mere good pleasure, Luke xii 32.

Q Did God elect any to eternal life, because of their foreseen faith or holiness?

A. No: these are not the cause, but fruits, of election: for God hath chosen all his people to faith and holiness as the necessary means of salvation, Eph. i 4, 5, 6.

Q. Ought we not to try and examine our election by such fruits as these of faith and holiness?

A. Yes, 2 Peter i. 10. 2 Thess. ii. 13.

Q. By what other plain evidences may we know whether God hath chosen us to eternal life?

A. If we have chosen God to be our God and portion, and given ourselves away to him, we may conclude that he hath first chosen us; for, if we love him, it is "because he first loved us," 1 John iv. 19.

Q. In what way and method doth God bring his elect into an estate of salvation?

A. In the way of a covenant, and by a Redeemer.

Q. Is it in the way of a covenant of works that he saves them?

A. No; but in the way of a covenant of grace

Q. What is meant by the covenant of grace in the answer?

A. It may either point at, 1. The covenant of grace as made from eternity with Christ in name of the elect, called frequently the covenant of redemption: Or, 2 The covenant of grace, as made in time with the elect themselves upon their believing in Christ.

Q. What is that covenant of grace or redemption, which was made with Christ from eternity?

A. It is a gracious agreement made between the Father and Christ as the second Adam and representative of the elect; wherein God promised to him, that, upon condition of his mediatorial obedience and satisfaction in their stead, he should be gloriously assisted and rewarded himself, and have grace and glory to all his seed And all this Christ accepted of, Isaiah liii 10, 11. Psalm lxxxix 3, 4, 19, 20, &c. Heb x 5, 6, 7, &c

Q. How can that covenant made with Christ be called a covenant of grace, seeing it required perfect obedience to the law?

A. It was a covenant of grace with respect to the elect whom Christ did represent, seeing in God it passeth from their personal obedience, and accepteth obedience from their surety in their stead. Likewise it contains all the blessings and good things which are freely and gratuitously bestowed upon the elect, these being first promised in that covenant to Christ as their head and representative, 2 Tim. i. 19. Titus i. 2. Gal. iii 16.

Q. What is the covenant of grace, as made in time with the elect themselves?

A. It is the execution or application of the covenant made with Christ, as to what immediately concerns the elect themselves; and may be defined, God's gracious paction with elect sinners in Christ, wherein he offereth and promiseth pardon and salvation to them, and to all who hear the gospel, upon their believing in his Son Jesus Christ, John iii 36 Acts xvi 31.

Q. When was this covenant first tendered to fallen sinners?

A. Immediately after the fall to our first parents in that great gospel-promise, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent," Gen. iii 15.

Q Can you shew what is meant by that promise?

A. By the seed of the woman is meant Christ, that was to be born of a virgin. By the serpent is meant the devil, called so for his subtilty. By breaking his head, is meant Christ's disappointing his counsels, and destroying his works.

Q What are the blessings promised to us in this covenant?

A All the blessings of Christ's purchase, such as, illumination, pardon of sin, peace with God, freedom from the law's curses, sanctification, access to God, the conduct of the spirit, victory over death, resurrection to life, and eternal glory, Ezek xxxvi 25, &c. Heb viii. 10, &c. John iii. 18, 36 Psalm lxxiv 11. 1 Cor. xv 22, 37.

Q. What is the condition required of us to interest us in these promised blessings?

A. Faith in Jesus Christ, Acts xvi. 31.*

Q. Can we fulfil this condition, or believe of ourselves?

A. No; but Jesus Christ hath both purchased faith for us, and promised it to us in this covenant, John iv. 37. Phil i. 29. Eph. ii. 7, 8. Rom. viii. 32.

Q. How then is it a condition required of us?

A. Though faith be both purchased and promised, yet God doth still require it of us as a duty, and that to humble us, and to put us on the use of means; to make unbelievers inexcusable, and to teach us the order and connection in which he will bestow the blessings of this covenant.

Q. Hath faith the same place in the covenant of grace, that obedience had in the covenant of works?

A. No; for Adam's obedience, had he performed it, was a condition in a proper sense, which gave him a right to life, and was pleadable before God for that effect; which cannot be said of faith, seeing it is not our faith, but Christ's surety-righteousness, that gives us a right to eternal life. This, and this only, is the ground of justification that a sinner can plead before God.

Q. Can faith then be called the condition of the covenant of grace in a strict and proper sense?

A. No, but in a more general sense, as it is the only mean or instrument for applying the righteousness of Christ to us, and without which Christ and his benefits cannot be ours. The righteousness by which we are justified is oft called the righteousness of faith, or by faith; to teach us, that as the righteousness of Christ is the only meritorious and pleadable condition of our justification, so faith is the instrumental and applying condition of it, Heb. xi. 6, 7.

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* The Westminster Assembly, and our Assembly 1648, in Lar. Cat. 32 Quest. do also assert this, in express words, that God requireth faith as the condition to interest sinners in Christ, proving it from John i. 12 and iii 16. Now our Larger Catechism, that hath these words, was approven by the Westminster Assembly, and the Assembly 1648, after the most exact trial and examination, both by themselves, and by the respective presbyteries of this church; as appears from the Act of Assembly 1648, sess. 10. If these noble reforming Assemblies had not thought fit to use the word *condition* to guard against the Antinomians, who say, the elect are justified before they believe, probably I might have dropt it, as being abused by some. But I continue to use it, in order to explain the words of our standards, to prevent mistakes, and to show in what sense the word *condition* may be safely used, when applied to Faith, as our Reformers understood it, viz that it is nowise a meritorious or pleadable condition, but only an instrumental or applying condition, mean, or qualification, (these being all one and the same) required in us, in order to our getting an actual interest in Christ, and the possession of the other benefits of his purchase, (for faith is also his purchase, though required of us;) and that Christ's righteousness and satisfaction alone is the meritorious and pleadable condition of a sinner's justification before God, and of his eternal salvation, and nothing else.

Rom. iv. 13, 16 Rom. iii. 22, 24, 26, &c. Rom. xi. 30, 32. Rom. x. 4, 6.

Q. What is the difference betwixt the covenant of works and the covenant of grace?

A. The first covenant makes the ground or condition of a man's justification before God to be the righteousness performed by the man himself; but the second makes it to be the righteousness performed by Christ the surety, apprehended by our faith: The first covenant had no surety to answer for Adam's performing what was required of him; but the second hath Christ engaged for what is repuired of us.

Q. Doth not the covenant of grace require obedience to God's law, as well as the covenant of works?

A. Yes, but not for the same ends, or in the same manner: For the first covenant required our obedience as the proper condition of life; but the second requires it as the evidence of our faith, and of our conformity to Christ: The first, for the justifying of our persons: The second, for testifying our thankfulness for redeeming love: The first required perfect obedience in our own strength; but the second accepts of sincere aims to obey in Christ's strength, and imputes his perfect obedience to us, to cover our defects, to atone for our guilt, and to obtain grace and glory for us.

Q May not repentance, love, self-denial, and holiness, be called conditions of the covenant of grace, as much as faith, seeing these are also required of us in it?

A. Though they be required, yet they have not the same conditionality with faith; in regard that, among all the graces, faith hath a peculiar aptitude and fitness, for taking hold of and applying Christ and his righteousness, and also for emptying the creature of self, and exalting of God's free grace: Therefore God puts honour upon faith above all the rest of the graces, by ascribing our justification and salvation so frequently to it, Rom. iii. 26, 27. John iii. 16, 18, 36. Rom. v. 1. Eph ii 8, 9. John vi 40. Rom. iv. 16. Phil iii. 9. Luke vii. 50. 1 Pet. i. 5.

Q. What names doth the covenant of grace get in scripture?

A. It is called a testament, a covenant of peace, a covenant of promise, a new covenant, a holy covenant, an everlasting, well-ordered, and sure covenant, Heb. ix 15. Isa liv. 10. Eph. ii. 12. Heb. xii. 24. Luke i. 27. 2 Sam xxiii. 5.

Q. Is the *covenant of grace* a scripture-term?

A. Though we find it not in the express words, yet we oft have it in words of the same import: And, it being a most significant term, it is fitly appropriated to this covenant.

Q Why is it called the *covenant of grace*?

A. To shew that free grace only, or the undeserved mercy and goodness of God, moved him to contrive it; that free grace only determines the elect to take hold of it; and that the exalting of free grace is the great end of it. Likewise it is termed the covenant of grace, because even faith itself, which is called the condition of it, is God's gracious and free gift to us, as well as all the rest of the blessings and benefits promised in it, Eph ii 7, 8, 9 Titus iii. 5, 6, 7. Eph i. 4, 6, 7. Rom. xi 5, 6. 2 Tim. i. 9, 10 Phil. i. 29.

Q. Why is this covenant called a Testament?

A. Because all the blessings and good things promised in it are freely bequeathed and made over to the elect, as legacies left and made sure to them by the death of Christ the testator; and in it he hath left them grace to enable them to perform every duty required of them.

Q. What is the greatest promise in the covenant of grace?

A. The whole covenant of grace, with all the blessings in it, is summed up in that great and comprehensive promise, "I will be your God, and ye shall be my people," Jer. xxxi. 33. Heb. viii. 10. "I will be your God," hath more in it than giving us the possession of both heaven and earth.

Q. How may we know whether we be included in this promise?

A. If we have been enabled to take God to be our God, and to surrender and give up ourselves unto him, we may claim an interest in it; according to Zech xiii. 9. 2 Cor. viii 5.

Q. Is the covenant of grace made with all mankind as the covenant of works was?

A. No; for though it be tendered and offered to all who hear the gospel, yet it is really made with none but those who take hold of it.

Q. Have not all sinners, even the worst of them, a call and warrant to come and take hold of this covenant?

A. Yes; as appears from Isaiah lvi. 3, 4, 5, 6, &c. Mark xvi. 15, 16. Rev. xxii. 17.

Q. Was ever any man saved another way than by the covenant of grace?

A. No; Acts iv. 12. Gal. ii. 16.

Q. Were all the faithful under the Old Testament saved by this covenant?

A. Yes; for they had it discovered and tendered to them, though not so clearly as we have.

Q Was the covenant which God made with the Israelites, when he brought them out of Egypt, a covenant of works or of grace?

A. Though that covenant was delivered in a legal form, and intermixed with terror, for humbling of that people; yet it was the same covenant of grace in substance with that proposed to us in the gospel: for they had the same Mediator and Surety with us, typified to them by Moses and the sacrifices; they had the same promises of remission, and of grace and glory, through the blood of the Messiah, to which they were required to look by faith, through the types and sacrifices, for their justification and salvation, Psalm ii. 12. Isaiah xlv. 22. Isaiah xliii 1, 3, 6, 7. Ezek. xi. 19, 20. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27 Exodus xii. 22, 23. Num. xxi. 7, 8. Lev. i. 4 Exodus xxiv. 7, 8. Heb iv. 2

Q. Ought we not to praise the Lord with our souls, that we have a far more spiritual, plain, and clear dispensation of the covenant of grace than the Old Testament believers had? A Yes.

Q What is the estate out of which God delivers his elect by the covenant of grace?

A. Out of an estate of sin and misery.

Q. Do the elect lie in a state of sin and misery, as well as others, till God is mercifully pleased to take them into the bond of his covenant?

A. Yes; for we are told, that at the time when God looks upon them with an eye of pity, and enters into covenant with them, he finds them in a loathsome state, wallowing in their blood and pollution, and by nature children of wrath, even as others, Ezek. xvi 5, 6, 8. Eph ii. 1, 2, 3.

Q. What is the estate that God brings them into by this covenant?

A. Into an estate of salvation.

Q. What estate is that?

A. It is an estate of safety and growing felicity, wherein they shall persevere, till in due time they arrive at full and perfect happiness.

Q. By whom doth he bring them into this estate of salvation? A. By a Redeemer.

QUESTION XXI.

Q. *Who is the Redeemer of God's elect?*

A. The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man; and so was, and continued to be, God and man, in two distinct natures, and one Person, for ever.

Q. What do ye mean by a Redeemer?

A. A Ransomer, or a person that delivers others out of captivity or bondage, as Christ doth elect sinners.

Q. How doth it appear that Christ is such a Redeemer?

A. Because he is frequently so called in scripture, and is said to give his life a ransom for many, Job xix. 25. Isaiah liv. 5. Isaiah lx. 16. Jer. l. 34 Mat xx. 28.

Q Are God's own elect in bondage by nature?

A. Yes

Q What sort of bondage is it they are in?

A. It is a spiritual bondage: they are prisoners in the hands of justice, condemned to the prison of hell; they are also captives and bondmen to sin and satan.

Q. How doth Christ redeem his people from their bondage?

A. Partly by price or purchase, and partly by power or conquest.

Q. How doth Christ redeem them out of the hands of God's justice?

A. Not by silver or gold, but by his precious blood, 1 Peter i. 18, 19.

Q. How doth Christ redeem his elect from the captivity of satan and sin?

A. By his mighty power, conquering their enemies, and subduing their hearts to himself, Eph. iv. 8. Col. ii. 15. Psalm cx. 3.

Q. Is not Christ the stronger man that overcomes the strong man, and spoils him of his goods?

A. Yes, Luke xi 21, 22.

Q. Is it not Christ that recovers his people out of the snare of the devil, who before had taken and led them captive at his will? A. Yes, 2 Tim ii. 26.

Q. How were the elect redeemed from sin and hell who died before Christ shed his blood?

A. By virtue of the compact between the Father and the Son from all eternity; the virtue of Christ's blood did reach back to believers from the beginning of the world, as well as it doth extend forward to believers to the end of the world; even as a cautioner by his bond will deliver a man from prison long before he actually pay the debt.

Q Could either angels or men have provided such a Redeemer for us.

A. No; none could do it but the infinitely wise God; it was his own arm that brought about this salvation, Isaiah lix. 16.

Q. What is our Redeemer's name?

A. The Lord Jesus Christ.

Q. Why is he called the Lord?

A. Because he is Jehovah, as he is God. And as Mediator, he hath by his death acquired an universal lordship and dominion over all things in heaven and earth, Matthew xxviii. 18. Phil. ii 8, 9, 10.

Q. Why is he called Jesus?

A. Because he saves his people from their sins, Mat. i. 21. The word signifies a Saviour, being the name given him by the angel that foretold his birth.

Q What is in sin, that this glorious Jesus saves his people from?

A. He saves them from the pollution and power of their sins, from the guilt and punishment of them, and at last from the very inbeing of sin.

Q. Why is he called Christ?

A. Because he is the anointed of God. The Greek word Christ is the same with the Hebrew word Messiah, both signifying anointed.

Q Wherefore gets he that name?

A. Because he was consecrated to a threefold office as Mediator, viz. the office of a Prophet, of a Priest, and of a King; to which offices men under the law were solemnly set apart and anointed with oil.

Q Was Christ anointed with oil to these offices?

A. No; but with the Holy Ghost above measure, whereby he was set apart, authorised, and fully furnished to discharge these three offices to the church, Psalm xlv. 7. John iii. 34.

Q. Is there no other Redeemer of souls besides the Lord Jesus Christ?

A. No, he is the only Redeemer.

Q. But though he be the only Mediator for redemption, may there not be other Mediators for intercession?

A. The Papists have coined this distinction, to bring in angels and saints to share of Christ's glory, if not in that of redemption, yet in that of intercession But as he is the only Redeemer, so he is the only Advocate with the Father; for his infinite blood is necessary to be the foundation of the one as well as the other.

Q. Whose Son is Christ?

A. The Son of God.

Q. Are there not others called the Sons of God in scripture besides Christ?

A. Yes; we find angels, Adam, and believers, so called, Job xxxviii. 7. Luke iii. 38. 1 John iii. 1. and that either in respect of their immediate creation by God, or their adoption into his family.

Q. How then is Christ the Son of God, as no other is so?

A. Christ is the Son of God by nature, and from all eternity, and so called the eternal Son of God.

Q. Why would God have no less a person to be our Redeemer?

A. That the glory of his justice might be displayed, and our redemption made effectual. Infinite justice could not have been glorified by a finite ransom: Therefore it is said that Christ's blood was shed to declare God's righteousness, Romans iii. 25.

Q How many natures hath Christ?

A. Two; to wit, his divine nature and his human nature.

Q. How many persons hath he?

A. But one.

Q. Are these two natures in Christ mixed or confounded together?

A. No; they are distinct, without any mixture or confusion, as some ancient heretics asserted.

Q. What are the ancient heresies about Christ's natures and person, which are obviated in the answer?

A. There are four heresies which were condemned by four general councils. 1. Arius and his followers denied the eternity of Christ's Godhead: And therefore it is asserted he is God, and that from all eternity. 2 Marcian and his followers denied the verity of Christ's human nature, saying he was only man in appearance: But the answer asserts, He became Man, and real Man. 3. Eutyches and his followers would have the two natures mixed and confounded, so as to make but one: Therefore it is asserted, That he hath two distinct natures 4 Nestorious and his followers divided the two natures of Christ, so as to make him two persons: Therefore it is asserted, That these two natures are so united as to make him but one person

Q. Is Christ true God, co-essential, co-eternal, and co-equal with the Father?

A. Yes; as is evident from the scriptures, John x. 30. Phil ii. 6 (See this fully proven before, in the explication of the 6th Quest. pages 329, 330.

Q. How do you prove that Christ is true man as well as true God?

A. He hath the essential constituent parts of a man, a true body, and a rational soul: He was hungry; he ate, drank, slept, swate, suffered, bled, and died.

Q. Was he man from all eternity?

A. No; Heb. ii. 14.

Q. When became he man?

A. In the fulness of time, when the sceptre was departed from Judah Then a body was prepared for him; being conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, in an extraordinary way, Gal iv. 4. Heb. x. 5. Luke ii. 1, 2, &c.

Q. How long time was there between Christ's coming in the flesh, and the first promise made thereof to our first Parents? A. About four thousand years.

Q. Why did he delay the accomplishing of this promise so long?

A. To convince fallen sinners of God's indignation against sin, and of the wretched state sin had plunged them into, and that their deliverance could never arise from themselves: And also to teach us to wait patiently for the fulfilment of others of God's promises to his church.

Q. How many years is it since Christ came into the world?

A. We may know that from the present year of God, which is 1816 years; for that is the reckoning of years among Christians, since God became Man.

Q. Why was it necessary that our Redeemer should be true Man?

A. That he might be our near kinsman, and have the right of redemption lodged in him; And that he might be capable to shed blood and suffer death in our room; for without the shedding of blood there was no remission, Ruth iv. 3, 4. Heb. ix. 22.

Q. Why was it necessary that our Redeemer should be God?

A. To support the human nature, and keep it from sinking under the wrath of God and power of death; and to give sufficient value and efficacy to his blood and sufferings, for satisfying justice, and purchasing life for us.

Q. Do these two natures in Christ make two persons?

A. No.

Q. How can he be but one person, seeing he is both God and man?

A. By the human nature its subsisting in union with the second Person of the glorious Trinity.

Q. Why was it necessary that the second Person should have taken the human nature to subsist in his own personality, so that our Redeemer should be but one Person?

A. That his sufferings, though only in his human nature, might be reckoned the sufferings of one that was truly God, and so be of infinite value to redeem a lost world.

Q. How is this union called?

A. A hypostatical or personal union; but it is such a mystery as neither men nor angels can comprehend, 1 Tim. iii. 16. 1 Peter i. 12.

Q. How long will this union last?

A. For ever.

Q. Doth Christ continue to be God and Man still in heaven?——A. Yes.

Q. Is not the human nature highly exalted by this hypostatical union?——A. Yes.

Q. Have we not ground to say, with wonder, "Lord, what is man, that thou are mindful of him" in such a manner?

A. Yes; for it is most amazing conduct to shew such respect to fallen men, when fallen angels are past by.

Q. Is it not a strong argument to avoid brutish lusts and sensual pleasures, that these would debase the human nature which Christ hath so highly advanced?——A. Yes.

Q. Ought we not cheerfully to act, suffer, and be abased for Christ, that stooped so low as to become man for us?

A. Yes.

QUESTION XXII.

Q. *How did Christ, being the Son of God, become Man?*

A. Christ the Son of God became Man, by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul; being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin.

Q. Did Christ, in assuming our nature, take all the necessary essential parts of a man?

A. Yes, he took a true body, and a reasonable soul.

Q. Why is it called a true body?

A. To shew that it was not a phantastic body, or only the shade and appearance of a body, as some old heretics maintained; but that he took a real body of flesh and blood, as we have, Luke xxiv. 39. Heb ii. 14.

Q. Did Christ's divine nature supply the place of a soul to him?

A. No; though some heretics taught so. He took a reasonable soul, as well as a true body, Isaiah liii. 10. Mat. xxvi. 38.

Q. Did Christ bring his body or flesh from heaven?

A. No; he was the seed of the woman, Gen. iii. 15.

Q. Was Christ's birth like that of other men?

A. No; for he was born of a virgin, without any earthly father, Isaiah vii. 14. Mat. i. 24, 25.

Q. How could that be?

A. He was miraculously conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary. Luke i. 34, 35.

Q. Of what nation, tribe, or family, did Christ descend as he was a man?

A. By his mother Mary he came of the nation of the Jews, of the tribe of Judah, and of the family of David, Luke 1. 69.

Q. If Christ had a mother, how is Melchizedec a type of him, as being recorded "without father, and without mother?" Heb. vii. 3.

A. In regard Christ is without any human Father as man, and without mother as God.

Q. Why was he conceived and born of a virgin?

A. To fulfil scripture-prophecies concerning him, and to keep him pure from original sin, which is conveyed to all Adam's posterity by natural generation.

Q. How could he be free of sin, seeing he was born of a sinful woman?

A. The Holy Ghost did miraculously sanctify so much of the virgin's substance as formed Christ's body, which therefore is called " that Holy Thing," which shall be born of her, Luke i. 35.

Q. Why was it necessary that Christ should be conceived and born without sin?

A. If he had not been without all spot or blemish, he could not have been a sacrifice for sin acceptable to God: Neither could his righteousness, which was to be imputed to all believers, have been infinitely perfect, as was necessary for our redemption, Lev. iii. 1, 6. Jer. xxiii 6. 2 Cor. v. 21. Heb vii 26, 27. Num. xxviii. 3. 1 Peter i. 19.

Q. Do not we read that Christ was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh? Rom viii. 3.

A. That doth not import he was really tainted with sin, but only that he had the likeness or appearance of sinful flesh, in partaking of these infirmities of our nature, which were the consequents of sin, though they were sinless in themselves.

Q What were these sinless infirmities?

A. Such as weariness, sleeping weeping, sorrowing, suffering, bleeding, sweating, and dying.

Q. Did not Christ suffer for sin?

A. Yes, but not for any sin of his own; for " he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities," Isaiah liii. 5.

Q. Should we not all desire to be like our head, and, as much as possible, to be without sin?

A. Yes, 1 Peter ii. 21, 22, 23, 24.

QUESTION XXIII.

Q. *What offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer?*

A. Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the office of a Prophet, of a Priest, and of a King, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.

Q. Are not these three offices called Christ's mediatory offices?

A. Yes; or they are three branches of Christ's mediatory office, in each of which Christ doth perform what he undertook, by mediating and acting, either for God, with us, or for us with God.

Q. Why is Christ's mediatory office threefold?

A. To answer his people's threefold misery, ignorance, guilt, and bondage: For, as our Prophet, he cures our ignorance by his divine teaching; as a Priest, he atones for our guilt by his sacrifice; as a King, he rescues us from bondage by his power, and settles us under a good government.

Q. What mean you by Christ's executing of his offices?

A. His doing or performing these things which properly belong to such office or charge.

Q. Did Christ take upon him those offices without a call?

A. No; he was lawfully called to every one of them by the Father, who hath put all power and judgment in his hand. And therefore he is called the LORD's Christ, Mat. xxviii. 18. Luke ii. 26. John v. 27.

Q. How doth it appear from scripture, that Christ is called and appointed by the Father to his threefold office of Prophet, Priest, and King?

A. It appears from these three following plain texts,—Acts iii 22. Heb v 6. Psalm ii. 6.

Q. Was ever any man honoured with all the three offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, but the man Christ?

A. No; for, though Melchizedec was a king and a priest, yet he was not a prophet; David was a king and a prophet, yet he was not a priest; Samuel was a priest and a prophet, yet he was not a king. Which shews us how far short the types and shadows came of the substance.

Q. Do not all the promises of the new covenant flow from Christ's several offices as their proper fountain?

A. Yes; the promises of instruction, illumination, and conduct, flow from his Prophetical office; the promises of pardon, peace and healing, from his Priestly office; and the promise of deliverance, protection, grace and glory, flow from his Kingly office.

Q. Do not these three offices of Christ render him a most suitable help and complete remedy for all the grievances and necessities of his people? A. Yes

Q. Can a man close with Christ in one of these offices, and not in another?

A. No; they are but hypocrites who would divide his offices, and receive him partially; for whoever would reap benefit by one office, must receive Christ in all.

Q. In which of Christ's estates doth he execute his three offices?

A. In both of his estates; to wit, of humiliation and exaltation.

Q. What do you mean by these two estates of Christ?

A. By his estate of humiliation, I understand that low and afflicted condition Christ was in here upon earth; and by his estate of exaltation, that raised, high and glorious condition he is in now in heaven.

Q How did Christ execute all his three offices in his estate of humiliation?

A. 1. He executed his office as a Prophet, by his personal ministry upon earth, and sending out his disciples to instruct the world in the way of salvation. 2 He executed his Priestly office, by offering up himself a sacrifice on the cross, and praying for his people. 3. He executed his Kingly office, in promulgating and explaining laws to the world, purging the temple, and riding in triumph to Jerusalem.

Q. How doth Christ execute these three offices now in his estate of exaltation?

A. 1. He executes that of a Prophet, by furnishing and sending forth his ministers to teach the world. 2. That of a Priest, by making intercession for his people 3. That of a King, by proclaiming his laws, subduing his enemies, and governing his church

Q Did Christ execute none of these offices before either his state of humiliation or exaltation?

A. Christ being installed in all these three offices by virtue of the covenant of redemption, he entered upon the execution of them immediately after the fall, and did execute them so far as his work did not necessarily require his incarnation.

QUESTION XXIV.

Q. *How doth Christ execute the office of a Prophet?*

A. Christ executeth the office of a Prophet, in revealing to us, by his word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.

Q. What do you mean by a Prophet, or his office?

A. One whose employment it is, either to foretel things to come, or to teach sinners the will of God, and expound his word to them.

Q. Is Christ a Prophet in all these respects? A. Yes.

Q. What do we read of his prophesying or foretelling things to come?

A. He foretold Judas his betraying him, Peter's denying him, all the disciples their forsaking him, the manner of his death and sufferings, his rising on the third day, the destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem, the persecution of his disciples, the calling of the Gentiles, &c. Mat. xxvi 23, 31, 34 Mat. xx. 18, 19. Luke xix. 44. Mat xxiv 2 John xvi. 2 Mat xxi 43.

Q. By what other way did Christ execute his prophetical office?

A. He did it by his personal ministry, and teaching sinners the will of God, while he was on earth; and by sending forth his apostles and their successors to teach them; and by illuminating the minds of gospel hearers by his Spirit, to understand and relish divine truths

Q. What was the need of such an extraordinary prophet as Jesus Christ to teach us the will of God?

A. Because of the gross darkness and blindness which came upon us by the fall; and because none but he, that was in the bosom of the Father from eternity, was capable to make known to us the hid mysteries of the gospel, John i. 18. Acts xxvi. 18.

Q. Did Christ execute his prophetical office under the Old Testament as well as the New?

A. Yes; for he existed before he became man, and taught his church of old

Q. How doth that appear?

A. By the holy scripture, which tells us, that Christ was in the Old Testament prophets by his Spirit; that he preached, in the days of Noah, to those who are now in prison; that he spoke with Moses and the Israelites in the wilderness, and was tempted by them there See 1 Peter i. 11 1 Peter iii 19 Acts vii 38, 39 1 Cor x. 9.

Q. Wherein doth Christ excel all other prophets?

A. In regard Christ authorises them all, and teacheth the heart as well as the ear No prophet ever taught with such authority, power, widom, diligence, faithfulness, zeal and compassion, as Christ did; nor ever confirmed his doctrine with such miracles and holiness of life as Christ did his.—Mat. xxii. 16 2', 34, 46 Luke iv. 22. Mat. vii. 28. 29. John vii 46. Luke xxiv. 32, 45. John xv. 24. John viii 46.

Q. By what means doth Christ reveal to us the will of God?

A. He doth it outwardly by his word, and inwardly by his Spirit.

Q. Why are the Scriptures called the word of Christ? Col. iii 16.

A. Though they be also the word of the Father and of the Holy Ghost, yet they are Christ's word in a peculiar manner, because by them he speaks as Mediator in the name of God, and executes the prophetical office for teaching the church

Q. Is it only by the word read that Christ teacheth his church?

A. He teacheth also by preaching and hearing of the word; and therefore he hath appointed pastors for opening up the scriptures, and teaching his church thereby to the end of the world, Mat. xxviii. 19, 20. Neh. viii. 8. Rom. x. 14, 15, 16, 17. Prov. viii. 34.

Q. Is the word sufficient to teach us the will of God without the Spirit?

A. No; for though the scriptures are in themselves a sufficient rule to direct, yet such is the darkness of our minds, that we cannot savingly discern and receive divine truths without the Spirit's illumination, 1 Cor. ii 14.

Q. How is it that the Spirit teacheth us the will of God?

A. He teacheth us in and by his word, giving inward light, writing his laws in our hearts, and setting home spiritual truths upon the conscience.

Q. What are these special lessons which our great Prophet teacheth sinners by his Spirit?

A. Such as these; the great evil in sin, the woful corruption of our natures, the dreadful wrath we deserve, our insufficiency to save ourselves, the fulness of saving power that is in Christ, the excellency of the new covenant, and a surety righteousness, the necessity of the Spirit's work in the soul, and of faith and holiness.

Q. Is not the Spirit sufficient to teach us these things without the word?

A. No doubt he could have taught us by the Spirit alone, without the word, if he had so pleased; but he hath instituted the word as the means he will make use of in teaching his church, Isa. viii. 20. Rom. xv. 4.

Q. What case are those in, who have not the scriptures to reveal the will of God to them?

A. They must be in a perishing condition, Prov. xxix. 18.

Q. Cannot the light of reason, or the sun, moon, and stars, make known the will of God to us?

A. No; for though they may teach us some general things concerning God, yet they cannot shew us the way of salvation through Jesus Christ

Q. Who are those that are taught the will of God by his word and spirit?

A. All true believers are so taught.

Q. Do not others know the will of God besides them?

A. Though natural men may have much literal knowledge, and some common illuminations; yet none but believers attain to the saving knowledge of God's will.

Q. How may we know if our knowledge of God will be saving?

A. We may conclude it is so, if it tend to humble us and exalt Christ; if it warm our hearts, transform our souls, and reform our lives, and if we study to live up to our light in all respects, Phil. iii. 8, 9. John xiii. 17 2 Cor. iii. 18.

Q. What shall become of those who are ignorant of God and his will, and slight the means of knowledge which God hath appointed?

A. He that made them will not have mercy on them; but will come with flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel, Isaiah xxvii. 11. 1 Thess i. 8.

Q. What shall ignorant persons do for knowledge?

A. They must read and hear the word, and go to Christ the great Prophet and Teacher of his church, and cry, 'Lord, open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law,' Psalm cxix. 18.

QUESTION XXV.

Q. *How doth Christ execute the office of a Priest?*

A. Christ executeth the office of a Priest in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God; and in making continual intercession for us.

Q. What are the two parts of Christ's Priestly office in the answer?

A. They are his offering sacrifice, and making intercession for us.

Q. What do you mean by a sacrifice?

A. In the scripture sense, it is a living creature slain, and offered to God to make atonement for sin.

Q. What is it to make atonement for sin?

A. It is to satisfy God's justice for sin, and pacify his wrath.

Q. What was the sacrifice which Christ our Priest offered up to God for us?

A. It was himself

Q. What mean you by himself; Was it his body or his soul that he offered?

A. He offered up both his body and soul for us, according to Heb. x 10. Isa liii. 10.

Q. What is meant by his offering up himself a sacrifice for us?

A. His representing his death and sufferings to God for his acceptance, as an equivalent for the sins of an elect world.

Q. How often did Christ offer up himself for us?

A. Once, and no more; though yet the papists most absurdly pretend to offer him up frequently in their unbloody sacrifice of the mass, and so set every mass priest upon a level with Christ

Q. Why may not Christ be offered up more than once?

A. Because his once offering up of himself did sufficiently satisfy justice: And none else can offer up Christ but himself; nor can he be offered without new suffering, which is inconsistent with his exalted state. See Hebrews ix. 25, 26, 28.

Q. For what ends did Christ offer up himself as a sacrifice?

A. We are told in the answer, that he did it, to satisfy divine justice for our sins, and to reconcile us unto God

Q. Could neither men nor angels offer a sacrifice sufficient to satisfy the justice of God for our sins? A. No.

Q. Why so?

A. Because no satisfaction of theirs could be of infinite value.

Q. Was divine justice fully satisfied by Christ's sacrifice?

A. Yes.

Q. How doth that appear?

A. By the infinite dignity of the person that offered it; by the Father's voice from heaven, declaring he was well pleased in him; by Christ himself saying on the cross, "It is finished;" and by the glorious mark of respect God put upon him after his sufferings, in raising him from the dead, in receiving him up to heaven, and setting him down on his right hand

Q. But why might not God have pardoned our sins without any such sacrifice?

A. Because he behoved to see his just threatening in the covenant of works fulfilled in the punishing of sin; and the glory of his justice displayed, as well as that of his mercy.

Q. What is the happy consequent to us of Christ's satisfying divine justice?

A. Our reconciliation to God.

Q. What is it to be reconciled to God?

A It is to make God and men friends, who were enemies before.

Q. How is this reconciliation brought about?

A. By Christ's shedding his blood as a price to purchase our peace and friendship with God, of which we are to share upon our receiving Christ by faith.

Q. What are the benefits which Christ purchased by his sacrifice for his people?

A. All needful blessings, whether temporal, spiritual, or eternal; so that faith, repentance, conversion, justification, holiness, with all the graces of the Spirit, daily bread, communion with God, and eternal life, are all the purchase of Christ to his people.

Q. Whence had the sacrifice of Christ so much efficacy?

A. From his divine nature, to which his soul and body were closely united; and hence his blood is called the "blood of God," Acts xx. 28.

Q. How could the sufferings of one man satisfy for the sins of others?

A. By his having the sins of these others laid upon him and imputed to him

Q. How could the sins and crimes of men be imputed to Christ, an innocent person, who had no hand in them?

A. By Christ's becoming Surety for sinners, substituting himself in their place, and voluntarily taking their guilt upon him.

Q. What view doth this sacrifice give us of sin?

A. It shews us the malignity and heinous nature of sin, that no less could expiate or wipe it away than the blood of Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

Q. Doth Christ's sacrifice so completely satisfy justice for sin, as to exclude all further satisfaction from us?

A. Yes; and hence all Popish satisfaction for sin, by penances, pilgrimages, prayers, alms-deeds, and purgatory, are vain and presumtuous.

Q. Why then are good works, prayers, confessions, tears, afflictions, and sufferings, required of, and appointed to, believers here below?

A. Not to satisfy or atone for their sins, but to glorify God, and promote their sanctification and meetness for a better world.

Q. For whom did Christ offer up his sacrifice?

A. For the elect, and those who believe on him, Isa. liii. 11. Mat. xxvi. 28. John x. 15, 16. John xvii. 9, 19, 20. Acts xx. 28.

Q. Do we not read also of Christ's dying for all, of his reconciling the world to God, and of his being a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, 1 Cor. v. 15, 19. 1 John ii. 12.

A. Yes, but these texts are to be understood only of the elect world; it being absurd to say, that Christ did shed his blood for those for whom he would not pray; that he satisfied justice for great numbers, who were actually in hell before he suffered.

Q. How could Christ's sacrifice satisfy for the Old Testament saints, who died before it was offered?

A. See the answer before, page 335

Of Christ's Intercession.

Q. What is the second part of Christ's priestly office?

A. His making continual intercession for us.

Q. Doth this office properly belong to Christ's priesthood?

A. Yes; for under the law the priests made intercession for the people, and for that end carried the blood of the sacrifices into the most holy place, and sprinkled the mercy seat with it.

Q. What is the need of Christ's intercession?

A. Because there are many to accuse us, and plead a-

gainst us; and of ourselves we are vile and unworthy of access to God.

Q. How is it that Christ makes intercession for us?

A. When he was on earth, he did it by humble prayers and supplications to God; but now in heaven he doth it by his glorious appearing as a public person in our name, and presenting before the throne of glory his all-sufficient merits, willing his Father to accept of his blood in behalf of the elect, that all and every one of them may, in due time, enjoy the benefits of his purchase, John xvii 11, 17, 24. Heb. ix. 12, 24 and xi 24.

Q. Is this the way that the blood of Christ is said to speak? A. Yes.

Q. Is it upon the account of Christ's intercession that our duties and services are now accepted of God?

A. Yes, John xiv. 13.

Q. Is not the Holy Ghost said to make intercession for us, Romans viii. 26. How is that consistent with Christ's office?

A. It is Christ's office to intercede without us, by presenting his blood and sufferings for us: It is the Spirit's work to intercede within us, by exciting our desires, and suggesting arguments in prayer to God.

Q. Did not Christ finish his priestly work, when he was upon the cross?

A. Yes; with respect to his satisfaction, but not his intercession: the one was then perfected, the other still continues.

Q. Is not his satisfaction the foundation of his intercession? A. Yes.

Q. How long will Christ's intercession continue?

A. For ever, Psalm cx 4 Heb. vii. 25.

Q. Will there be any need for the intercession of Christ after the last day, when all the elect will be gathered home?

A. Yes, in order to preserve them for ever in the possession of that happiness to which they are come.

Q. Doth Christ intercede only for actual believers?

A. No; he intercedes for all the elect; both those who have believed, and those who are yet to believe, John xvii. 20.

Q. What are the respective blessings which he pleads for to them?

A. To the unconverted, he pleads for converting grace, faith, repentance, &c. To them who believe, for more grace and holiness, for renewed pardons, preservation from the evil of the world, perseverance in grace, unity among themselves, and accomplishment of all the promises and good things purchased to them, both here and hereafter.

Q. When Christ pleads for his people, that they may be kept from the evil in the world, John xvii. doth he mean to keep them from all afflictions? A. No.

Q Are not sanctified afflictions a part of Christ's purchase to them?

A. Yes; and in that respect they are not evil to them, but good.

Q What evil is it then that Christ speaks of?

A. The evil of sin, and the evil of wrath.

Q. Is Christ's intercession still prevalent and successful?

A. Yes; for him the Father heareth always, John xi. 42.

Q. What are the grounds of Christ's prevalency?

A. The dignity of his person and of his sacrifice, and because he pleads for nothing but what is agreeable to the divine will, and for those whom the Father loves as well as he.

Q. Doth not Christ infinitely excel all other advocates in the world?

A. Yes; for there is none so skilful, so prevalent, so diligent, so cheap, or so ready as he is.

Q. May we employ any other Advocate or Mediator besides Christ?

A No; for the scripture tells us, "There is but one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus," 1 Tim. ii. 5. Christ is the sole Mediator of intercession, as well as of redemption.

Q. Why cannot saints or angels be our mediators with God?

A. Because they have no merit to plead upon, neither do they know us, nor our cases and wants, Isaiah lxiii 16.

Q. Wherein doth the priesthood of Christ excel that of the Levitical priests?

A. All these were but types and shadows of Christ; he is the substance: These offered many sacrifices, and the blood of beasts, which could not satisfy justice for sin; but Christ offered only one sacrifice, even his own blood, which gave full satisfaction: In the Levitical priesthood, there was still a difference between the priest, the sacrifice, and the altar; but Christ is all the three in one.

Q How is it that Christ is all the three, the priest, the sacrifice, and the altar?

A. Christ in his own person was the priest which made the offering that atoned for sin; his human nature was the sacrifice, and his divine nature was the altar.

Q Was not the cross the altar on which the sacrifice was offered?

A. The cross may be called so improperly, or in a large sense, as being the material part to which the sacrifice was affixed: but it was by no means the altar which sanctified the gift, and made it acceptable for the great ends it was offered for: this only was Christ's Godhead.

Q. How is Christ said to be a priest after the order of Melchisedec, rather than after the order of Aaron?

A. Because, though both of them typified Christ, yet Melchisedec was a more exact and lively type and representation of Christ as a priest than Aaron was, seeing he is set forth as superior to Abraham, and was a King as well as a Priest, having neither predecessors nor successors in his office, and his genealogy and descent wholly concealed; thereby prefiguring Christ's eternal generation and duration.

Q. What shall we do to secure an interest in the sacrifice and intercession of this glorious High Priest?

A. 1. Let us seek to be duly affected with our misery while without it, as being every moment exposed to the stroke of unsatisfied justice. 2. Let us be persuaded, that no sacrifice will satisfy, no blood will protect, but that which Christ hath offered. 3. Let us renounce all confidence in our own righteousness and duties. 4. We must heartily approve of the glorious device of saving penitents by the merits and intercession of our High Priest. 5. We must receive this bleeding High Priest into faith's arms, as one freely offered to us, and entirely trust him with our salvation. 6. Accept of him as a Priest upon his throne, and give up ourselves unto his government.

QUESTION XXVI.

Q *How doth Christ execute the office of a King?*

A. Christ executeth the office of a King in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.

Q. What sort of a kingdom is it which Christ hath?

A Besides his essential kingdom, which he hath as God equal with the Father over all the world; he hath also a Mediatorial kingdom, given him as Immanuel, in which he acts as the Father's viceroy, Psalm ii. 6 Acts ii. 36.

Q. What is Christ's Mediatorial kingdom?

A It is the great dominion and power which is given to him as a Mediator; and this is twofold, 1. Christ's spiritual kingdom in and over the church. 2. His providential kingdom over all things for the good of the church.

Q. What do you mean by Christ's spiritual kingdom?

A. Both his kingdom of grace and his kingdom of glory; or, in other words, the church militant on earth, and the church triumphant in heaven; which are not two different kingdoms, but two provinces of one and the same kingdom; they both being but one body united together under one head, in and over which Christ doth reign and rule both in a gracious and glorious manner.

Q. What do you mean by Christ's providential kingdom?

A. The administration of the kingdom of providence, or the power which is given to Christ over all things, whether in heaven, earth, or hell, to be managed for the good of the church; by which he is made the King of kings, and King of nations, as well as the King of saints, Mat xxviii 18 Eph i. 22. Prov. viii. 15, 16 Rev. xv. 3, 4. and xix. 15, 16.

Q Over whom doth Christ exercise his kingly power?

A Both over his own people, and over his enemies.

Q Doth he govern them both alike?

A. No; for he puts forth and executes different acts of his power concerning them.

Q. What are these different acts?

A. With respect to his people, he subdues them to himself, he rules them, and defends them With respect to his enemies, he restrains them, and conquers them.

Q. In what estate doth the King of Zion find his own people and subjects at first?

A. In a state of enmity and rebellion to him.

Q. Do they submit to him of their own accord?

A. No; he must subdue them to himself.

Q. What is that to subdue them?

A. It is to conquer their wills, and to make them, who were children of disobedience, willing and obedient in the day of his power.

Q. How shall we know if a day of Christ's power hath passed upon us, to make us his willing people?

A It is a good sign if our love to sin be changed into a hatred of it, and if we sincerely desire to do the things that please God, and that not only in duties which are outward and public, but in those which are inward and secret.

Q. Doth Christ leave his church and people to their own care and conduct, after he hath subdued them?

A. No; but, like a good king, brings them under a good government, and continues to rule them in a gracious manner.

Q. How is it that Christ doth rule his subjects?

A. 1. He rules them outwardly, by giving them good laws, with promises and threatenings annexed thereto, and appointing church-officers, and discipline for applying the same. 2 He rules them inwardly by his Spirit, writing his laws in their hearts, and disposing them to yield obedience to what he requires of them; thus he sets up his throne in the hearts of his subjects, and makes all the faculties of their souls to submit unto him.

Q What further doth Zion's King for his subjects besides ruling them?

A He defends them also

Q From what doth he defend them?

A From whatever may hurt their souls; and, so far as it is for his glory, he defends their bodies from enemies also.

Q How doth Christ defend his people?

A He sets a hedge about them, he hides them under his wings, he intercedes for them; he gives strength to his people, he upholds them in the state of grace; he restrains and conquers their enemies.

Q. Have Christ and his subjects always the same enemies? A. Yes.

Q How comes that?

A Because of the near relation between them; he being the head, and they the members: So, whatever injures the one, the other feels it

Q Who are the enemies of Christ and his people?

A. Sin, satan, wicked men, and death, which is called the *last enemy*.

Q. How doth Christ restrain his and his people's enemies?

A. By setting bounds to their rage, disappointing or over-ruling their evil designs, and making their wrath to praise him, Rev ii 10. Psalm lxxvi 10

Q. Will Christ suffer these enemies to prevail at last?

A. No; for he will at length conquer them all.

Q When doth he conquer them?

A He did it partly at his death and ascension, when he triumphed over them, and led captivity captive; for then he divested them of that legal power they held over the elect, as executioners of divine justice. He ruins many of them by particular judgments within time; and he will bring final destruction upon them all at his second coming.

Q Is there not a great difference betwixt Christ's subduing of his people, and his conquering of his enemies?

A. Yes; for he makes the one sweetly bow to his golden sceptre, the other he breaks with his rod of iron

Q. Are not devils and wicked men subject to Christ, as well as his people?

A Yes; but the one are subject to him by constraint, and against their will, and the other are subject by free choice and consent.

Q Have we not many things to engage us to become Christ's willing subjects?

A Yes; for he it is that hath best right to us, and there is none so good a master; his yoke is easy, and his rewards are glorious

Q Can any trust to Christ as their Priest, who do not submit to him as their King?

A No; for they who will not be governed by his laws cannot expect to be saved by his blood

Q. Will not Christ look on them as his enemies who refuse to submit to his government? A. Yes.

Q. What will the King say to them at last?

A Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me, Luke xix. 27.

QUESTION XXVII.

Q *Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?*

A. Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time.

Q. What do you mean by Christ's humiliation?

A. His coming from a high condition to a low one.

Q What was the necessity of his doing so?

A. That he, as our Surety and Cautioner, might suffer the punishment due unto us.

Q. What are the several steps of Christ's humiliation mentioned in the answer?

A. They are chiefly three; namely, with respect to, 1. His birth. 2. His life. 3. His death.

Q. How did Christ humble himself in his birth?

A. 1. In that such a glorious Person should be willing to reside in flesh, and be born of a woman. 2. In his being born in such a low condition as he submitted to

Q. Was it not a low step of humiliation in Christ to be incarnate, or to become man?

A. Yes; this was a much lower step for the eternal Son of God than for the sun in the heavens to become a clod of dust, or an angel a worm.

Q. What was the low condition that Christ submitted to be born in?

A. He was born of a mean woman, in a mean city, and that in the stable of an inn, having the beast's manger for his cradle.

Q. How did Christ humble himself in his life?

A. There are three things relative thereto, mentioned in the answer: 1. His being made under the law. 2. His undergoing the miseries of this life. And, 3. Suffering the wrath of God.

Q. What is meant by Christ's being made under the law? Gal. iv. 4.

A. That, according to his engagement as our Surety, he subjected himself to the law, both ceremonial and moral, and did exactly fulfil and obey the same.

Q. How did Christ subject himself to the ceremonial law?

A. In submitting to circumcision, making the offerings, and attending the ordinances therein required; and, in order to fulfil it at once, he offered himself a sacrifice upon the cross.

Q How did Christ subject himself to the moral law?

A He did it as our Surety, fulfilling the preceptive part of it by the perfect obedience of his holy life, and satisfying the minatory part, by bearing the curse and penalties of the law, which we incurred for breaking it.

Q. Was it not a piece of amazing humiliation for the eternal lawgiver to be thus subjected to his own law?

A. Yes

Q. What is meant by the miseries of this life, which Christ did undergo for us?

A. These are manifold, and do include, 1. The common sinless infirmities of the human nature which Christ took upon him; as hunger, thirst, weariness, pain, sleeping, weeping, and the like 2. The assaults and temptations of the devil, which he endured. 3. Outward poverty and want. 4 The contradictions, reproaches, and persecutions of a wicked world.

Q. Why did he take all these miseries upon him?

A. That he might bear what we deserved, and be the more sympathizing with us in our troubles.

Q. Why became he so poor, that was Lord of all?

A. That through his poverty we might be made rich, and to teach us contentment in a low condition.

Q. Did Christ undergo no more trouble in this world than what he endured from devils and wicked men?

A. Yes, he underwent the wrath of God also; as in the answer

Q What is to be meant by that?

A. That Christ became the butt of God's wrath and anger for our sins, and felt the direful effects of it in his soul as well as his body.

Q. Was God really angry with Christ, who was perfectly innocent, and his dearly beloved Son?

A Christ in himself considered, was always the Father's delight; but as he became our Surety, and took on him our sins, the object of God's indignation, and which had a burden of wrath necessarily annexed thereto, he behoved to feel the sense and pressure of that insupportable load in a very extraordinary manner.

Q. How did his feeling of it appear?

A. By expressing his soul-trouble and non-plussing strait at the distant prospect of it; by the shrinking of his human nature at tasting of the bitter cup, and praying it might pass from him, if possible; by his wrestling in an agony, and sweating great drops of blood, that fell to the ground about him; by his crying out of his soul its being exceeding sorrowful even unto death, and complaining of God's forsaking of him, John xii. 27. Mat. xxvi. 38, 39. Luke xxii. 44. Mat. xxvii. 46.

Q. Is it not upon this account also that Christ is said to be made a curse for us, and a man of sorrows?

A. Yes.

Q. Could any mere creature have borne the load of the Almighty's wrath?

A. No; and Christ's human nature could not have borne it, had it not been united to, and supported by his Godhead?

Q. Was it not possible this bitter cup could pass from our Surety Christ?

A. No; for the justice of God could not be otherwise satisfied?

Q. Was not Christ heard in that prayer he made concerning it?

A. Yes; for we are told, "He was heard in that he feared," Heb. v. 7.

Q. How was he heard, when the cup did not pass from him.

A. In the extraordinary supplies granted to his human nature for enabling him to drink it.

Q. Was it necessary that Christ should suffer death after all his other sufferings?

A. Yes; that he might fully answer the threatening of the first covenant, satisfy justice, and confirm the truth by his resurrection.

Q. Was our Lord greatly humbled in his death?

A. Yes.

Q. In what respects?

A. In respect of the previous circumstances of his death, the kind and manner of it, and the things following upon it.

Q. How was he humbled in the previous circumstances of his death?

A. 1. In being betrayed by his own disciple, Judas. 2. In being sold for a small price. 3. In being taken and bound like a thief. 4. In being forsaken by all his disciples. 5. In being denied by Peter in his own hearing. 6. In being accused by the Jews of crimes he was wholly innocent of. 7. In being buffeted, spit on, cruelly mocked, arrayed, and crowned with thorns, by the soldiers and Herod. 8. In being scourged and condemned by Pilate as a notorious criminal. 9. In being put to carry his own cross to the place of execution.

Q. How was Christ humbled in the kind and manner of his death?

A. In being crucified, or put to suffer the death of the cross, which was a cursed, painful, lingering, and shameful death.

Q. What manner of death was the death of the cross?

A. A death used among the Romans for the greatest of malefactors, in which the man was so racked that they might tell his bones, his feet being nailed to the lower part of a tree, and his hands to a cross tree above, where he hang alive for several hours; the wounds still widening by his own weight, and the blood gushing out, till he died in extreme pain.

Q. Why is it called a cursed death?

A. Because God had said, Deut. xxi. "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." That is, he is exposed to the highest disgrace and reproach that can be done to a man, which proclaims him as much under the curse of God as any external punishment can do it.

Q Why is it called a shameful death?

A Because the person suffering it was exposed naked, and accounted one of the vilest criminals; and our blessed Lord was placed between two of them, as if he had been the greatest of the three.

Q What love was this, that made him to endure the cross, and despise the shame?

A. Love that cannot be comprehended, for it passeth knowledge, Eph. iii. 18, 19

Q What was the most afflicting and humbling ingredient of all in Christ's death?

A His being deserted and forsaken of God at the time of it; as appears by that amazing outcry on the cross, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani.*

Q Why was Christ thus forsaken?

A. To testify God's displeasure against sin, and to bear the punishment of desertion which was due to us for ever.

Q. In that dark hour of Christ's death, did nothing fall out to give testimony to Christ?

A. Yes; the sun was eclipsed, the earth quaked, the rocks rent, together with the vail of the temple, and many graves were opened; so that the centurion with his guard, that attended Christ, were forced to own, that truly he was the Son of God, Mat xxvii. 51, 52, 53, 54.

Q. Doth not the death of Christ afford the strongest arguments to cause us hate and forsake sin?

A. Yes; for in it we see the infinite mercy of God towards us in providing such a Surety for us; we see God's indignation against sin as the most cursed evil in the world; and the dreadful storm of wrath which he will bring upon the workers of iniquity.

Q. What humbling things followed upon Christ's death?

A. There are two things mentioned in the answer: 1. He was buried. 2. He continued under the power of death for a time.

Q. Was it a piece of great humiliation for Christ to be laid in the grave?

A. Yes, certainly; for it is humbling to any man to be sent there, where he must call the worms his brethren and sisters: But much more was it so for him, who hath the keys of hell and death, to be himself locked up in the grave.

Q. Was not Christ's burying attended with several humbling circumstances? A. Yes.

Q. What are they?

A. 1. It was done in great haste, with few attending it. 2. These few were not his relations, but strangers. 3. His body was not carried from his own house, nor from any house, but from the ignominious cross. 4. It was not laid in his own, but in another man's sepulchre.

Q. What is meant by Christ's continuing under the power of death?

A His remaining in the state of the dead, and being death's prisoner for a time.

Q What gives death a power over any man? A Sin.

Q How could sin have any power over Christ, who had no sin?

A. Though he had no sin of his own, yet "he was made sin for us;" and so death seized him as his prisoner in our stead.

Q. How then should death have any more power over believers?

A. Death cannot seize them as prisoners for punishment, but is only continued as a mean to purge away the remainder of sin perfectly from them.

Q. Was it not a great humiliation for him, who is the Lord of life, to be laid under the power of death for a time?

A. Yes.

Q. How long was the time he was in this state?

A To the third day after his death.

Q. What type have we in scripture of his continuing so long in the grave?

A. Jonah, his being three day's in the whale's belly,—Mat. xii. 40.

Q Why did Christ continue so long?

A. To shew that he was really dead.

Q Why could not death hold him under its power any longer?

A. Because he had given full satisfaction to divine justice for his people's sins, and could not see any corruption in the grave.

Q. Why could he not see any corruption there?

A Because he was the holy One of God, and free of all sin.

Q. Whither did Christ's soul go after his death?

A We read in the gospels, that he resigned it into his Father's hands, and that it went to paradise, the seat of the blessed

Q Do we not read in the Creed that *he descended into hell?*

A. Yes; but the meaning is not that he descended locally into hell, the place of the damned; but, the same word in the original signifying both *hell* and the *grave,* it may be understood either of his body's lying in the grave, or of his suffering the pains of hell in his soul.

QUESTION XXVIII.

Q. *Wherein consisteth Christ's Exaltation?*

A. Christ's exaltation consists in his rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, sitting

at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day.

Q. What may we learn from Christ's exaltation, its following his humiliation?

A. That we should patiently bear an afflicted state here, in hope of the glory that is to follow.

Q. In respect of what nature was Christ exalted?

A. Seeing Christ as to his divine nature cannot be exalted really, but declaratively only; it behoved to be with respect to his human nature that he was really and properly exalted.

Q. What are the steps or degrees of Christ's exaltation mentioned in the answer?

A. They are four: 1. His resurrection. 2. Ascension. 3. Sitting at God's right hand. 4. Judging the world.

Q. When did Christ rise from the dead?

A. On the third day.

Q. What day of the week did that day fall upon?

A. The first day of the week, which, ever since, is called, *The Lord's day.*

Q. By whose power did Christ rise?

A. By his own power, and by the power of his Father, John ii. 19. Rom. vi. 4.

Q. In what manner did he rise?

A. In a triumphant manner, with a great earthquake, the angels attending, and the keepers trembling for fear, and becoming as dead men, Mat. xxviii. 2. 3, 4.

Q. How do we know the truth of Christ's resurrection?

A. By the testimony of the apostles, who saw him very often after it, and heard his excellent instructions about their future conduct, and, for their greater satisfaction, were allowed to handle his body, and to eat and drink with him in a familiar manner.

Q. Did none see him after his resurrection besides the apostles?

A. Yes, many others, both men and women; and the apostle Paul, writing to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. xv. 6. says, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the most part was then alive.

Q. But how can we be sure that the apostles testimony was true?

A. Because they were men of great sincerity, and could propose no worldly advantage by declaring their master's resurrection, but the greatest persecution from the Jews. And, if it had not been certain, they had not chosen Jerusalem as the first place for publishing it, and that within a few days after he was crucified there; and yet there they began, and many thousands embraced their doctrine. Nay, God from heaven confirmed their testimony, by enduing them with the gift of tongues, and a power of working all kinds of miracles.

Q. What was the necessity of Christ's rising again?

A. To declare that he was the Son of God, and that justice was fully satisfied for their sins, and to assure all believers of their resurrection from the dead also.

Q. Did Christ rise with the very same body that was crucified? A. Yes.

Q. How doth that appear?

A. By the print of the nails, and spear, in his hands, feet, and side, which he shewed to his disciples after he rose.

Q. Did never any man rise from the dead but Christ?

A. Yes, such as Lazarus, Jairus's son, and several others.

Q. What is the difference betwixt their resurrection and Christ's?

A. They rose but as private persons, by the power of God: but Christ rose by his own power, and that as a public person; the great head and representative of the church, for their justification, and to assure them of the truth of all his promises.

Q. How long did Christ stay with his disciples after his resurrection? A. Forty days.

Q. For what end?

A. That he might convince them he was truly risen, and also instruct them of the nature of his kingdom and church, and give them directions about the government thereof.

Of Christ's Ascension.

Q. What is the second step of Christ's exaltation?

A. His ascending up into heaven.

Q. From what place did he ascend?

A. From the mount of Olives.

Q. In what manner?

A. Visibly and triumphantly, with a cloud receiving him, and angels attending; leading captivity captive, and dispensing gifts, Acts i. 9, 10. Psalm lxviii. 17, 18

Q. How was he employed at parting from his disciples?

A. He was blessing them with uplifted hands, Luke xxiv. 50, 51.

Q. For what end did Christ ascend into heaven?

A. That he might take possession of the kingdom, both in his own name, and in the name of all his people; and as a fore-runner, he might prepare mansions for them, and as an advocate, he might plead their cause effectually.

Q. Where is Christ now bodily present?

A. In heaven.

Q. How long will he continue there?

A. Until his second coming.

Q. Are we not to look for his bodily presence on earth till that time?

A. No; for him the heavens must receive, until the restitution of all things, Acts iii. 21.

Q. Is not this a good argument against transubstantiation, or Christ's bodily presence in the sacrament? A. Yes.

Q. Doth not Christ promise his presence to his people upon earth?

A. Yes; but that is meant of his spiritual, not his bodily presence.

Q. What do you mean by Christ's spiritual presence?

A. His coming to his people by the influences of his Spirit, for quickening and comforting their souls.

Q. Did never any ascend bodily to heaven but Christ?

A. Yes; Enoch and Elijah did so also.

Q. What was the difference between their ascension and Christ's?

A. They were taken up, but Christ went up by his own power; they as private persons, without witnesses, but Christ as a public person, before many witnesses.

Q. What are the great lessons which Christ's ascension should teach us?

A. To be heavenly-minded, to set our affections upon things above, where Christ is, and to desire to be with him, Col. iii. 1. Phil. i. 23.

Q. What comfort may believers draw from Christ's ascension?

A. They may conclude that mansions will be ready, and that they will follow their head: They may promise themselves welcome, and kind usage, seeing he who hath got all power in heaven, is nearly related to them, and hath all the compassions of both God and man in him.

Of Christ's Sitting at God's Right Hand.

Q. What is the third step of Christ's exaltation?

A. His sitting at the right hand of God the Father, Eph i. 20. 1 Peter iii 22.

Q. Hath God a right or left hand as we have?

A. No, for God is a spirit that hath no bodily parts: Only his right hand is spoken of, in condescension to our weak capacities.

Q. What is meant by Christ's sitting at God's right hand?

A. That he is advanced to the highest place of honour, power, and dignity, in heaven, having all things subjected to him, 1 Peter iii 22

Q. How long will Christ sit at the Father's right hand?

A. Until he make all his enemies his footstool, Psal cx 1.

Q. What is the last enemy which he hath to destroy?

A. Death.

Q. When will that enemy be finally destroyed?

A. At the general resurrection; then it is that *mortality* shall be *swallowed up of life*, 2 Cor. v. 4.

Q. How is it that we read of Christ sometimes, as *sitting*, and at other times as *standing*, at God's right hand?—Acts vi. 56.

A. His *sitting* is mentioned, to denote his perpetual possession of the kingdom: his *standing*, to represent his readiness for the mediatory work, and particularly to help, plead for, and receive afflicted and dying saints, such as Stephen was, who saw him in that posture, Acts vii. 56.

Q. What may we learn from Christ's sitting at the right hand of God?

A. That it must go well with the church, seeing her Friend and Agent is so high in favour, and ruleth over all things; and that all the members of the body must be exalted, seeing the head is raised so high.

Of Christ's Judging the World.

Q. What is the fourth step of Christ's exaltation?

A. His coming to judge the world at the last day.

Q. Is not this called Christ's second coming?

A. Yes, Heb. ix. 28.

Q. Why is it called so?

A. Because we read of two famous comings of Christ to the world, and this is one of them.

Q. What is the other?

A. His coming in the flesh.

Q. Is not the difference between these two comings of Christ very great?

A. Yes; for the first was in a state of deep humiliation, but the second is in a state of glorious exaltation.

Q. Do we read of any other comings of Christ in scripture?

A. Yes; we read of his coming by his Spirit in his ordinances; and of his coming in the dispensations of his providence, to destroy Antichrist, and deliver his church from his enemies, John xiv. 18. 2 Thess. ii. 8.

Q. For what end will Christ come the second time?

A. To judge the world.

Q. What is understood by the world?

A. All mankind, quick and dead, small and great, righteous and wicked; and likewise the fallen angels.

Q. What is meant by Christ's judging of the quick and the dead, 2 Tim. iv. 1. and other places?

A. That Christ, at the end of the world, shall descend from heaven, to judge all that will be then living on the earth, and all the dead then in their graves.

Q. How is it evident that there will be such a judgment-day?

A. 1. Conscience in every man declares for it, by creating remorse and fears upon the doing of evil; and, on the other hand, satisfaction and hope upon the doing of good. 2. The justice of God requires it, that the wicked may be duly punished, and the godly rewarded: which is not done in this life. 3. The holy scriptures do often assure us of it. that we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, John v. 28, 29. Acts xvii 31. 2 Cor. v. 10, 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.

Q. Who is to be the judge in that day?

A. Jesus Christ

Q. Is not God the judge of all? Heb xii. 23.

A. Yes, and Christ is that God equally with the Father and Holy Ghost: But God hath ordained the Man Christ to be the visible Judge of the world, Acts xvii. 31.

Q. Why is Christ ordained for that end?

A. That he might be rewarded for his obedience and sufferings, and every eye might see the judge; and that man being thus judged by his peers, the equity of God's proceedings might the more appear.

Q. When will Christ come to judge the world?

A. At the last day.

Q. Why is it called the last day?

A. Because it will be the concluding period of the world, when God will put an end to its days by the dissolution of all things; for then "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works therein shall be burnt up,"—2 Peter iii. 10.

Q. Doth any man know the particular time of Christ's coming?

A. No, though yet we may discern its approach to be near, by signs and forerunners The Apostles declare the gospel-times which we enjoy to be the last times, and that the ends of the world are come upon us, 1 Pet. i. 20. 1 John ii. 18. 1 Cor. x. 11.

Q. Are there not still some great events to be expected in the world before the last day come?

A. Yes, such as the conversion of the Jews, the downfal of Antichrist and Mahomet, and the great enlargement and purity of the church.

Q. Why hath God kept the particular time hid from us?

A. To prevent carnal security, and to keep us preparing and watching for it every day; still ready to say, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus, make haste, O my beloved."

Q. What will be the manner of Christ's coming at the last day?

A. 1. It will be surprizing and unexpected; and therefore it is compared to the coming of a thief in the night. 2. It will be with power and great glory: for the heaven shall rend, and fire issue before him; and he, attended with a multitude of glorious angels and saints, shall descend with a great shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and the trumpet of God, which will raise the dead: And thus shall he ascend the great white throne, and have all the world ga-

thered before him, 2 Thess. v. 2. Mat. xxv. 31. Psalm l. 3. Jude 14. 2 Thess. i. 7, 8 1 Thess. iv. 6. Rev. xx. 11.

Q. Why do the scriptures insist so much upon Christ's coming to judgment?

A. To assure the world of it, to excite us to duty, to deter men from sinning, and to comfort the godly under distress, 2 Peter iii 10, 11, 14. 2 Thess. i 6, 7.

Q What is the great necessity of a day of judgment?

A To make a solemn manifestation of the glory of God's attributes and perfections; as of his omniscience, in discovering the secrets of men's hearts and lives; of his mercy, in saving the elect; and of his justice, in punishing the wicked.

Q In what manner will Christ judge the world?

A He will judge the world in righteousness, and render to every one according to what he hath done in the body, whether it be good or evil, Acts xvii. 31. 2 Cor. v. 10.

Q. Must all men come into judgment at that day, good and bad, Christians and Heathens? A. Yes.

Q. May not some be overlooked and concealed in that great crowd?

A. No, for God's all-seeing eye will find them all out.

Q Upon which of the Judge's hands will the good and bad be placed in that day?

A. The godly will be set upon the right hand, and the ungodly upon the left.

Q. What will be the difference betwixt the judgment of the godly and of the ungodly?

A. The one shall come into a judgment of absolution, the other into a judgment of condemnation: The sentence of the one will be, "Come unto me, ye blessed;" but the sentence of the other will be, "Depart from me, ye cursed." And likewise, the judgment of believers will go before that of the wicked.

Q. How do you know that?

A. By the scriptures, which tell us that "the dead in Christ shall rise first," and be immediately "caught up to meet the Lord in the air;" and that they shall be set on thrones, and become assessors to Christ in judging the world, 1 Thess. iv 16, 17 Mat. xix. 28. 1 Cor. v 2, 3.

Q. Seeing believers are guilty of many sinful thoughts and actions, as well as the wicked, how is it that they are not condemned with them?

A. Because all their sins are laid upon Jesus Christ, and he hath answered for them to the justice of God.

Q. Who are these sinners that shall be most miserable in the day of judgment?

A. Wicked Christians, and especially those who have had the clearest dispensations of gospel-light, and greater measures of knowledge of God's will than others, and yet have abused them, and sinned against them, Mat. xi. 23, 24. Luke xii 47

Q. Will God judge heathens, who never had his law or gospel revealed unto them?

A. Yes, he will judge them by the law of nature, and the dictates of their own consciences, Rom. ii. 12, 14, 15.

Q Will not the wicked have many accusers and witnesses to appear against them in that day?

A. Yes; such as the attributes of God, his mercy, patience, omniscience, bounty; and the creatures of God which they have abused The blood of Christ which they have trampled, conscience which they have stifled, and the devil and companions in sin, which have tempted them, will then accuse them, and witness against them.

Q. Do we not read of books that will be opened in that day, Rev. xx. what are those?

A. This is spoke with allusion to the courts here below which have books for the rule of judgment. Accordingly, in that day will be opened the book of God's remembrance or omniscience, wherein all the actions of men will be found written. 2. The book of conscience, which will bring convincing evidences of sinners guilt. 3. The book of the law, with all its precepts, threatenings, and curses, which they have despised. 4. The book of the gospel, with all its calls, offers, and promises, which they have slighted. All which will afford terrible matter of indictment against the wicked.

Q. What are the things which will be brought into judgment at that day?

A. All the thoughts and designs, as well as the words and actions of men.

Q. Must we give an account in that day of every idle word?

A. Yes, Mat. xii. 36.

Q. Should not this teach us to take good heed to all our words, thoughts, and designs now? A. Yes.

Q. Will not the consequences of this judgment be very awful? A. Yes.

Q In what respects?

A. In regard the wicked shall thereupon go into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal, Mat. xxv. 46.

Q. How will the Judge's sentence be executed against the wicked?

A. The devils, the executioners of God's justice, will be waiting on, and ready, upon the passing of the sentence, to hale away the wicked to the place of torment.

Q. Will angels be judged at that day?

A Yes, evil angels

Q. How is it said, that the saints shall judge angels? 1 Cor. vi 3.

A. In regard they shall approve of the sentence which Christ shall pass upon them and upon all his enemies.

Q What ought we to learn from Christ's coming to judgment?

A. We should endeavour always to be ready for it, and to love his appearing; we should be diligent to be found of him in peace, and to aim at all holy conversation and godliness; and we should suspend all rash judgments till that time, Luke xii. 40 2 Tim iv. 8. Tit ii. 11, 13. 2 Pet. iii. 11, 14 1 Cor. iv. 5.

QUESTION XXIX.

Q *How are we made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ?*

A. We are made partakers of the redemption purchased by Christ, by the effectual application of it to us by his holy Spirit.

Q. What is the proper office and agency of the holy Ghost in the work of man's redemption?

A. To apply it to elect souls.

Q. Hath not each person in the glorious Trinity an eminent hand in the work of our redemption?

A. Yes; the Father projected it, the Son purchased it, and the Holy Ghost applies it.

Q. What is meant by the work of our redemption?

A. The delivering of lost sinners from sin, satan, and the wrath of God.

Q. What is meant by the purchasing of our redemption?

A. The buying or obtaining it at a valuable price.

Q. Who was it that purchased our redemption?

A. Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Q. At what price did he purchase it?

A. At the price of his own precious blood.

Q. What is meant by our being partakers of this purchased redemption?

A. Our being made sharers of the benefits and advantages of it.

Q. What are these benefits?

A. Such as pardon of sin, protection from wrath, peace with God, peace of conscience, a change of nature, sanctifying grace, the unstinging of death, resurrection to life and eternal glory.

Q. What is meant by the applying of this redemption to us?

A. The making of it ours, by producing the first beginnings of it in the soul, and thereby bringing us gradually into the full possession of its benefits. We begin the possession of them in our justification and sanctification here, and we complete it in our glorification hereafter.

Q. Is it only the Holy Spirit that can apply this redemption to us effectually, and possess us of it? A. Yes.

Q Cannot godly parents, ministers, or gospel-ordinances, do this? A. No.

Q. Why is the Holy Spirit said to apply this redemption to us effectually?

A. To teach us that all that can be done by means and instruments to apply this redemption to us, will be ineffectual, without the work of the Holy Spirit.

Q. Is not the Spirit's application of this redemption as necessary to us as Christ's purchasing of it? A. Yes

Q. What is the difference between the purchasing and application of it?

A. The first is a work done without us, but the second a work done within us.

QUESTION XXX.

Q. *How doth the Spirit apply to us the redemption purchased by Christ?*

A. The Spirit applieth to us the redemption purchased by Christ, by working faith in us, and thereby uniting us to Christ, in our effectual calling.

Q. What doth the Spirit work in us, in order to apply the purchased redemption to us? A. Faith.

Q. Cannot we produce faith, or believe of ourselves?

A. No.

Q. Is not faith an act of the believing soul?

A. Yes; but still the scripture makes it God's gift to him, and the Spirit's work within him, Ephes. ii. 8 Col. ii. 12.

Q Is not the Spirit of God the Author or Worker of all grace?

A. Yes; and therefore he is called the Spirit of Grace.

Q. What means doth he use for working faith in us?

A. The word, or ministry of the gospel, Rom x 14, 17.

Q. What shall become of those who want the gospel?—May not the Spirit work faith in them for their salvation?

A. We have no promise for his doing so?

Q. What is the use of faith for applying Christ's purchase to us?

A. Faith is the grace that brings us to Christ, and is the means of our union with him.

Q. What is it to be united to Christ?

A. It is to be joined to him, and made one with him.

Q. Is it hereby that every believer hath an actual interest in Christ, and a title to his purchase? A. Yes.

Q. What sort of union is there between Christ and believers?

A. It is a spiritual, supernatural, and mystical union, hard to be explained by any thing we find here below. It is somewhat like the union that is between a debtor and his surety, seeing by it the righteousness and satisfaction of Christ becomes the believer's; or like the union that is between the head and the members, and the root and the branches, seeing by it the Spirit of God brings vital and refreshing influences from Christ to all true believers, 2 Cor. v. 21. Col. ii 19 John xv. 5. 1 Cor. vi. 17.

Q. Are not believers said to be in Christ, and Christ in believers, by virtue of this union?

A. Yes, Rom. viii 1, 10. 2 Cor v. 17 and xiii. 5

Q. What are the bonds of this union with Christ and believers?

A. There is the Spirit, on Christ's part, taking hold of us; and there is faith, on our part, taking hold of Christ.

Q. What advantage doth believers reap by this union?

A. By it they have sympathy from Christ in their sufferings, and communion with Christ in his fulness; and, because he lives, they shall live also.

Q. Is there any dissolving of this union?

A. No; for death, which looseth all the ties of nature, cannot dissolve this union; for Christ is united to believers' dust in the grave, as well as to their souls in heaven.

Q. What must we do to be united to Christ?

A. We must be deeply sensible of our misery without Christ, cast off our sins which separate us from Christ, and receive him by a lively faith, as he is offered to us in the gospel.

Q. How shall we attain to this uniting grace of faith?

A. Let us look and cry to the Holy Spirit to work it in us.

Q. When doth he that?

A. In our effectual calling.

QUESTION XXXI.

Q. *What is effectual calling?*

A. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel.

Q. Is not effectual calling the same thing with conversion or regeneration? A. Yes.

Q. Why is our conversion termed a *call* or *calling*?

A. In regard that it is by the voice or word of God, that we are rouzed from the sleep of sin, reduced from our wanderings, and brought home to himself.

Q Why is it termed *effectual calling*?

A. Because it takes effect to bring the soul to God, and to distinguish it from the outward call of the word, which of itself is insufficient to prevail with us; for "many are called, but few are chosen," Mat. xxii 14.

Q. What do you mean by "few are chosen?"

A. That few are determined effectually to embrace the call.

Q. Whose work is the inward and effectual call?

A. It is the work of the Spirit of God.

Q. Why is it called a work?

A. Because it is not perfected all at once, but done by several steps and degrees.

Q. What are the several steps of the Spirit's work mentioned in the answer?

A. There are, 1. A work of conviction. 2. A work of illumination. 3. A work of renovation.

Q. What is the state which the soul is called from by this work?

A. From a state of sin, of darkness, of enmity, of slavery, and misery.

Q. What is the state which the soul is called to?

A. It is a state of grace, of light, of peace, of liberty, and bliss.

Q. Whence is it that God doth call some, and not others?

A. It is not from any worth or goodness in them, but from his own mere good will and pleasure.

Q. What means doth the Spirit make use of in the calling of men?

A. Chiefly the voice and ministry of the word.

Q. Whether is it the voice of the law or the gospel?

A. It is both; the law to shew us our misery, and the gospel to discover our remedy

Q. What is the first step of the Spirit's work in our effectual calling? A. Conviction.

Q. What doth the Spirit convince us of?

A. Of our sin and misery, or the defiled and wretched condition we were born and lie in, till a gracious change be wrought in us.

Q. What is it in sin that the Spirit doth convince us of?

A. Of sin's evil, malignity, guilt, and pollution; of its fountain, numerousness, aggravations, and deservings.

Q. By what means doth the Spirit bring men to the conviction of sin?

A. By the laws, precepts, and threatenings, by rods, and by conscience.

Q. May not any of these convince us of sin without the Spirit? A. No.

Q. Was not this one great design of sending the Spirit?

A. Yes, John xvi. 8

Q Is there no conversion without conviction going before?

A. No; for, unless we have it in some measure, we will not see our need of Christ, nor come to him for help.

Q. Is the work of conviction alike great in all true converts?

A. No; some have more and some less, according to God's holy pleasure.

Q. What degree of conviction is necessary to all who are converted?

A. So much as is needful to discover a man's lostness, to make him value Christ above all things, and willing to part with all things for Christ

Q. Doth conversion always follow upon a work of conviction?

A. No; for not a few, like Judas and Felix, have had strong convictions which have come to nothing.

Q Whence is it that their convictions prove abortive?

A. Because they stifle them, and go to the world for ease, and not unto Christ; neither are their convictions of the right kind.

Q. What is the difference between the conviction of natural men, and those of true penitents?

A. 1. The first proceed only from a natural conscience and the fears of hell; but the second from the operation of God's Spirit, and a view of sin's evil, God's goodness, and Christ's sufferings. 2. The first are mainly upon the account of gross sins and outbreakings; but the other reach also to heart-sins, and those which are secret. 3. The convictions of natural men are cured by natural means, but those of true penitents only by the blood of Christ.

Q. What is the second step of the Spirit's work in effectual calling?

A. The work of illumination with respect to the remedy for sin.

Q Are our minds dark by nature in that respect till the Spirit of God enlighten them? A. Yes.

Q. What doth he enlighten our minds with?

A. With the knowledge of Christ our only Surety and Saviour.

Q. Is not ignorance of Christ a sad sign of one that is not effectually called or converted? A. Yes.

Q. What knowledge or discoveries of Christ doth a sinner get by the Spirit's light?

A. He is brought to know the excellency of Christ's person, offices, righteousness and fulness provided for believing sinners; he is made to see Christ's all-sufficiency and ability to save to the uttermost, his suitableness to the various needs of our souls, and his willingness to save all that come to him for relief.

Q. What means doth the Spirit use for enlightening us with the knowledge of Christ?

A. Ordinarily the preaching of the gospel, Acts xxvi. 17, 18. Romans x. 17.

Q. Are not then both the law and the gospel useful in our conversion?

A. Yes; the law, for discovering to us our disease, and the gospel, for shewing us a physician: the law for convincing us of sin, and the gospel for leading us to a Saviour.

Q. May not the minds of some be very much enlightened under the gospel, without being called effectually or converted?

A. Yes; for Balaam was greatly illuminated; and we read of some supposed to be once enlightened, that yet may make final apostacy from Christ, Hebrews vi 4, 6.

Q How may we know if the knowledge of Christ we are enlightened with, be true and saving?

A It will be a good sign, if our knowledge humble us the more under a sense of our vileness; if it inflame our hearts with love to Christ, and a desire to be like him; if it engage us to put our trust in him for the whole of our salvation, and to hate sin as his great enemy, and to study to do the things that please him.

Q. What is the third step of the Spirit's work in effectual calling?

A. His renewing of the will.

Q What do you mean by the Spirit's renewing of the will of man?

A His making the will new and pliable, by putting new inclinations and dispositions into it, to chuse what is good, and refuse what is evil.

Q. Doth the Spirit, by the powerful work upon the will, offer any violence to the liberty of man's will?

A. No; for he inclines it in a way agreeable to its nature, and sweetly changes its stubborness and rebellion into a willing obedience.

Q. How may we know if our hearts and wills be yet renewed

A. By our embracing of Christ in all his offices; by our preferring his will and glory before all earthly satisfactions; by our loving the good we once hated, and hating the evil we formerly loved.

Q. Are we able to renew our own wills, or change them from evil to good?

A. No; we can no more do it than the "Ethiopian can change his skin, or the leopard his spots," Jer xiii 23.

Q. What shall we do then to attain to this gracious change by the Spirit's renewing work?

A. Let us be deeply sensible of the evil and misery of sin, diligently wait upon the means of salvation, earnestly look to God in Christ, pleading for his Spirit's work upon our hearts, and carefully entertain his motions when he begins to work.

Q. What end doth the Spirit aim at in his convincing, enlightening, and renewing work in our effectual calling.

A. That thereby he may persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ as freely offered to us in the gospel.

Q. What do you mean by the Spirit's persuading and enabling us to embrace Jesus Christ?

A. His prevailing with us, determining us, and making us able and willing to accept of Christ as our Saviour, and consent to the terms he proposeth to us in the gospel.

Q. What do ye mean by the gospel?

A. The glad tidings or joyful news of salvation through Jesus Christ, written at his direction by the prophets and apostles, and published by his messengers to lost sinners of mankind.

Q. How, or upon what terms, is Christ offered in the gospel to sinners, that they may embrace him?

A. He is offered to them as a free gift from heaven, in all his offices, of Prophet, Priest, and King; and they must embrace him accordingly.

Q. What mean you by embracing Christ freely as he is offered?

A. That we must come to Christ without money or price; that is, we must be sensible of our emptiness of all good; and that we can bring no qualification nor worth to purchase or obtain Christ, but must come poor and empty handed, willing to take Christ and his riches to furnish us with every thing necessary for us.

Q. How may we know if we have thus embraced Christ in a right manner?

A. By diligent examination of ourselves, and particularly trying if we can say, that we have embraced Christ, not only for pardon of sin and eternal salvation, but also for holiness and newness of life; believing and depending on him as the meritorious cause and fountain of sanctification, as well as justification and glorification.

Q. Can no man thus embrace Christ until he is persuaded and enabled by the Spirit to do it?

A. No.

Q. Are we naturally averse from accepting the offer of a Saviour?

A. Yes, and therefore must be persuaded to it.

Q. Are we without strength, as well as averse to do it?

A. Yes; and therefore we must be enabled to embrace Christ.

Q. Cannot moral suasions, such as the exhortations, threatenings and promises of the word, persuade sinners to embrace Christ?

A. No; these can no more do it of themselves, than the beams of the sun can enlighten a man born blind, or arguments can raise a dead man from the grave; for we are naturally blind and dead in sin.

Q. Is then the same power requisite to our renovation, and conversion, as to our creation and resurrection?

A. Yes.

QUESTION XXXII.

Q. *What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?*

A. They that are effectually called, do, in this life, partake of justification, adoption, sanctification, and the several benefits which, in this life, do either accompany or flow from them.

Q. Have those who are effectually called, a title to special benefits and privileges above other persons? A. Yes.

Q. When is it that they partake of these benefits?

A. They have some of them in this life, and the rest in the other life; they have some in hand, but much more in hope.

Q. What are the benefits or advantages they partake of in this life?

A. They are principally three; to wit, justification, adoption, and sanctification.

Q. Are all those who are effectually called, justified, adopted, and sanctified by God in this life? A. Yes.

Q. What do ye mean by these words, justified, adopted, and sanctified?

A. That they have their sins pardoned, they become God's children, and are made holy.

Q. Is holiness then a special benefit and privilege, as well as our duty? A. Yes.

Q. Do these three benefits come singly to those who are effectually called?

A. No; for they are attended with many other blessings, that attend upon and flow from them; such as inward peace, free access to God, assurance of his love, fatherly provision, growth in grace, &c.

Q. Who then are the happiest persons, even in this life?

A. Those who are effectually called; for they are privileged above all others.

QUESTION XXXIII.

Q. *What is Justification?*

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

Q. Doth the word *justify*, signify to make a person just, by infusing of inherent righteousness into him, as the word *sanctify*, signifieth to make a person holy in that manner?

A. No; for, if that were the meaning, it would confound justification with sanctification, of which the Papists are guilty.

Q. What then is the true meaning of the word *justify*?

A. It is a legal or forensick word, borrowed from courts of justice; and it signifies to absolve one from guilt or punishment, and to pronounce him righteous or innocent.

Q. Whose act is it to justify a sinner?

A. It is God's act; for it is God that justifieth, Romans viii. 33.

Q. Doth God justify the ungodly?

A. Yes, Rom. iv. 5.

Q. Is it not written, Prov. xvii. 15. "He that justifieth

the wicked is an abomination to the Lord?" will God do that himself which he abhors in another?

A. God indeed abhors the absolving of guilty persons without satisfaction made to justice; but, when God doth justify the ungodly, it is upon due satisfaction made to his justice.

Q. May any ungodly person take encouragement from this, to reckon himself among those that are justified?

A. No; for though God doth justify those who were ungodly before the passing of that act, yet none of those do continue to live ungodly afterwards: and those who continue to do so, shew plainly that they never were justified persons, seeing justification and sanctification are inseparable.

Q. Why do you call justification an *act* and not a *work*?

A. Because it is a thing done all at once, as the sentenc or declaration of a judge; and not a work of time, carried on by degrees, as effectual calling and sanctification are.

Q. What is the moving cause of this act?

A. The free grace of God, *that is*, his undeserved love and favour to sinners, without any worth or merit in them.

Q. What are the constituent parts of justification?

A. They are two, as mentioned in the answer, viz. God's pardoning of our sins, and his accepting of our persons as righteous.

Q. What is the meritorious cause of our justification?

A. The righteousness of Christ.

Q. Is it upon account of this righteousness that God both pardons our sins, and accepts of our persons? A. Yes.

Q. What do you mean by the righteousness of Christ by which we are justified?

A. Not his essential righteousness as God, which is incommunicable; but his surety-righteousness, which as Mediator God-man he performed in our stead, to satisfy justice, and magnify the law.

Q. What was this surety-righteousness of Christ made up of?

A. Of his active and passive obedience.

Q. What is Christ's active obedience?

A. The perfect obedience he gave to the precepts of the law in his holy life, which is imputed to be evers; seeing by the obedience of this one man many are made righteous, Rom. v. 19.

Q. What is his passive obedience?

A. His suffering the penalties of the law due to us for sin, whereby he gave perfect satisfaction to the justice of God.

Q. If Christ gave perfect and full satisfaction to justice for our sins, how can our justification be said to be of free grace?

A. These two consist very well together, according to Rom. iii. 24 "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." It is wholly *free* to us, seeing God doth graciously accept of a righteousness and satisfaction from a Surety, which he might have demanded from us. It is *free*, seeing God hath provided the surety for us, and furnished him to pay our debt, when it was impossible for us to find one to do it. It is *free*, seeing God requires nothing from us but *faith* in the *Surety*, which *faith* he also promiseth freely to give us: So that our justification is altogether of *free grace* to us.

Q. How is it that the righteousness of Christ becomes ours?

A. By God's imputing it to us, that is, his placing it to our account, as if we ourselves had performed a perfect righteousness to him.

Q. How is it according to truth for God to pronounce us righteous, who really are not so?

A. God doth not pronounce us righteous in ourselves, but righteous in our Surety Christ, who is righteousness to us in God's account; even as a creditor, having received payment from the surety, justly counts the debitor free and acquitted in law, 1 Cor. i. 30. 2 Cor. v. 21.

Q. Were the Old Testament saints justified by Christ's righteousness as well as we? A. Yes.

Q. How could that be, seeing they died before Christ's righteousness was performed?

A. They believed in the promised Messiah that was to come, to be made an offering for sin, and to bring in everlasting righteousness; and their faith in him was accepted of God for their justification

Q. How doth it appear that they depended upon Christ for justification?

A. In regard we are told that the gospel was preached unto them: That they saw the promises afar off, and embraced them. They had Christ exhibited to them in the ancient prophecies, types, and sacrifices; and so they viewed him as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.—Abraham saw Christ's day afar off. Job knew his Redeemer lived. Isaiah foretels, That his soul should be made an offering for sin: And he calls all men to look to him for salvation; and he points him out as one in whom we have righteousness and strength, and one in whom all the seed of Israel would be justified and should glory. Jeremiah calls him, *The Lord our righteousness.* Daniel says, He shall make reconciliation for sin, and bring in everlasting righteousness; and that for this end Messiah was to be cut off. Heb. iv. 2. and xi. 13. Rev. xiii. 8. John viii 56 Job xix. 25. Isa. liii. 10. and xlv. 22, 24, 25. Jer. xxiii. 6. Dan. xix. 24, 26.

Q. By what means do we receive and apply this righteousness of Christ?

A. By faith alone, Rom. iii. 22.

Q. Doth faith justify us as it is a work or act done by us?

A. No, but only as it is an instrument or hand whereby we receive and apply Christ's righteousness, which is the only ground of our justification before God.

Q. Why would God have faith to be the alone instrument of our justification

A. That it might appear to be wholly of free grace; for faith is of a self-emptying quality, and ascribes all to God, Rom. iv. 16.

Q. Doth the matter come all to one, when we are said sometimes to be justified by Christ's righteousness, and sometimes by faith?

A. Yes; for it is by the one meritoriously, and by the other instrumentally.

Q. Are we justified partly by Christ's righteousness, and partly by our own?

A. No, we must not mix any thing of our own with Christ in the point of justification; therefore the apostle Paul asserts in strong terms, that we are justified by faith in Christ, without the works of the law, Rom. iii. 28. Gal. ii. 16.

Q. How is it then that the apostle James doth say, that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only? Jam. ii. 24.

A. It appears, from the context, that James is not speaking of our justification before God, but of the justification of a person, and of his faith, before men: So good works declare before the world that we are justified persons, and they declare our faith to be true and lively, seeing they are the genuine fruits of faith. And therefore the apostle saith, "I will shew thee my faith by my works;" and Abraham's faith was perfected by works, James ii. 18, 22.

Q. Why cannot we be justified before God by our works?

A. Because all the world is guilty, and all our works imperfect before God; and a just God requires a perfect righteousness.

Q. Are good works then of no use?

A. Though they cannot justify us before God, yet they are most necessary and useful to glorify God, and to evidence the sincerity of our faith; and therefore it is required of all believers that they be careful to maintain all good works, Titus iii. 8.

Q. Is there not ground to suspect the truth of a man's faith, and of his justification, where holiness and good works do not appear?

A. Yes: For, by the same faith that a man is justified, his heart is also purified; and the goodness of a tree is known by its fruits, Acts xv. 9 Mat vii. 16, 17.

Q. When is it that a person is actually justified?

A. As soon as he is brought actually to believe on Jesus Christ.

Q. Did not God decree to justify the elect from eternity?

A. Yes, but that will not infer that we are justified from eternity; no more than, because God decreed to create us from eternity, that therefore we were created from all eternity. All that we can draw from it is, that God graciously purposed our justification from eternity, and this only to take effect upon our believing.

Q. Are not the elect justified at the death or resurrection of Jesus Christ, seeing it is said that he died for our sins, and rose again for our justification?

A. They were then justified virtually, but not actually; for, though the price was truly then paid, or completed, yet the purchased redemption is never actually ours, until it be applied.

Q. What is the first part of justification?

A. The pardoning of our sins.

Q. Whose prerogative is it to pardon sins?

A. It is God's only; for he is both the offended party, and the great Judge of all, Isaiah xliii 25.

Q. Have not ministers power to forgive sins, seeing Christ saith to them, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted?" John xx. 23.

A. That imports no more but a ministerial declarative power to pronounce from God's word that every penitent believing sinner shall be forgiven: So that ministers can only declare sin to be pardoned upon the condition of faith and repentance.

Q. Have not private men power to forgive sin, seeing Christ says to all, Mat. vi. 14. "If ye forgive men their trespasses," &c.?

A. Private men have power only to forgive private injuries done against themselves, but no power to forgive the wron[illegible] at the same time is done to God.

Q. [illegible] doth God pardon men for their sins?

[illegible]ey believe on Christ.

[illegible]s pardon an act of justice, or of mercy?

[illegible]n.

[illegible]doth that appear?

[illegible]t is an act of justice in God to pardon every pe[illegible]believer, seeing Christ their Surety hath paid their [illegible] 1 John i. 9. 2. It is an act of mercy likewise, seeing [illegible]d is graciously pleased to accept of a Surety's payment, and to provide the Surety also.

Q. What is it in sin that pardon doth take away?

A. The guilt of it.

Q. What is that?

A. Our actual obligation to punishment.

Q. Doth pardon take away the demerit or deservings of sin?

A. No; for the sins of believers in themselves do deserve hell, as well as the sins of others.

Q. Doth pardon take away the inherence or being of sin altogether?

A. No; for we find corruption still remaining in those who are pardoned, Romans vii.

Q. Hath every pardoned man the assurance of his pardon?

A. No; for an act of pardon may be past in the court of heaven, before it be intimated in the court of conscience.

Q. When God doth pardon the sins of his people, whether is it their bypast sins only, or is it their future sins also?

A. All their bypast sins are actually pardoned, and they have a right to pardon for their future sins, upon their actual believing and repenting: But no sin can be said to be actually pardoned, until it be actually committed, and application made to the blood of Christ for the pardon of it.

Q. Is not God angry with the sins of justified persons?

A. Yes.

Q. What sort of anger doth he manifest against them?

A. It is not vindictive wrath, as against the sins of the wicked, but only fatherly displeasure, which yet may be attended with sharp rods, and the loss of God's reconciled countenance, that cannot be recovered until they sincerely humble themselves, confess their sin, renew their faith and repentance, and pray earnestly for pardon.

Q. How may we know if our sins be pardoned?

A. By our love to Christ that obtained it, and our desire of conforming to him; by our mourning for sin that pierced Christ, and our fear of grieving him for the future; by the uprightness of our hearts, and our readiness to forgive others, Luke vii. 47. Rom. viii. 1. Psalm cxxx. 4. Psalm xxxii. 1. Mat. xviii. 35.

Q. What is the second part of justification?

A. God's accepting of us as righteous in his sight.

Q. What is meant by that?

A. It is God's adjudging us as righteous, or persons acquitted from guilt; and his giving kindly access and acceptances both to our persons and services, upon the account of the righteousness of Christ that covers both.

QUESTION XXXIV.

Q. *What is Adoption?*

A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God.

Q. Is adoption a scripture word?

A. Yes, Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iv. 5. Eph. i. 5.

Q. What is the meaning of the word; or, what is it to adopt?

A. Among men it signifies to take one that is a stranger into a family, to account him as a child or heir, and to provide for him as such. So for God to adopt believers, it signifies his bringing them who are aliens by nature into his household, his owning them as his sons and daughters, and giving them a right to the privileges of his children.

Q. How many sorts of sons is God said to have in scripture?

A. Three sorts; 1. Jesus Christ is his son by eternal generation, being of the same nature and essence with the Father, Psalm ii. 7. 2. Angels and Adam are called the sons of God, by reason of their immediate creation by him, Job xxxviii. 7. Luke iii. 38. 3. Believers are his sons by adoption, John i. 12 1 John iii. 1.

Q. Whose act is adoption?

A. It is God's.

Q. Why is it called an act?

A. Because it is done at once.

Q. What sort of an act is it?

A. An act of God's free grace.

Q. Why is it called so?

A. Because it is wholly owing to the free love and favour of God, that he adopts any of mankind sinners into his family.

Q. Is there nothing lovely in one more than another, that moves God to adopt them into his family?

A. No.

Q. In what condition are sinners before they are adopted?

A. They have neither wisdom, beauty, holiness, nor any good thing to recommend them; but are black as Ethiopians, strangers to God, children of wrath, and of the family of hell, when God adopts them into his family.

Q. Is it not wonderful grace and love in God, not only to pardon such rebels, but also to make them his sons and heirs? A. Yes.

Q. Upon whom is this favour conferred? Is it upon all?

A. No, but only upon those who receive Christ by faith, John i. 12. Gal. iii. 26.

Q. Have not God's adopted children a right to many privileges above others? A. Yes.

Q. What are these?

A. They are under God's fatherly protection, provision, and conduct, while here below: They are allowed access to God as a Father, the Spirit's assistance in their prayers, and hearing of them: They have the ministry of angels, and are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, of an inheritance incorruptible.

Q. Do not these peculiar privileges call f r special duties answerable to them for us? A. Yes.

Q. What are the duties of adopted children to their father?

A. They should love and honour him; they should ask his counsel in all things, submit to his fatherly correction, fear to offend him, trust him, and depend on his care.

Q. By what signs may we know whether we be God's adopted children?

A. By such as these: If we resemble our Father, love him above all, and be heartily concerned for his glory. If we have the Spirit of adoption, who always, where he is, doth excite to prayer and the study of holiness, Rom. viii. 14. Gal. iv. 6. 1 John ii. 20.

Q. Wherein doth the children of God resemble their Father?

A. In holiness, mercy, and beneficence to all, even to their enemies.

Q. Are not all God's adopted children his sons also by regeneration?

A. Yes, they are all born again, and have new natures given them, John i. 12, 13.

QUESTION XXXV.

Q. *What is Sanctification?*

A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man, after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

Q. What is it to sanctify a thing or person?

A. In the scripture sense, it is to devote a thing to God's use, or to cleanse from sin, and make us holy.

Q. Are not justification and sanctification inseparable?

A. Yes.

Q. What is the difference betwixt them?

A. Justification is God's act or sentence without us, absolving us from the guilt of sin; but sanctification is God's work within us, cleansing us from the filth of sin. Justification is perfect and equal in all believers, and is done at once; but sanctification is unequal and imperfect in this life, and is carried on by degrees.

Q. What is the difference between regeneration and sanctification?

A. Regeneration is the first change of the nature, by the infusing of all gracious habits into our soul at our conversion or effectual calling, which are all much the same; but sanctification is the continued exercise and advancement of the work of grace in the believer through his whole life.

Q. Whose work is it to sanctify us?

A. It is the work of the Holy Spirit, 2 Thess. ii. 13. 1 Peter i. 2.

Q. Why is sanctification called a *work*, and not an *act*?

A. Because it is wrought and carried on by degrees.

Q. Can we not sanctify ourselves?

A. No; we can no more actuate or increase grace than we can implant it at first. We can defile ourselves, but we cannot cleanse ourselves.

Q. May not the view of our graces humble us as well as our sins? A. Yes.

Q. Why so?

A. *Our sins*, because they are ours; *our graces*, because they are none of ours: For every degree of grace is freely bestowed by God upon undeserving creatures.

Q. What is the procuring cause of our sanctification?

A. The blood of Christ.

Q. By what means is it carried on in believers?

A. By means of God's ordinances and providences, as he pleaseth to bless them.

Q. What is the subject of our sanctification? Or, what part of us is it that is sanctified?

A. The whole man.

Q. What do you mean by the whole man?

A. The whole powers and faculties of the soul, and the whole senses and members of the body, both inward and outward man is sanctified.

Q. How are the powers and faculties of the soul renewed and sanctified?

A. By the Holy Spirit's diffusing his gracious influences upon the heart, understanding, will, conscience, memory, and affections of the soul, whereby they are cleansed from sin, made new, spiritual, and holy, and remarkably fitted for serving and glorifying God.

Q. How are the senses and members of the body sanctified?

A. By changing them into a holy use, making these that before were instruments of sin, now become instruments of righteousness; so that outward conversation is ordered aright, according to the rule of God's word.

Q. After what pattern is the change made in sanctification?

A. After the image of God.

Q. Wherein doth this image consist?

A. In resembling God, and becoming like him in holiness and purity; in hatred to sin, and love to righteousness.

Q. Is the image of God perfectly restored to us while in this life?

A. No; for the work of sanctification is imperfect in the best of God's people while on this side of heaven.

Q. How doth that appear?

A. From the complaints they make of the remainders of sin in them, which make a continual struggle betwixt grace and corruption: And hence it is, that our best duties are stained with sin.

Q. Why doth God leave corruption in his people as long as they are here?

A. 1. To keep them always humble under a sense of sin, and their need of a Saviour. 2. To teach them to make continual use of Christ for righteousness and strength. 3. To magnify his power in preserving weak grace, in midst of corruption. 4. To loose their hearts from this world, where they live such a struggling life, and make them long for heaven, where they shall triumph over corruption, and have perfect purity for ever.

Q. Will sanctification never be perfected till that time?

A. No.

Q. Do sanctification and glorification differ specifically?

A. No, but only in degrees; for grace is glory begun, and glory is grace perfected.

Q. What are the parts of sanctification mentioned in the answer?

A. They are two, to wit, *mortification* and *vivification*, or dying to sin, and living to righteousness.

Q. What do you mean by mortification, or dying to sin?

A. The gradual weakening and subduing the power of sin in our souls.

Q. By what marks may we know whether we be dying to sin?

A. 1. If we be growing in our hatred of sin, and be labouring for its utter destruction. 2. If we be careful to withdraw every thing that proves fuel to our corruptions, and to check the first motions of sin. 3. If we bewail it before the Lord, when we feel its strength, and pray earnestly against it. And, 4. If we be studying to improve the death of Christ for the death of sin.

Q. What is imported in the other part of sanctification, living more and more unto righteousness?

A. It is to have a growing principle of spiritual life in our souls, prompting us to obey the will of God in all things, and to aim at further advancement in true holiness.

Q. What is the difference betwixt morality in natural men and true sanctification in believers?

A. The first is the product of nature, and makes some change only upon the outward life; but the second is the fruit of the Spirit, and makes a gracious change upon the heart. The first proceeds from self, and tends to self; but the second proceeds from a principle of love to God, and tends to his glory. In the first, Christ is neglected; but in the second, his strength and righteousness are sought to and employed.

Q. Is there an absolute necessity of sanctification here, in order to salvation hereafter?

A. Yes; for we are assured of it, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Heb. xii. 14. An unsanctified man can have no communion with a holy God.

Q. Is it possible that great and notorious sinners can be sanctified?

A. Yes; for the apostle Paul, speaking of the vilest of sinners, saith to the Corinthians, "Such were some of you but ye are sanctified," 1 Cor. vi. 11.

QUESTION XXXIV.

Q. *What are the benefits which in this life, do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?*

A. The benefits which, in this life, do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

Q. How many benefits, belonging to justified and sanctified persons, are there set forth in the answer?

A. Five.

Q. Which is the first?

A. Assurance of God's love.

Q. Doth God bear a special love to justified persons above others?

A. Yes, they are the special objects of God's love.

Q. May believers in this life attain to the persuasion or assurance of this love? A. Yes.

Q. How doth that appear?

A. From the command of God enjoining all Christians to seek after it, and from the instances of many believers who have actually attained to the sure knowledge and persuasion of the love of God to them. 2 Peter i. 10. Heb. vi. 11. Rom. v. 2, 5. Rom. viii. 16, 38, 39. 2 Cor. v. 1. 1 John iii. 14, 19, 21, 24. 1 John v. 13. Cant. vi. 3. Job xix. 25. 2 Tim. i. 12.

Q. Can any person attain to this assurance without special revelation from God? A. Yes.

Q. How do they come at it?

A. Two ways. 1. By rational evidence and proofs from the word of God: namely, when they discover the inward evidences of these graces wrought in their souls, to which the promises of God's special love are annexed. 2. By the testimony of God's Spirit, bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God. 1 John ii. 3. 1 John iii. 14, 19. Rom. viii. 15.

Q. By what marks and evidences may we know our interest in God's love?

A. By our receiving of Christ in the gospel-offers, and trusting in him; by our love to Christ and to his people; by our affection to God's laws, and care to observe them; by our opposing of all sin, and particularly beloved lusts; by our desires after holiness, and the like. Mark xvi. 16. John i. 12. Prov. viii. 17. 1 John iii. 14. Psalm cxix. 16. Psalm xviii. 23. 1 John iii. 3. Phil. iii. 8. Psalm cxix. 5, 6. 1 Peter ii. 7.

Q. What do ye mean by the Spirit's witnessing with our spirits? Rom. viii. 16.

A. His shining upon our graces, and enabling us to discern them: his concurring with the rational inferences of our spirits therefrom, and strengthening us to conclude that we are the children of God.

Q. Is this assurance essential to faith, and the attainment of every believer?

A. No; for some of them may walk in darkness and have no light, Isaiah l. 10.

Q. Do any true believers lose their interest in God's love?

A. No; for nothing can separate them from the love of God which is in Christ: but they may be without the sense and assurance of that love.

Q Whence is it that God's people lose the sense and assurance of his love?

A. It proceeds frequently from their sloth and negligence in duty, and from their venturing upon sins against light; and sometimes from God's withdrawing the light of his countenance, for wise and holy ends, 2 Peter i 10. Cant. v. 3, 6. Psalm li. 8, 12, 14 Psalm lxxvii 7, 8, 9.

Q. Why doth God withdraw from his own people, and deny them the sense of his love?

A. He doth it sometimes to hide pride from their eyes, and to teach them to live by faith rather than by sense:—Hence it may be that some of weaker grace are allowed more sensible comfort than those who are stronger.

Q How may we distinguish true assurance from presumption?

A. True assurance humbles the soul, and makes it watchful against sin; but presumption puffs up and makes men secure. True assurance is willing to come to the light for trial, but presumption shuns the light, Gal ii. 20. 2 Cor. vii. 1. Psalm cxxxix 23, 24 John iii 20, 21.

Q. Should not all Christians press for the assurance of God's love, as a thing of great advantage to them?

A Yes

Q What is the advantage of having it?

A. It quiets the mind, and removes the fear of death; it enlarges the heart with love and thankfulness to God, and gives strength and cheerfulness in the performance of commanded duties

Q. Doth this assurance tempt or incline men to negligence or looseness?

A. No; but rather excites and quickens them to diligence in holy duties.

Of Peace of Conscience.

Q Is peace of conscience a benefit that belongs to those who are justified, adopted, and sanctified? A Yes

Q Do all sanctified persons enjoy this benefit at all times? A. No.

Q What should hinder it, seeing God speaks peace to such persons, and forgives all their sins?

A Many times those whose sins are forgiven them, cannot be brought to forgive themselves; sometimes clouds of unbelief and temptations do sadly darken their evidences, and they relapse into untender walking, whereby their consciences may be much disquieted, Psalm xxxviii 3, 8 Isaiah lix. 2

Q What is it that doth pacify conscience, when troubled or wounded?

A. Conscience being God's deputy in us, nothing less can pacify it than what pacifieth divine justice, namely, the blood of Christ

Q How doth the blood of Christ pacify conscience?

A. By obtaining the removal of the guilt and power of sin from us, and the lifting up of God's countenance on us.

Q. Can any unbeliever have peace of conscience?

A He may have a false peace, but it is only the believer in Christ that hath true peace of conscience, Luke xi. 21. Rom v. 1.

Q. Whence doth the peace of unbelievers proceed?

A. Partly from the deceitfulness and flattery of their own hearts; and partly from the devil, that, as a strong man armed, keeps the house, Luke xi. 21.

Q What is the difference between a true and false peace of conscience?

A. True peace of conscience is attained by the use of means, such as the ordinances, earnest prayer, brokenness of heart for sin, tender and holy walking before God. It arises from faith in Christ, the Peace-maker, and makes the man careful of pleasing God, and fearful of offending him. Whereas a false or presumptuous peace comes not this way, and hath no such attendants; nay, it is grounded upon vain imaginations, and is attended with carnal security, neglect of duty, and untender walking, 2 Thess. iii. 16. 1 Sam. i. 12, 18. Isaiah lvii. 15. Psalm cxix. 165. Gal vi. 16. Rom. v. 1, 2 Rev. iii. 17. Deut. xxix. 19.

Q. Doth the believer's inward peace come and go with his outward peace?

A. No; for he may have great tribulation in the world, when yet he may have much inward peace through Christ, John xvi 33. Heb. iii. 17, 18.

Q. What is the best way to maintain our inward peace?

A. By making much use of Christ who is our peace, looking daily to him for righteousness and strength, and strict walking by gospel-rules, Eph. ii. 14 Gal. vi. 16.

Q. Doth the believer's peace with God still alter with his peace of conscience? A. No.

Q. How is it that the believer's state of peace is maintained, when his sense of peace is lost?

A. By reason of the stability of God's covenant, and the prevalency of Christ's continued intercession with God for his people. Psalm lxxxix. 31, 32, 33, 34. 1 John ii. 1.

Of Joy in the Holy Ghost.

Q. What do you mean by joy in the Holy Ghost?

A. That spiritual joy, delight, and complacency, which the Holy Ghost works in his people, when he clears up their evidences, or allows them special favours to their souls.

Q Why is this spiritual joy called joy in the Holy Ghost?

A Because he breeds and feeds this joy; hence it is called the "fruit of the Spirit," Gal. v 22.

Q What are the chief grounds of this joy?

A. Ordinarily they are a sense of our interest in Christ, and of our justification by his righteousness; or his gracious presence with us, his work in us, the success of his gospel, or a prospect of heaven, Psalm cl. 2. Isaiah lxi. 10. Heb. iii. 18 Phil i 25. Acts ii. 46, 47. Acts viii. 8 1. Psalm li. 12. Rom. [illegible] 2.

Q Wherein doth this spiritual [illegible] from the joy of the world?

A. Spiritual joy is inward an[illegible] solid; it bears up under inward troubles, an[illegible] for all spiritual performances: But worldly jo[illegible] sensual, blown away by every cross wind, le[illegible] der uneasy reflections, indisposeth for holy [illegible] nisheth at the approach of death.

Q. What is it that is most destructive to the [illegible] tian's joy?

A. Sin, especially when it is ventured upon against [illegible] Psalm li. 8.

Q. May not hypocrites have flashes of spiritual joy at some times?

A. Yes; for so had the stony ground hearers, and John's followers, Mat. xiii. 20. John v 35.

Q. What is the difference between the true spiritual joy of believers, and the temporary joy of hypocrites?

A. True spiritual joy comes in the way of godly sorrow for sin, and of faith in Jesus Christ; it disposeth a man to humility and lowliness of mind, to hate sin more vehemently, resist temptations more steadily, and perform duty more cheerfully: But the hypocrite's joy being without any true foundation, or right views of Christ, it keeps sin in its strength, puffs up the man with a conceit of himself, and very soon leaves him as carnal and unholy as ever.

Of Growth in Grace.

Q What is meant by the word Grace?

A. Sometimes grace is taken for God's good-will towards us, that is, his mercy and favour to sinners through Christ; and it is by this grace we are said to be elected, called, justified, and saved, Rom. xi. 5. Gal. i. 15. Rom. iii. 24. Eph. ii. 8 Sometimes again grace is taken for God's good work in us, or these gracious qualities which he infuses and plants in all justified persons, such as repentance, love, faith, &c whereby they are sanctified and made meet for heaven, 2 Peter iii 18. James iv. 6. Col. iii. 16. Eph. iv. 7. John i. 16. And in this last sense grace is to be understood in the answer.

Q. Is all true grace of a growing nature? A. Yes.

Q. What doth the scriptures compare it to in its growing?

A To the morning light, that increaseth more and more unto the perfect day: And to the husbandman's seed, which springs and groweth up, he knoweth not how, Prov. iv. 18. Mark iv. 26. 27

Q Wherefore is it that all true grace must grow?

A. Because it is the seed of God, and every soul possessed of it is united to Christ: Likewise there is a stature appointed, to which every Christian must gradually advance, that so he may be made meet for the inheritance above, 1 John iii. 9 John xv. 5. Eph iv. 12, 13 Col. i. 12.

Q. When may grace be said truly to grow in a believer?

A When it receiveth new additions or degrees of strength, which may be perceived either, 1. When its growth is inward, in respect of heart-sincerity and liveliness: Or, 2. When it is outward, in respect of the fruits of holiness produced in the life Or, 3. When it is downward, in respect of self-abasement, and the rooting of gracious habits in the soul: Or, 4. When it is upward, in spirituality and heavenly-mindedness.

Q. Do believers at all times actually grow in grace?

A. No; but they are still in a growing disposition, and desirous to grow.

Q. May not true grace sometimes decay?

A. Yes; for sometimes believers do leave their first love, and the good things which remain in them may be ready to die, Rev ii. 4. and iii. 2

Q. Whence is it that grace doth decay in believers?

A. Sometimes it proceeds from violent storms of temptations, but ordinarily from their unwatchfulness, their neglect of employing Christ, their grieving of the Spirit, or harbouring of known sin.

Q. What are the ordinary symptoms of grace in decay?

A. 1. Loss of spiritual appetite, and of delight in duty.— 2. Loss of wonted hatred of sin, and of tenderness of conscience. 3. Loss of desire for the coming of Christ's kingdom. 4. A growing love to the world and time's things.

Q. How may we know if grace be real and true, though it be very weak?

A. Wherever grace is true, sin will be felt as a burden, the soul will esteem Christ precious, his ordinances and people will be loved, and more grace and holiness will be earnestly desired.

Q. What means shall we use to get weak and languishing grace brought to thrive and grow?

A We must be duly sensible of the spiritual consumption, and apply to the physician for help; we must search if there be any unmortified lust at the root of grace, and remove it; we must look to Christ for his Spirit's influence and blessing upon ordinances and providences, earnestly pleading his promises of quickening and strength, and that he may come as the dew to Israel, Psalm lxxxv 6. Hosea xiv. 4, 5, 6. Psalm cxix. 25, 28.

Of Perseverance in Grace.

Q. Is perseverance in grace a privilege of justified persons? A. Yes.

Q What do you mean by perseverance in grace?

A. A continuing still in the state of grace, and in the practice of godliness to the end.

Q. Can no justified person fall totally and finally from grace? A. No.

Q. How are you assured of that?

A From the unchangeableness of God, and the nature of grace; for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance; and grace in believers is a well of water springing up unto everlasting life, Romans xi. 29. John iv. 14.

Q. Do all that profess Christ persevere in their profession?

A. No; for we read of many who have fallen from it, John vi 66.

Q Why do not all the professors of Christ persevere?

A. Because many of them are not rooted in sincerity; and they who begin in hypocrisy do commonly end in apostacy, Mat. xiii. 20. 21. Psalm lxxviii. 37.

Q May not truly gracious souls fall very foully into gross sins? A. Yes.

Q. Have we any examples of such upon record?

A. Yes; we have Lot, Noah, David, and Peter.

Q. Why are such instances recorded?

A To teach us to distrust our own strength, to avoid all temptations to sin, to live and rely upon our Surety, and not to despair of mercy upon our penitent returning to the Lord.

Q. Did not these who fell so foully fall from grace?

A 1. Not totally: For though they fell from many degrees of grace, yet not from all grace; they came to have little faith, but not to be quite without faith. 2. Not finally, or without recovery; for though they fell from God for a time, yet repentance and recovery was secured to them.

Q Are there not many who have once looked well, who have become final apostates from God?

A Yes; but, when they fall totally and finally from God, we may conclude they were never that in sincerity which they appeared to be: They were only saints in profession, but not in reality, 1 John ii. 19.

Q. Is it not said, The branches in Christ that bear not

fruit shall be taken away, John xv. 2. Is not that a falling from grace?

A. These fruitless branches, there spoke of, were not in Christ by faith, but by profession only.

Q. Did not Adam and Solomon, who were gracious persons, fall totally and finally?

A. As for Adam, he had no promise of perseverance, though yet it is most probable he was recovered by believing in Christ, upon the promise that was freely tendered to him by God himself. And as for Solomon, we have ground to believe he was recovered by the mercy of God unto repentance, 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15.

Q Why have we so may cautions and warnings given to believers in scripture, if they could not fall away from grace?

A. These warnings and dehortations are some of the means which God makes use of to prevent their falling away.

Q. Is it owing to the free will or strength of grace in believers that they fall not away finally?

A. No; for Adam and angels, who had stronger grace, fell; and so would believers, if they were not upheld by a power superior to any thing in themselves.

Q. What are the main grounds of the saint's perseverance?

A. The immutability of God's covenant and electing love; their being the purchase of Christ's blood, and united to him; Christ's potent intercession, together with the power and promise of God, John x 11, 28. Luke xxii. 32. 1 Pet. i. 5.

Q. What promise have believers for their perseverance in grace to the end?

A. They have, among others, that in Jeremiah xxxii. 40. "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me."

QUESTION XXXVII

Q. *What benefits do believers receive from C[illegible]ist at death?*

A. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection.

Q. Do the benefits which believers receive from Christ end with their lives?

A. By n[illegible]eans? for they receive far greater benefits than ever at death, and after death.

Q. Whom do you understand by believers here?

A. Those who give credit to the word of God, and do heartily receive and rest upon Christ for salvation, as he is offered to sinners in the gospel.

Q. Whether is it upon believer's souls or bodies that Christ doth bestow his benefits at death?

A. It is both upon their souls and bodies.

Q What are the benefits granted to their souls at death?

A There are two mentioned in the answer: 1. They are made perfect in holiness. 2. They do immediately pass into glory.

Q. Do all believers arrive at perfection in holiness?

A Yes.

Q. When do they arrive at it?

A At their death.

Q. Can none attain to it during this life?

A. No.

Q. Why so?

A. Because sin is never rooted wholly out of the soul till death.

Q. How doth that appear?

A. Both from the word of God, and our own experience, 1 John i. 8. Rom vii 23, 24.

Q Why must all believers be made perfectly holy at death?

A. Because no unclean thing can enter within the gates of the new Jerusalem, Rev. xxi. 27.

Q. How is it that believers are made perfectly holy at death?

A. Their graces are pefrected, and the roots of sin plucked up out of their nature, which cannot be till the earthly fabric be dissolved.

Q. Do the souls of believers die or sleep with their bodies?

A. No; they live and act in a separate state.

Q Whither do they go upon leaving the body?

A. Into glory.

Q. How soon after death?

A. Immediately, without any delay.

Q Do they not go to Purgatory by the way, that they may be purged from sin, and made pure to enter into heaven?

A. There is no ground for that popish fiction in the word of God, there being no purgatory, but the blood of Christ.

Q. How do you prove from scripture that they pass immediately into glory?

A. From these passages, which tell us, that Lazarus's soul was presently carried by angels into Abraham's bosom; that the penitent thief was immediately glorified; that death is gain to the believer, and brings him to the Lord's presence; all which made the apostle desire to depart, that he might be with Christ, Luke xvi. 22. Luke xxiii. 43. 2 Cor. v 8. Phil i 21, 23.

Q. What do you mean by that glory which believers immediately pass into at death?

A. The immediate presence, vision, and fruition of God, which they are presently admitted to after death. Well may believers be said then to pass into glory; for then it is that they pass into a glorious state, a glorious place, a glorious company, and glorious employment.

Q. What is that glorious state which believers enter into at death?

A. It is a state of eternal rest and nearness with God, Heb. iv. 9. Rev xiv 13. 2 Cor. v. 8.

Q What is that glorious place whic[illegible] they pass into?

A. It is their Father's house [illegible]alled the King's palace, in which Christ ha[illegible]ons for them, Psalm xlv. 15. John xiv. 2.

Q What is the glorious compa[illegible]tted to?

A. The company of God, of Ch[illegible]ls, and spirits of just men made perfect, 2 [illegible]. 21. 1 Thess iv. 17. Heb xii. 22, 23, 24.

Q. What is the glorious employment th[illegible]

A. They will be employed continually i[illegible] praising of God.

Q What is it in God that will be the subject o[illegible] miration and praise?

A. His glorious perfections, and wonderful works, a[illegible]pecially his redeeming love, and that amazing work

" God manifested in the flesh," and dying for us, Rev. i. 5. and iv. 11 and v. 9, 12

Q. What benefits have believers from Christ at death, in respect of their bodies?

A. Their bodies at death do remain in union with Christ, and do rest in their graves, as in beds, until the resurrection, 1 Thess. iv. 14 Isaiah lvii 2.

Q Wherefore is it that believers must meet with death?

A. Because it is appointed unto men once to die; and death doth pass upon all men, for that all have sinned, Heb ix 27 Rom. v. 12.

Q. Are none excepted from this law of death?

A. None, but Enoch and Elias, who were translated to heaven without tasting of death; and those who will be found alive on the earth at Christ's second coming, 1 Cor. xv. 51. 1 Thess. iv. 15

Q. Was death appointed as the punishment of sin?

A. Yes, Rom vi 23.

Q Why then do believers die, seeing they are freed from all the punishment of sin, by Christ's suffering it for them?

A. Christ might have removed death altogether from believers if he had pleased; but he hath thought fit only by his death to change the nature of it, and take all that was penal out of it: so that he hath now quite altered death to believers, turning it from an enemy to be a friend, from a punishment to be a purgation, or a special mean for bringing about their perfect sanctification, and thorough cleansing from all sin: and hence it is that death is ranked among the believer's blessings or privileges, 1 Cor. iii 22.

Q. Is there not a great difference between the death of a believer, and of an unbeliever?

A. Yes: for to the one it is the effect of God's love, to the other it is the punishment of sin; to the one it is his Father's servant, sent to bring him home to his Father's house, to the other it is an officer of justice sent to arrest him for his fearful debts and crimes

Q What is the difference between the graves of believers and unbelievers?

A. The graves of believers are beds of rest, wherein they sleep in Jesus; and it is by virtue of the union subsisting between him and them, that they shall be awaked from their sleep in the morning of the resurrection: but the grave is a prison to unbelievers, wherein their bodies are kept in custody until the judgment of the great day; and from which they shall be raised by the power of God their terrible Judge.

Q How can there be any union between so glorious a person as Christ, and our vile bodies, when rotting in the grave?

A. Not only because the covenant which Christ stands in to believers reacheth to their very dust, but more especially because there is a mystical union between Christ as the head, and belie[illegible] the members of his mystical body; and, their d[illegible]arts of that body mystical, Christ doth still look[illegible]ne as related to him.

[illegible] doth dissolve the union that is between [illegible]y, why doth it not also dissolve the union [illegible] and the body?

[illegible]se the mystical union that is between Christ and [illegible]e is in its nature indissolvable, so that death cannot [illegible]it, as it doth other unions and relations; but in this re[illegible]ct it is like the hypostatical union that is between the divine and human nature in the person of Christ: for, when Christ died, the hypostatical union still remained, his divine nature being united both to his soul in heaven, and to his body in the grave; so, when believers die, the mystical union still remains, Christ their head being united both to their souls in heaven, and to their bodies lying in the grave.

Q. Are all believers bodies laid in the grave?

A. No, strictly speaking; for some martyrs have been burnt in fires to ashes, some devoured by wild beasts, and some drowned in the sea: But the places wheresoever the bodies of such are put to corrupt, are to them as their graves, and thence will Christ bring them

Q. In what respect is the believer's death called a sleep?

A Because, as sleep doth ease and refresh the man that is weary with toil and labour; so death doth ease the weary believer of all his toil and struggling with sin, satan, and the world. Again, death is as a sleep to the believer, in regard he is to be wakened again from it in the morning of the resurrection, Psalm xvii. 15. and xlix. 14.

Q Why are believers graves called beds of rest?

A. Because therein they rest from all their afflictions and labours in this world; from the wicked's persecutions, satan's temptations, and sin's workings

Q. How long shall they rest in their graves?

A. Till the resurrection.

QUESTION XXXVIII.

Q *What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?*

A. At the resurrection, believers, being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

Q What is meant by the resurrection here spoken of?

A The raising of all the dead from their graves, small and great, just and unjust, who have lived in all ages of the world, from the creation of it unto the last day, Acts xxiv. 15 Rev xx. 12.

Q. How doth the resurrection differ from creation?

A Creation is the making of a new body out of the earth, that did not subsist before; but resurrection is the raising up again of the same body out of its former dust.

Q. When is this universal resurrection to be?

A. At the last day, when Christ shall come to judgment.

Q How do you prove the truth and certainty of such a resurrection?

A. From the Almighty power of God, that is abundantly able to raise the dead; and from the holy scriptures, wherein God expressly declares he will raise them.

Q. What was the cause of the Sadducees error, who denied the resurrection?

A Their not knowing the two great foundations of this doctrine; namely, the scriptures, and the power of God, as Christ told them, Mat. xxii 29.

Q. How could they be ignorant of this doctrine of the resurrection from the scriptures of the Old Testament, seeing Job and Daniel plainly told them of it? Job xix. 26, 27, Dan. xii. 2.

A. The Sadducees had little regard to any of these writings, except the five books of Moses, which they imagined gave no hint of the resurrection, or of a future state; but our Lord did plainly evince the contrary from these very books, to the conviction of all, Mat. xxii 31, 32, &c. Mark xii. 26, 27.

Q. How did Christ prove the resurrection, and a future state, from the books of Moses?

A. From Exodus iii. 6. where God in the bush spoke to Moses, long after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were dead, saying, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Now, seeing he saith not, *I was* their God, but *I am* their God, our Lord reasons from it, "He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living." And, seeing the covenant-relation still stands, their souls must then be living, and so also must be united again to their bodies, to which they have an innate inclination, that so they may be made for ever happy in the enjoyment of their covenanted God.

Q. But have we not far clearer discoveries of this doctrine in the New Testament?

A. Yes, in many places of it.

Q. How is it credible that the dead bodies of men, after undergoing innumerable different alterations, should afterwards be raised again to what they were?

A. It should in nowise be thought incredible, that God should raise the dead: For, if his power was able to raise the whole world out of nothing, it cannot be thought hard for him to raise our bodies out of their former dust, Acts xxvi. 8.

Q. Hath not God given us many proofs and instances of his power to raise the dead?

A. Yes, as in the raising of the widow of Zarephath's son by Elijah, the Shunamite's son by Elisha, the dead man at the touch of Elisha's bones, Dorcas by Peter, Eutychus by Paul, besides the resurrection of Christ himself, and many that were raised by him while he was on earth, 1 Kings xvii 2 Kings iv. 2 Kings xiii. Acts ix. Acts xx. Mat. xxvii. Luke vii. Mat. ix. John xi.

Q. Doth not the nature and perfection of God's infinite justice require that there should be a resurrection?

A. Yes; for, seeing the bodies of the wicked have been actors in their sins, it is just they should share in the punishment of them; and believers' bodies having been instruments in God's service, it is agreeable to equity that they should share in the reward and glory conferred upon them.

Q. Have you not some peculiar arguments for the resurrection of believers' bodies?

A. Yes; the resurrection of Jesus Christ their head, and the nature of God's covenant with believers, are certain and satisfying arguments for it.

Q. Will the dead be raised with the very same bodies they had when they were alive? A. Yes.

Q How do you prove that?

A. Because, these very bodies, being the instruments of piety or vice, it is just that these, and no other, should partake of the reward or punishment. Again, if they were not the same bodies, it would be more properly a new creation, than a resurrection. But Job puts the matter out of doubt, by assuring us that the bodies will be the very same, Job xix. 26, 27. "And though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another."

Q. Will not the bodies of believers, when raised, differ from what they are now?

A. Not in regard of their substance or essence, though they will differ very much in respect of qualities.

Q. What will be the different qualities of believers bodies, when raised again?

A. Here they were weak, sickly, corrupt, and dying bodies, and called vile bodies, as being the instruments of much sin; but then they shall be strong, healthful, pure, spiritual, incorruptible, immortal, and beautiful bodies, Phil. iii. 21. 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44, 52, 53, 54

Q. How are believer's bodies said to be raised in glory, and to be made conform to Christ's glorious body?

A. In regard they shall partake of his glory: For Christ's body shall shine as the sun, and theirs shall shine as so many bright stars round about him; only all their glory will be borrowed from Christ their head.

Q. Will there not be a great difference betwixt the resurrection of the just and unjust?

A Yes; for the saints will be raised to eternal life, and that by virtue of Christ's resurrection, and of their union with him; but the wicked shall be raised to condemnation, by virtue of the power and justice of God, which shall bring them, like malefactors, from prison to the judgment-seat. The saints shall rise with glory and triumph, amidst angels attending them; but the wicked shall rise with trembling and horror, having most deformed and ghastly looks, as men going to be sentenced to everlasting burnings.

Q. What will be the great means of raising the dead at the last day?

A. The voice of the archangel, and sound of the last trumpet, which shall give such a powerful summons to the dead, that none can sit; all thereupon must rise and appear before their judge.

Q. Will there not be a speedy separation made betwixt the righteous and wicked in that day?

A. Yes; the angels will then be employed to separate the godly from the wicked, and gather them altogether in one blessed company.

Q. How shall believers be then disposed of?

A. They will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air.

Q What privileges shall believers have at the judgment seat above others?

A. Christ will place them on his right hand: He will openly acknowledge and acquit them: He will declare their right to the glorious inheritance prepared for them, and invite them to take possession of it: He will cause them sit with him as assessors in judging wicked angels and men.

Q. What do you mean by Christ's open *acknowledging* of believers in that day?

A. His public owning of them as his elect and redeemed ones.

Q. Whom doth Christ say he will acknowledge for his at that day?

A Those who own and confess Christ now.

Q. Whom will Christ deny in that day?

A. Those who disown and deny Christ now, Mat. x. 32, 33 "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven."

Q. What do you mean by Christ's open *acquitting* of believers in that day?

A. His public justifying and absolving of them from all the guilt of their sins; and his vindicating and clearing them from all the world's slanders and aspersions.

Q. Are not believers acknowledged and acquitted by Christ before this time?

A. Yes; he doth it in this world, when their sins are

pardoned, and he intimates this to them by his Spirit's bearing testimony with their consciences, Rom viii. 16, 33. 1 John iii. 21.

Q. How doth Christ's *acknowledging* and *acquitting* of believers, now, differ from his doing it at the judgment-seat?

A. 1. In respect of promulgation; the first is secret in the believers bosom, the second is public before men and angels. 2 In respect of subjective certainty; the believer may doubt of the first, but he cannot doubt of the second; it being a judicial sentence pronounced by the judge's own mouth with the greatest solemnity

Q. What will be the effect of this acknowledgment and acquittance?

A It will for ever remove all doubts and fears from believers' hearts, and fill them with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Hence this day is called "the time of refreshing" to them, Acts iii. 19

Q Should not the faith of this acknowledgment and acquittance by Christ encourage us to own Christ in his person, offices, and truths, in the face of all dangers?

A. Yes.

Q How shall we attain to that happy resurrection and acquittance at the last day?

A. We must labour to be found in Christ, and clothed upon with his righteousness: We must constantly adhere to Christ and his truths, advance in the work of mortification, and study holiness in all manner of conversation.

Q. When Christ the Judge shall pronounce the sentence of absolution and condemnation, will not the execution thereof speedily follow?

A. Yes; for, after passing of them, it is added, Mat. xxv. 46. "And the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

Q. Will not the wicked be made to acknowledge the justice of the sentence against them?

A. Yes; because Christ, in passing the sentence, gives them what was their own former wish and desire.

Q. What was that?

A. The absence of God: As they said to God here, *Depart from us*, so Christ saith to them then, *Depart from me*.

Q. Will not the saints after their sentence enter immediately upon perfect happiness? A Yes

Q. What will be their happiness after the judgment is over?

A. They shall be made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity.

Q What is included in perfect bliss?

A Perfect freedom from all evil, and full enjoyment of all good

Q. What evils will believers be freed from in heaven?

A. From all manner of sin, guilt, or pollution; from all inclinatio[illegible] temptations to sin; and from all the bitter fruits a[illegible] of sin, such as complaints, fears, or trouble of ar[illegible]

[illegible] at a man enjoys all that is good?

[illegible] ttains to the full enjoyment of God.

[illegible] ttain to that here upon earth?

[illegible] r though God may be enjoyed by his people in [illegible] ure here, when they attain to communion with [illegible] s ordinances, yet the full enjoyment of God is re[illegible] for heaven hereafter.

[illegible] Wherein doth the full enjoyment of God in heaven [illegible]sist?

A. 1. In being admitted to his glorious presence. 2. In having the immediate beatific vision of his face. 3. In having the full persuasion and sense of his love 4. In being made like him. 5. In having fulness of delight and satisfaction in God as our everlasting portion.

Q Is it possible that any creature can fully enjoy God?

A. No creature can enjoy God fully, as God enjoys himself; but believers have such enjoyment of God in heaven as fills them, in the measure they are capable of

Q. How can any man see his face, when he is the invisible God?

A. He is invisible to the eye of the body, but not to the eye of the mind.

Q. How can a creature be made like to him that is infinite?

A. The holiness and purity of the rational creature is some shadow or picture of the infinite holiness of God.

Q. How long shall believers be blest with the full enjoyment of God in heaven?

A. Not for days, or years, but for all eternity; and this is the ingredient that will exceedingly sweeten their happiness above, that is without end; and they shall ever be with the Lord, 1 Thess. iv. 17.

Q. How is God said to be *All in All* in heaven?

A It imports these things: 1. That saints will be satisfied there from God alone. 2. That there will be no need there of these subordinate things, out of which they used formerly to bring comfort. 3. That every thing they before have found comfortable will all be eminently found and enjoyed in God.

Q Will not the saints be continually employed in adoring, praising, and worshipping God in heaven?

A. Yes.

Q. Will not their worship and adoration above far transcend the most refined worship upon earth.

A. Yes, in regard there will be no mixture of sin, no wandering, no hypocrisy, no imperfection, in the worship above: They will act above with the highest delight and constancy, without any weariness or intermission, for ever.

QUESTION XXXIX.

Q. *What is the duty which God requireth of man?*

A The duty which God requireth of man is, obedience to his revealed will.

Q Doth this question begin the second part of the catechism? A. Yes.

Q. What is the difference between the first and second part of the catechism?

A The first part doth treat of matters of faith, and what man is to believe concerning God: The second part doth handle matters of practice, and what is man's duty towards God.

Q. Are not these the two great lessons which the scriptures principally teach us?

A. Yes; and as we have heard the first, so we ought to be attentive to the second, for man has something to do, as well as something to believe.

Q What do you mean by duty here?

A. That which a man oweth to God, or ought to do for God.

Q. What do you mean by obedience?

A. A man's going in with the will of God, either in what he commands or forbids.

Q. What is the rule of our duty and obedience?

A. The revealed will of God.

Q. What do you mean by God's revealed will?

A. God's mind discovered and made known to us in the scriptures.

Q. Why may not the traditions or inventions of men be our rule?

A. Because God doth reject all will-worship and superstitious performances, saying, "Who hath required this at your hand?" Isaiah i 12.

Q. Hath God any other will besides his revealed will?

A. Yes, his secret will.

Q. What is the difference between God's secret and revealed will?

A. God's secret will is his eternal counsel and decrees concerning all events whatsoever, which is not known till they come to pass; but God's revealed will is that which he declares, and lays before us as our duty, that we may practise and follow it.

Q. Is God's secret will no part of our duty?

A. No; "for secret things belong unto the Lord, our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children," Deut. xxix 29

Q. Upon what account is our obedience and service due to God?

A. Because God is our Creator, our Preserver, our Benefactor, and supreme Lord and Lawgiver.

Q. Is there not obedience due to others besides to God?

A. Yes; servants must obey their masters, children their parents, and subjects their magistrates, but not as we are bound to obey God.

Q. What is the difference between the obedience we owe to God, and what we owe to man?

A. We must obey God for his own sake, and because of his supreme authority; but we must obey men, our superiors, chiefly because God enjoins it, and because their commands are agreeable to his will.

Q. What is to be done when the commands of God and of men are opposite one to another?

A. In that case we are to obey God rather than man, Acts iv 19.

Q. What sort of obedience is it that is acceptable to God?

A. It must be sincere, universal, and constant; it must proceed from right principles, namely, from a renewed heart, from faith, and from the love of God, and of Jesus Christ; and it must be directed to right ends, namely, to advance the honour and glory of God.

Q. Can we merit any thing at God's hands by our obedience?

A. No; but must count ourselves unprofitable servants after we have done our best. Our best performances are imperfect, so that it is by Christ's obedience, not our own, that we must be saved.

Q. Is it our duty, notwithstanding, to study to obey God in the best manner we can?

A. Yes, because God commands it.

Q. Will not God accept of our obedience, if sincere, tho' attended with imperfection?

A. Yes, upon the account of Christ's merits and intercession.

Q. Is it not a yoke for men to be bound to constant obedience and service to God all the days of their lives?

A. No; for those who know God, and love him, count his service the greatest freedom, Psalm cxix 45.

Q. Will they be free from this service in heaven?

A. No; for there his servants shall serve him, and count this their greatest happiness, Rev. xxii. 3.

Q. Will not their service in heaven differ much from what it is now?

A. Yes; for there they will serve God without sin or weariness.

QUESTION XL.

Q. *What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?*

A. The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience was the Moral Law.

Q. Is man appointed to be under the obligation and direction of a law? A. Yes.

Q Why so?

A. Because, being made with rational faculties for the service of his Creator, he must needs be accountable to God for his actions.

Q What is the use of a law to men?

A. To shew to them what is sin, and what is duty.

Q. What is the law that was first given to men?

A. The moral law.

Q. What do you mean by the moral law?

A. That law which is the perpetually binding rule of our manners and practice, being the unalterable declaration of the will of God concerning the duties of righteousness, which all men do owe to God and their neighbours, in all ages of the world:—which law is briefly summed up in the Ten Commandments.

Q. Why is it called moral.

A. Because it is a perpetual rule for regulating our manners and conversation both towards God and man

Q. How can the moral law be said to be the first rule revealed to man, seeing the ten commandments were only given at Sinai, above two thousand years after man was created?

A. The moral law, notwithstanding, was the first rule, seeing it was written on the heart of man at his first creation, he being made after the image of God.

Q. Doth this law still remain written upon man's heart?

A. The moral law being agreeable to the light of nature, though it be sadly obscured by the fall, yet some relics of it are to be found on the hearts of all mankind.

Q. Is the moral law binding upon the heathen world, who have not the scriptures to make it known to them?

A. Yes; it is binding upon all mankind, seeing it was fully made known to man at his first creation, and which knowledge he lost by his own fault. And though the heathens want the benefit of scripture-light, yet so much of the moral law is made known to them by the light of nature, as is sufficient to leave them without excuse for their disobedience, Rom. ii. 14, 15.

Q. If the moral law be natural, what need was there for writing it to us in the Bible?

A. 1. Because the fall of man had woefully darkened our minds, and obscured the knowledge of this law. 2. God would hereby shew that he is the Author of the law and light of nature. 3 He designed to leave sinners the more inexcusable.

Q. Can any man obtain salvation by his obedience to the moral law? A. No.

Q. Can any man now obey this law perfectly? A No.

Q. Is it just for God to require perfect obedience to the law, when no man is able to give it?

A. Yes; for God may justly demand what he hath a right to, though we have lost it by our own fault. God gave man at his creation power to obey perfectly, which he squandered away: now, though a debtor do disable himself for paying his debt, the creditor doth not thereby lose his right to ask it.

Q. Why is the law given to men, seeing none can obtain life by it?

A. To be a restraint to sin, and a rule of righteousness; and particularly, the law is given to be a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ, Gal. iii. 24.

Q. How doth the law as a schoolmaster bring men to Christ?

A. As a schoolmaster by his threats and whips doth excite dull scholars to learn knowledge for their good; so the law, by its challenges, convictions, threatenings, and curses, doth awake secure souls to see their sins and dangers, and to flee to Christ for a perfect righteousness to answer the demands of the law, and to shelter them from its curses

Q. Doth the law lead all men to Christ? A. No.

Q. For what use is the law to them who are not led to Christ?

A. It serves to render them inexcusable, if they continue still in their Christless state, after their sin and danger are discovered to them by the law.

Q. Is the law of any use to the regenerate, who are already brought to Christ?

A. Yes; it serves to shew them how much they are bound to Christ for fulfilling it, and enduring its curse for them; and to engage them to live holy and thankful lives to his glory: and particularly, the law is given to them as a rule of life, that they may order their conversations by it.

Q How can the moral law be a rule of obedience under the gospel, seeing it is said of believers, that they are not under the law, but under grace? Rom. vi. 14.

A The meaning is, that believers are not under the law as a covenant of works, being delivered from the cursing and condemning power of the law by their Surety Christ. But though it be not a covenant to them, whereby they are either to be justified or condemned; yet it is still continued as a rule, by which they are to regulate both their hearts and lives, Rom iii. 31. Rom. vii. 7, 12. Titus ii. 11, 12. 1 Cor ix 21.

Q. How is Christ said to be the end of the law for righteousness to us? Rom. x. 4.

A. In regard Christ doth answer the primary design of the law under the first covenant, which was to bring men to a perfect obedience or righteousness for their justification: this we cannot now find by the law, therefore we must seek it in Christ, where it is to be found. The end and scope of the law is now gained in Christ, seeing he is that to a believer, which the law would have been to him, if he could have perfectly kept it; namely, righteousness, justification, and salvation.

Q. Doth the moral law preach Christ to us?

A. No; but God mercifully makes use of it as a spur to [illegible] to flee to Christ for salvation.

Q. How doth it that?

A. By shewing to men that they have destroyed themselves, and that they cannot be their own saviours; and so it becomes a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ, as was before explained.

Q. What is it then that preacheth Christ to men, and shews them plainly the way of salvation?

A. The gospel.

Q. What do you mean by the gospel?

A. Any part of the Old and New Testament that brings to us the glad tidings of salvation, or points out the way to it; for the word *gospel* signifies glad tidings, or good news.

Q. Are any news so welcome or refreshing to sensible sinners, as the news which the gospel brings?

A. No news are so joyful as the doctrine of free grace, no tidings so sweet as the news of pardon, the news of a Saviour, and of salvation to the chief of sinners.

Q. Are the law and gospel opposite to one another?

A. No; for the one is subservient to the other, Gal. iii. 21. 1 Tim. i, 9, 10, 11. Rom iii 21.

Q. Did God give any other laws to men besides the moral law?

A. Yes; he gave also to the Jews the judicial and the ceremonial law, which were explained before under the 14th question, page 326.

QUESTION XLI.

Q. *Where is the Moral Law summarily comprehended?*

A. The Moral Law is summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments.

Q. What mean you by the law its being summarily comprehended?

A. That the law of God, or moral law, which is contained at large in the whole bible, is briefly, or in few words, summed up in the ten commandments: and these ten commandments are no more but a very short sum of the moral law, though they be a most comprehensive sum of it.

Q. How are the ten commandments commonly divided?

A. Into two tables; the first four commandments make the first table, containing our duty to God; the last six commandments make the second table, containing our duty to our neighbour.

Q. How do the Papists divide these commandments?

A. Though they cannot deny them to be ten in number, and these ten to be divided into two tables, seeing the scripture so expressly doth assert both, Deut. iv. 13. Yet they make but three in the first table, and seven in the second; designing this way to cloke their worshipping of images: For they would gladly conceal the second command, which strikes directly against them, by making it a pendicle of the first; and so they reckon the first and second commandments to be but one. And that they may still have the number of ten commandments, they divide the tenth into two.

Q What absurdity is there in this way of doing?

A It is against the plain sense and scope of the words of the decalogue. For the first and second commandments are evidently distinct, the first prescribing the right object of worship, and the second the right way of worship. And as for the tenth commandment, it appears plainly from the tenor of it, to be but one; the scope of it being to prohibit men to covet any thing that belongs to their neighbours: So that, if it was at all to be divided, it should be divided at least into six commands, or rather into as many commands as there are things which are our neighbours.

Q. Where were these ten commandments first promulgated? A. At mount Sinai.

Q. After what manner was it done?

A. With the greatest solemnity and terror: For the mount

was railed about, that none might touch it: the angels attended; the glory of God visibly descended in a cloud; there were thunderings, lightenings, the sound of a trumpet, and God's voice was heard; the mountain shook; the people trembled, and even Moses himself did quake: And, lastly, God with his own finger did engrave the ten commandments upon two tables of stone.

Q. Why was the law given in this manner?

A To possess the world with awful thoughts of the Lawgiver, and to shew them the danger of breaking his holy law.

Q What are the properties of this law?

A. It is holy, just, good, spiritual, and exceeding broad, Rom. vii. 12, 14. Psalm cxix. 96.

Q. Why is it called spiritual?

A. Because it reacheth to the thoughts and frame of the heart, as well as to the outward life and conversation.

Q. Why is it called exceeding broad?

A. Because of the large extent and comprehensiveness of its meaning.

Q. In what respect is the law so comprehensive?

A. In many respects: As, for instance, when it forbids any sin, it doth at the same time command the contrary duty: and, when it commands any duty, it doth forbid the contrary sin: and, when any sin is forbidden, all inward motions and affections to it, all degrees and appearances of it, all temptations, means, words, or gestures tending to it, are also forbidden; and, when any duty is commanded, the inward frame and affections suitable to it, and the means and helps for promoting it, are likewise injoined.

Q. Why did God write his law upon tables of stone?

A. To teach us the lasting obligation of it, and that we should write it on the tables of our hearts, or pray to God to do it for us

Q. Can any man obtain to a conformity to this holy law in all things, in respect of his heart, words, and actions?

A. No.

Q Are we not liable to the curse and condemnation of the law, if we break it, or come short of it in any thing?

A. Yes.

Q. How then shall we be sheltered from this curse?

A. By looking by faith to our Surety Jesus, and to his perfect obedience and righteousness to answer for us

QUESTION XLII.

Q *What is the Sum of the Ten Commandments?*

A The sum of the ten commandments is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbour as ourselves.

Q What do you mean by the sum of the ten commands?

A The main substance or life of them.

Q. What is the sum of the *first* table of the law?

A. Love to God.

Q. What is the sum of the *second* table?

A Love to our neighbour.

Q Why are the two tables summed up in love to God, and our neighbour?

A. Because love is the great spring of all obedience to them; for, where true love is to God and our neighbour, all the duties required in both tables will certainly follow.

Q How is it that we ought to love the Lord?

A As our God, and, with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind, Mat. xxii. 37.

Q. What is imported in loving the Lord as *our God*?

A. That we must chuse him for our God, and give up ourselves unto him.

Q. What is imported in loving the Lord with all our *heart, soul, strength,* and *mind*?

A. It imports the sincerity, ardency, activity, and supremacy of our love to God; that we ought to love and serve him with our whole powers and faculties, and above all other things whatsoever.

Q. What are those things we ought to love the Lord above?

A. Above all things that we enjoy on earth; such as our money or estates, our houses or lands, our children or relations, our liberties, or even our very lives.

Q. What reason is there for loving the Lord above all things?

A. Because he is the Author of all; his excellency infinitely transcends all; and from him we have our all, even our being, our breath, our souls, our strength, our relations, an devery thing else.

Q. May not a man lawfully love his relations and possessions in this world?

A. Yes, providing his love be not excessive.

Q How may we know if our love to things in the world be excessive?

A. It is a token it is so, when the thoughts of these things justle our spiritual thoughts; and when they come to get our first thoughts in the morning, or our last at night:—Or when the impressions of worldly things abide longer with us, than of things spiritual.

Q. How shall we know if we love God above all things?

A. It would be a good sign if we could say, that we value the favour of God more than that of any creature; and that we are more affected with the loss of God's favour than with any worldly loss; and that we would chuse rather to displease all the world, than to offend him.

Q. Who is meant by our *neighbour* that we ought to love?

A Every man is our neighbour, and therefore we should bear affection to all men.

Q What mean you by loving our neighbour as ourselves?

A. That we should love others with the same truth and sincerity of love as we do ourselves; or, as our Saviour explains it in that golden rule, Mat. vii. 12. We should be ready to do to others as we would have them doing to us: And we should not do that to others, which we would not have done to us, were they placed in our circumstances, and we in theirs.

Q. Should (according to this rule) a robber be spared, because he would spare those who would punish him; or a drunkard have what liquor he demands from us, because he would give it to us if it was in his power?

A. The rule is not to be understood of self-love that is corrupt and vicious, but of self-love that is natural and innocent; it is this only that ought to be the standard of doing to our neighbour. In doing as we would be done to, we must act from a well-informed judgment, and not from any corrupt bias to sin or vice.

Q. Are we bound to love our neighbour with the same degree of love as we bear to ourselves?

A. No, but with the same sincerity of love only.

Q. Ought we to love all mankind alike?

A. No; we ought to love all men, indeed, with the love of benevolence, but the saints only with the love of complacency, Psalm xvi. 6.

Q. Are there not many who break this law of love to their neighbour?

A. Yes; namely, those who backbite their neighbour, who wish them evil, are grieved at their prosperity, or are inwardly glad of their hurt.

QUESTION XLIII.

Q. *What is the Preface to the Ten Commandments?*

A. The Preface to the Ten Commandments is in these words: "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

QUESTION XLIV.

Q. *What doth the Preface to the Ten Commandments teach us?*

A. The Preface to the Ten Commandments teacheth us, that, because God is the Lord, and our God, and Redeemer, therefore we are bound to keep all his commandments.

Q. What mean you by a Preface?

A. Something that is spoken or written before, in order to introduce another thing.

Q. What is the design of the preface to the decalogue?

A. To lay before us some reasons and arguments to enforce the keeping of the commands.

Q. Why doth God make use of arguments to persuade men to obedience, seeing he is the absolute Sovereign of the world, who may command what he will?

A. 1. To shew his condescension in dealing with man, who is a rational creature, according to the principles of his nature. 2. To teach us that obedience to God is our reasonable service. 3. To teach us that he would have all his people to serve him willingly, and from free choice.

Q. What arguments doth God make use of in this preface to enforce obedience to his law?

A. They are three: The first is taken from God's sovereignty over us, "I am the Lord:" The second from his covenant relation to us, "I am thy God:" The third from the redemption he hath wrought for us, "I have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

Q. How is it said, of this preface and the ten commands, that "God spake all these words," Exod. xx. 1. Was it only as he spoke the rest of the bible?

A. No; for other parts of the bible God spake only mediately by the mouth of his prophets; but these words were spoke immediately by God himself.

Q. How can God be said to speak, who hath no mouth, tongue, or organs of speech?

A. God speaks not as we do; but it is easy for his almighty power to form a voice in the air, and to utter articulate words when he pleaseth.

Q Should it not engage us to a special regard of these words, that God spake them himself?

A. Yes; for, where God hath a mouth to speak, we should have an ear to hear. Let us carefully hear God when he speaks his laws to us, as we would have God to hear us when we speak in prayer to him.

Q. What force is there in that argument for our obedience, "I am the Lord?"

A. It doth import, that he is JEHOVAH, the eternal, independent, self-sufficient, immutable, and Almighty Creator, and supreme Sovereign, who hath being in and from himself, and gives being to all things; and therefore we his creatures and subjects owe to him all obedience.

Q: What is the force of that argument, "I am thy God?"

A. It imports that we have chosen God for our God; and that he hath owned us for his people, and bestowed peculiar mercies on us: And therefore our covenant interest in him should sweeten all his commands, and strongly engage us to obey them.

Q. Doth not the promise to believers, "I will be your God," include greater blessings in it than any other promise in the covenant of grace?

A. Yes: For it hath in it, I will not only give you pardon, give you heaven; but I will give you myself, a whole Deity, a JEHOVAH; all I am, all I have, all I can do, shall be yours; I will not only be your Friend, your Father, your Husband, but I will be your God. All the divine attributes are yours, to make you happy, yea, all the Persons of the glorious Trinity are yours, to contrive, carry on, and accomplish the work of your salvation.

Q. How shall we come to get an interest in God as our God?

A. We must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and heartily accept of him as our Mediator, who by his death had made atonement for all who believe in him, yea, had purchased for them reconciliation with God, and a covenant relation to him as their God.

Q. What force is there in that argument (I have brought thee out of the land of Egypt) to engage us to obedience, who were never in Egypt?

A. Though we were not in the *earthly Egypt*, yet we are all by nature in the *spiritual Egypt*, and under the bondage of the devil and our lusts, which is worse than Egyptian bondage. And the Israelites temporal deliverances from Egypt was typical of our spiritual deliverance from satan's bondage; so that the argument hath the same force with us as with the Jews.

Q. Why was the Israelites deliverance from Egypt so much made us of as an argument for their obedience?

A. Because Egypt was full of gross idolatry, a plague with which they were in danger of being infected: and there they groaned under cruel bondage; from which God delivered them in a most miraculous manner.

Q. Why should it be reckoned so great a mercy to be delivered from places overspread with idolatry?

A. Because idolatry is a damnable sin, and brings on great wrath; upon which account the mercy of our ancestor's deliverance from mystical Egypt (Rome's idolatry and bondage) should engage us to thankful obedience to God's law, as well as the Israelites deliverance did their posterity.

Q Are not those who are redeemed by Christ from the bondage of satan and his lusts, strongly obliged to keep his commands?

A. Yes, Luke i. 74.

Q. Is not satan's slavery worse than any other?

A. Yes; for other captives groan under their slavery, and long for deliverance, but satan's slaves are content and easy; other tyrants rule only over the bodies of their slaves, but satan rules over the soul, and all its faculties.

Q. How may we know if we be redeemed by Christ from this bondage?

A. It will be a good sign, if the Redeemer be precious to us, particularly in his kingly office; and if we find the

power of indwelling sin so broken in us, that this bosom enemy doth not triumph over us.

QUESTION XLV.

Q. *What is the first commandment?*

A. The first commandment is, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

QUESTION XLVI.

Q. *What is required in the first commandment?*

A. The first commandment requireth us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly.

Q. Why doth this and the rest of the commands still run in the singular number, *Thou*, and not *You*?

A. Because God would have every man to notice the directions thereof as particularly as if they were spoke to himself by name.

Q. How is the first command said to require things of us, when it seems only to forbid?

A. Because it is a rule for the right understanding of the commands, That where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded; and, where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden: and so we find the scripture explains the law, Mat. v. 21, 23. Eph. iv. 28. Isaiah lviii. 13. Mat. xv. 4, 5, 6.

Q. How many duties doth the first commandment chiefly require?

A. Four: 1. To know God. 2 To acknowledge God. 3. To worship God. 4. To glorify God.

Q. Doth God expressly command us to study to know him?

A. Yes, 1 Chron xxviii. 9. "And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father."

Q. Is it not highly dangerous to live without the knowledge of God?

A. Yes, Jer. x 25. "Pour out thy fury upon the Heathen that know thee not."

Q. Is not ignorance of God yet more dangerous to those who live in a land of light, and enjoy the means of knowledge?

A. Yes, seeing they are without all excuse.

Q. Is it sufficient to know that there is a God?

A. No; we must also know what God is, and what are his works.

Q What are these things we must know of God?

A. We should study to know God, 1. In his unity of essence. 2. In his Trinity of persons. 3. In his attributes and perfections. 4. In his works of creation, of providence, and of redemption.

Q. What sort of knowledge of God is it that we must seek after?

A. A literal knowledge of God is not sufficient; a comprehensive knowledge of God is unattainable: but an experimental, practical, soul affecting, humbling, and transforming knowledge of God, is what we should seek after, and labour to attain.

Q. Besides knowing God, are we also bound to acknowledge God?

A. Yes, Deut. xxvi. 17. "Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God."

Q. What should we acknowledge concerning God?

A. We should acknowledge him to be the only living and true God, and that he is the only object of divine worship; we should acknowledge him to be the Creator and Governor of the world, and own our dependence upon him for all things; and we should acknowledge him as our Lawgiver and Judge, to whom we are accountable for all that we do.

Q. Is it sufficient to own and acknowledge God to be the true God?

A. No, unless also we take him and acknowledge him to be our God, and serve him accordingly.

Q. What is imported in acknowledging God as our God?

A. 1. It imports our renouncing all idols that would rival it with him. 2. Our making choice of God as our portion and chief good, and the God whom we will serve and please above all the world. 3. Our covenant-dedication, surrendering, and engaging ourselves to be the Lord's. 4. Our owning of God, and of his truths and ways before the world, which is called a confessing or professing of him before men, Mat. x. 32. John xii. 42. Rom. x. 9. 1 John iv. 15. 1 Tim ii 10. and vi. 12.

Q. What is the third duty required in this command?

A. To worship God, Mat. iv. 10. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

Q How is God to be worshipped by us?

A. Both inwardly and outwardly.

Q. When is it that we worship God inwardly?

A. When we remember him, love him, highly esteem him, desire him, delight in him, honour and adore him, fear him, believe him, trust and hope in him, Mal. iii 16. Eccl. xii. 1. Deut vi. 5. Psalm lxxi. 19. Mal. i. 6. Isaiah xxvi. 4, 8. Psalm cxxx. 7. Psalm xxxvii. 4.

Q. How do we worship God outwardly?

A. By offering up our prayers and praises to God, attending to his word, and partaking of the sacraments.

Q. What is the fourth duty required in this command?

A. To glorify God.

Q Is there any difference between worshipping and glorifying of God?

A. Yes, in regard glorifying of God is of larger signification than worshipping of him, seeing it comprehends all obedience to his laws, and hath respect to all parts of our conversation We are bound to glorify God, not only in our religious, but also in our civil and natural actions; whether we buy or sell, eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we should "do all to the glory of God," Psalm l. 23. 1 Cor. vi. 20. 1 Cor x 31.

Q. What is the import of the word *accordingly* in the answer?

A. It imports that we should worship and glorify God in such a manner, as to make it appear that we really know him and own him, both as the true God and as our God.

Q. Why is worshipping God and glorifying him joined together?

A. To teach us, that we must not only worship God devoutly, but must also walk circumspectly, and live holy lives in the world.

Q What if a man worship God, and yet live in sin?

A. His prayers cannot be heard, but will be an abomination to the Lord, Psalm lxvi. 18. Prov. xxviii 9.

Q. Who is the worshipper that will be accepted of God?

A. The man that hath a tender walk, and makes conscience of his ways, John ix. 31. "We know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth."

Q. Can we be said to glorify God in the same sense that God is said to glorify us?

A. No; for our glorifying God is only *declarative*, but God's glorifying us is *effective*: We only declare God to be glorious, but God makes us glorious,

Q. How are we to declare God's glory?

A. By making known his glorious excellencies and perfections, and honouring him both, with our lips and lives. See more of this before on the first question, page 313.

QUESTION XLVII.

Q. *What is forbidden in the First Commandment?*

A. The first commandment forbiddeth the denying, or not worshipping and glorifying the true God, as God, and our God; and the giving that worship and glory to any other which is due to him alone.

Q. What are the chief sins here forbidden?

A. They are five, mentioned in the answer: 1. Denying the true God. 2. Not worshipping him. 3. Not glorifying him. 4. Giving his worship to another. 5. Giving his glory to another.

Q Who are these that are guilty of the sin of denying the true God?

A. 1. Atheists, who deny the being of a God. 2 Deists and infidels, who deny the truth of the holy scriptures, and do not believe what God saith in them. 3. Those who deny the true Deity of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, or disown the doctrine of the Trinity; such as Arians, Socinians, Quakers, and others. 4. These who deny the providence of God in governing the world, and ascribe events to other things

Q. How many sorts of Athiests are there?

A. Three sorts: 1. Athiests in opinion. 2. Athiests in affection 3. Athiests in conversation.

Q. Who are those that are Athiests in opinion?

A. Those who profess to believe that there is not a God. Some few have done so, and have been put to death for it. This truth of the existence of God having the light of nature, and general consent of all nations to vouch for it, it is not easy to imagine how there can be a speculative Athiest, or one that hath got the impressions of God entirely blotted out, which are naturally engraven upon man's heart.

Q. Are there any such Athiests in hell?

A. Atheism is a sin that cannot have place there; no devil is guilty of it, James ii. 19

Q. Is not Atheism a dreadful sin?

A. Yes; for it tends to open the flood-gates for all impiety and wickedness, and to destroy all order and government in the world; for thus a man might cheat, steal, rob, murder, and do the vilest things, and yet not sin, nor have any thing to fear hereafter.

Q. Who are those that are Atheists in affection?

A. Those who, in their hearts, wish there were no God, as all wicked men secretly do? Psalm xiv. 1.

Q Why do wicked men wish there were no God?

A. That so they might be freed from those restraints which mar their sinful pleasures.

Q. Who are those that are Atheists in conversation?

A. Practical Atheists, or those who live as if there were no God, Tit. i. 16 " They profess they know God, but in works they deny him."

Q. Are there not many of these practical Atheists in the world? A. Yes.

Q. Who may be reckoned such?

A. All those, 1. Who neglect the worship of God. 2. Who live in hypocrisy. 3 Who indulge secret sins. 4. Who mock at the holy scriptures, or holy persons. 5. Who never think on death or judgment 6 Who set their hearts wholly upon the world, or upon sensual things.

Q. What is the second sin mentioned in the answer?

A. Not worshipping of God.

Q Who are those who are guilty of this sin of not worshipping God?

A. Those who do not think of God, do not esteem him, do not love him, do not believe him, do not honour him, do not fear him, do not humble themselves before him, do not attend God's ordinances, do not offer prayers or praises to God in the public assemblies, nor in their families or closets.

Q. What is the third sin forbidden in this command?

A Not glorifying of God.

Q. Who are those that are guilty of this sin?

A. 1. Those who neglect the knowledge of God, and live in ignorance of him. 2. Those who forget God, or hate the thoughts of him. 3. Those who do not admire and praise him, or are unthankful to him 4 Those who desire the creatures, or delight in objects of sense more than God. 5. Those who are profane and ungodly in their lives and conversations.

Q What is the fourth sin forbidden in this command?

A. Idolatry, or the giving that worship to another which is due to God alone.

Q. How many kinds of idolatry are there?

A. Two kinds, 1 Idolatry that is outward and invisible. 2 Idolatry that is more secret and invisible.

Q Who are guilty of the idolatry that is outward and invisible?

A 1. The Pagans, who worship their idol-gods, their demons, and deified heroes, the sun, the moon, the stars, the fire, several kinds of beasts, &c. 2 The Papists, who worship other gods besides the true God; for they deify several things both in heaven and earth, to which they pay religious worship and homage.

Q. What are those other gods in heaven which the Papists do worship?

A. They worship angels, the Virgin Mary, and saints departed.

Q. What are those other gods on earth which they worship?

A They worship the Pope, the bread in the sacrament, the sign of the cross, the images and relics of saints.

Q How doth it appear that the Papists give religious honour and worship to these things?

A. Both by their practice, and by their books: for they build churches, erect altars, and institute holidays in honour of them; they burn incense, make and pay vows to them; they bow their knees, and pray to them; they seek blessings from them, and make them their hope and trust. As, for instance, they adore the wood of the cross, saying, *O crux ave, spes unica*, &c. that is, O holy cross, our only hope and trust, increase to the godly their righteousness, and give unto sinners grace and remission of their sins.

Q. But why may we not worship saints and angels?

A. It is idolatry to worship creatures; for men to pray to them is to ascribe divine honours and perfections to them, as omniscience and omnipotence. God forbids this, as a giving of his glory to another; and tells us, that the saints

in heaven do not know our wants, for proof of which, see Mat. iv. 10. Acts x 25, 26. Rev. xix. 10. Isaiah xlii 8. Isaiah lxiii. 16. And if it be idolatry to worship saints in heaven, far more is it to worship the bones, teeth, or relics of saints on earth, as Papists do. To avoid this, God buried the body of Moses secretly, that none might worship his body.

Q. Is there not idolatry more secret and invisible, which others are guilty of, besides Pagans and Papists?

A. Yes; all carnal and unregenerate persons are guilty of it, by putting the creature in room of the Creator, loving it and depending on it more than God For whatever thing it be that hath most of our love, or of our trust, or of our fear and dread, or hath most of our thoughts, or of our time and service, that is really our god; seeing it is put in God's room, and hath the honour and glory which is only due to him.

Q. What are those idols which men do commonly set up in God's room?

A. 1. Self is the great idol which men generally adore, by seeking themselves in all they do: And this idol appears in many different shapes; as self-profit, self-wisdom, self-righteousness, self-ability, self-ease, self-credit, and applause. 2 The *world* is the great clay idol which worldly men adore; hence covetous men are called idolaters, and covetousness idolatry. 3 The *belly* is the god of drunkards and gluttons, Phil. iii 19 4 *Children* and *relations* are the idols of many. 5. *Great men* or *superiors* are put in the room of God, when we trust in the arm of flesh, or make them Lords of our faith and conscience. 6. The *devil* is called the God of this world, 2 Cor. iv. 4 So that we may hence see how sadly idolatry abounds, even among professed Protestants, who have renounced the Romish idolatry.

Q. In what respect is the *devil* called the God of this world?

A. Because he is put in the room of the true God by the most part of the world. Why? In the first place we read and hear of many of the Indians, who directly worship him, and he appears to them in a bodily shape: Besides, it is at his instigation that the infidel world run into all manner of wickedness. Again, how much is he adored, honoured, and served among professed Christians! By witches, who enter into compact with the devil, and give up themselves to him; by those who consult with witches and charmers, and those who use his spells and charms; by those, who, in their common discourse, pray to the devil, bidding him take them, or their neighbours; and by those who hearken to the devil's temptations more than God's counsels.

Q. What is the fifth sin forbidden in the first command?

A. The giving of the glory which is due to God to another.

Q Who are guilty of this sin?

A. Not only those who give divine worship to creatures, as above, but also those who ascribe events, not to God's providence, but to luck or chance, or to second causes only; and those who ascribe the praise of any good thing they receive, and their success in any business, to themselves and their own industry, to creatures, or to fortune; and likewise those who have men's persons in too great admiration, they are chargeable with the sin of giving God's glory to others, 1 Sam. vi 9. Deut. viii. 17. Dan iv 30. Heb i. 10 Acts xii 22, 23. Jude 16.

QUESTION XLVIII.

Q. *What are we specially taught by these words* (before me) *in the First Commandment?*

A. These words *(before me)* in the first commandment, teach us, that God, who seeth all things, taketh notice of, and is much displeased with the sin of having any other god.

Q. What is the argument in this command to dissuade or restrain us from the sin of idolatry?

A. The consideration of God's omniscience, that the sin is committed before him, or in his sight, who exceedingly hates and abhors it.

Q. How doth it appear that God doth see all things?

A In regard that he is present in all places, and infinite in knowledge, Psalm cxxxix. 7, 8, &c Jer xxiii. 24 Psalm cxlvii. 5

Q. What are these things which God doth see?

A. He seeth all past things, all present things, all future things, and all possible things: He sees all his creatures, all their thoughts, all their words, and all their actions

Q. Doth God take special notice of the sin of idolatry above others? A. Yes.

Q. How doth that appear?

A. By the many tokens of displeasure which God hath evidenced against it, both in threatening and punishing men for it, Deut. xxix. 24, 25, &c.

Q. Why is God so much displeased with the sin of idolatry?

A. Because God, who is jealous of his own glory, cannot but take it as a great indignity to see another put in his room, and set upon his throne, and that in his very sight and presence.

Q Is not the attribute of God's omniscience much affronted by the world?

A. Yes; namely, by their idolatry, hypocrisy, and secret wickedness.

Q. Ought not God's omniscience to be a powerful check to all sins? A. Yes.

QUESTION XLIX.

Q. *Which is the Second Commandment?*

A. The second commandment is, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me: and shewing mercy to thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments."

QUESTION L.

Q *What is required in the Second Commandment?*

A. The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his word.

Q. Is the worship required, and idolatry forbidden in the second commandment the same with that in the first commandment?

A. No; for the *first* command directs us as to the right object of worship, but the *second* command directs us as to the right way and means of worship: The *first* forbids the wor-

shipping of any false god; the *second* forbids the worshipping of the true God in a false way, or by any means but what he himself appoints.

Q. Hath God appointed all that religious worship, and all these means and ordinances, in and by which only he will be served and worshipped? A. Yes.

Q. Where do we find these?

A In his word.

Q. What are these ordinances and means of divine worship appointed us?

A. 1st, There is prayer in public, in private, and secret, Luke i 10. Jer. x. 25. Mat vi. 6 ——2dly, There is thanksgiving, and singing of Psalms, Eph. v 20. Isaiah lii. 8 James v. 13.——3dly, There is the reading, preaching, and hearing of the word, Acts v 21. 2 Tim iv. 2. Acts x. 33 ——4thly, The administration and partaking of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, Mat. xxviii 19. 1 Cor xi 23, 24, &c ——5thly, There is fasting,* Luke v. 35 ——6thly, Swearing by the name of the Lord, when lawfully called, Deut. vi. 13.——7thly, Vowing to the Lord, Psalm lxxvi 11.——8thly, Instructing of children and servants, Gen x. 18, &c.

Q. What doth God require of us concerning all these ordinances?

A. That we should receive them, observe them, and keep them pure and entire.

Q. What is it to receive and observe them?

A. It is to approve them, attend upon them, and continue stedfastly in the practice of them.

Q. What is it to keep these ordinances pure and entire?

A. It is to use our best endeavours to preserve them free from all corruption, or mixture of human inventions; and to keep them so as nothing be added to them, nor taken away from them.

QUESTION LI.

Q. *What is forbidden in the Second Commandment?*

A. The second commandment forbiddeth the worshipping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his word.

Q. What is the chief sin forbidden in this command?

A Idolatry, or the worshipping of the true God by images.

Q. What do you mean by an image?

A. The picture, shape, or likeness of any creature in heaven, on earth, or in the sea.

Q. When is a person guilty of worshipping of God by images?

A. 1st, When he frames or takes any material picture or similitude, and sets it before him in worship, as the Papists do, who paint God the Father under the likeness of an old man; and Jesus Christ in the likeness of a young man, or of a lamb; and the Holy Ghost by the figure of a dove; which is plainly to "change the glory of God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts;" which the apostle condemns, Rom. i. 23.—2dly, A person is guilty of it, when he hath any carnal imagination or represention of God in his mind while worshipping him, as if he was like to a man, or any creature.

Q. May not an image or picture, to look upon in time of prayer, be some help to us in devotion, as Papists say?

A. No; instead of a help, it is a great hinderance to it.

Q. How is it a hinderance?

A. In regard it promotes carnal and low thoughts of God, who is a glorious spirit, and infinitely exalted above all things visible or earthly. It is as great a dishonour and disparagement to the majesty of God, to represent him by the dead image of a creature, as it would be to represent a king by the picture of a frog.

Q. But, may we not have such images of God, or of the Persons of the Trinity by us, if we do not worship them?

A. No; for it is an abomination which God expressly forbids, Deut. iv. 15, 16. "Take ye good heed to yourselves, (for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake to you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire,) lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure," &c. And, further, it is impossible to frame an image of him that is infinite, spiritual, and invisible; and therefore he frequently asks the question, as in Isaiah xl. 18, 25. and xlvi 5. "To whom will ye liken God?" Surely no shape of any creature, no dead image, can be a fit representation of the living God.

Q. May we not have a picture of Jesus Christ, who is truly a man?

A. No; because, 1. His divine nature, which makes him to be God, cannot be pictured at all. 2 He left no picture of his body when he left the earth, nor any account of his features, as it were on purpose to discourage any to draw his picture. 3. His body, as now glorified, cannot be represented by any artist whatsoever; so that the pictures now made of him must be greatly debasing of his glorious person. 4 If any such picture be designed to excite devotion, it is a breach of this command, which forbids all worshipping of God by images.

Q. Why do Papists leave the second command out of their catechisms and public offices?

A. Because it so expressly condemns their images, crucifixes, and idolatrous practices.

Q. Will it free them from idolatry to say they only worship God or Christ before or by them, but not the images themselves?

A. No; for the command forbids even bowing or kneeling before them. And, if this shift could excuse the Papists, it had also excused the Israelites in worshipping the golden calf; for they had it to say that they intended to worship Jehovah before the calf, Exod. xxxii. 4, 5.

Q. Is there any other sin forbidden in the second command besides idolatry, or the worshipping of God by images?

A. Yes; namely, the sin of superstition or will worship.

Q. What do you mean by that?

A. Mens presuming to worship God by means of their own devising, adding human inventions to God's institutions, or contriving other ways to serve and worship God than what he hath appointed or warranted in his word.

Q. Who are guilty of this sin?

A. All those who add new sacraments to the two of Christ's institution, or those who add the sign of the cross to baptism, the posture of kneeling to the Lord's supper, the keeping of holy-days to the Lord's day, playing with organs to singing with the voice, reading of a book to prayer: Or they who erect altars, pictures, or crosses, in places of worship, and bow unto them, or bow to the east, and at the name of Jesus, or the like. All these are superstitious inventions in God's worship, and human additions to God's

institutions, without any warrant in his word, and therefore against the second command.

Q. Why may not wise, holy, and learned men, add some such things, for beautifying the worship of God?

A. 1st, Because an infinitely holy and wise God, who hath an unquestionable right to appoint the means and manner of his own worship, hath expressly forbidden men to add any thing to the directions he hath given concerning the same, Deut. xii. 30, 31, 32.——2dly, He sharply censures all such additions, by calling them will-worship, and vain worship, and saying, they had only a shew or pretence of wisdom in them, Col. ii. 23. Mat. xv. 9. Nay, he looks upon it as a presumptuous attempt to rival it with him, for men to add their own inventions to his institutions; and calls it a setting of their thresholds by his threshold, and their posts by his posts, Ezek. xliii. 8 and even saith it is a going a-whoring with their inventions, Psal. cvi 39.

Q. Why would God censure things which are so well designed for his glory, and beautifying his worship?

A 1st, Because he accounts it great pride and presumption in men to take upon them to mend the ordinances of God, as if they were wiser than he. 2dly, Instead of beautifying his worship thereby, they rather disfigure it; for God's worship is most beautiful in its own native simplicity and lustre: For to paint glass doth darken its light, to gild a diamond mars its sparkling rays. 3dly, It is only the presence and blessing of God that can make ordinances profitable to us; but God hath nowhere promised his blessing to mens inventions, but allenarly to his own institutions, Mat xxviii 20.

Q. Had not the Jews several significant ceremonies in their worship under the law?

A. Yes; but these were appointed by God's authority, as they were abolished again by it at Christ's coming, and a plain simple way of worship instituted under the gospel.—And it is nowise likely that God would remove the ceremonies of his own institution, merely to make way for mens inventing others in their room.

Q. May not the church appoint some rites or ceremonies, for sake of decency and order, by virt.e of that command, 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

A. The text doth not warrant the church to add new parts to the worship of God, as significant ceremonies would be, but only to keep and observe the ordinances as God hath delivered them to us, with decency and order; and take care that there be no indecency or disorder in the worship of God; namely, as to the circumstances of time and place, and the like, which the command of God, appointing the worship itself, doth virtually include, seeing without such circumstances it cannot be performed.

Q. Is there any other sin forbidden by the second commandment?

A Yes; such as the countenancing, approving, or promoting of any false religion or superstitious worship; the neglecting, contemning, hindering, or opposing of the true worship of God, or any of his ordinances; the reproaching or persecuting those who worship God according to his word.

QUESTION LII.

Q. *What are the reasons annexed to the Second Commandment?*

A. The reasons annexed to the Second Commandment are God's sovereignty over us, his propriety in us, and the zeal he hath to his own worship.

Q. What mean you by a reason annexed to a command?

A. An argument joined to it, to enforce the keeping of it.

Q How many such reasons are annexed to this command?

A. Three: 1. God's sovereignty over us. 2. God's propriety in us. 3 God's zeal for his own worship.

Q. What mean you by God's sovereignty over us?

A. His absolute power and authority over us, so that he may do with us as he pleaseth.

Q. In what words of the command is this reason contained?

A. In these, "I the Lord."

Q. What do these words import?

A. That he is the sovereign Lord over us, and has a right to make what laws he pleases about his own worship; and that we, as God's subjects, are bound to observe the laws, and to worship him no other way.

Q In what words is the second reason contained?

A. In these words, "Thy God," I the Lord thy God.

Q. What do these words import?

A. That God hath a propriety or special interest in us, we belong to him by creation, redemption, or profession; and therefore we ought to keep close to our God and his institutions, and beware of idolatry and superstition in worship, which tend to estrange the heart from God, Psalm cvi. 19, 21.

Q. In what words of the command is the third reason contained?

A. In these, "I am a jealous God"

Q. What do these words import?

A. That God hath a great jealousy, zeal, or tender concern, for his own worship, and is highly displeased with those who corrupt it, by bringing men's inventions into it, Exodus xxxiv. 14. Psalm cvi. 29.

Q. Wherein doth God shew his zeal and jealousy for his own worship?

A. In threatening to punish them as haters of God, who break this command, to the third and fourth generation: and in showing mercy to thousands of them that love him, and keep his law.

Q. Is it just with God to punish children for the sins of the parents?

A. Yes, if the children go on in their parents sins; but if they forsake them, God will not punish them for them, Ezek xviii. 14.

Q Doth not God esteem any persons as lovers of him, but such as keep his commandments?

A. No John xiv 21.

Q. Do not all these reasons oblige us to the greatest caution that we do not alter nor add to divine ordinances and institutions of worship? A. Yes.

Q Have those who suffer for non-conformity to such additions, sufficient warrant for their sufferings?

A. Yes; as it is evident from Deut. xii. 32. compared with Deut. iv. 2. "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you."

QUESTION LIII.

Q. *What is the Third Commandment?*

A. The Third Commandment is, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

QUESTION LIV.

Q. *What is required in the Third Commandment?*

A. The Third Commandment requireth the holy and reverend use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word, and works.

Q. In what manner must we use God's name?

A. In a holy and reverend manner; that is, with a humble and awful regard to God's infinite greatness and excellencies.

Q What is meant by the name of God here?

A Any thing that is commonly ascribed to God, and by which God makes himself known to us, as a man is known to us by his name.

Q. What are those things whereby God makes himself known to us?

A. They are six; to wit, God's names, his titles, his attributes, his ordinances, his word, and his works.

Q What are the names given to him which we must reverently use?

A They are such as Jehovah, Lord, God, Jah, I Am, the Father, the Son, Jesus Christ, the Holy Ghost, the Spirit.

Q. What are the titles of God, which we must use with reverence?

A. They are his usual designations taken from some of his peculiar excellencies; such as, the Lord of Hosts, King of kings, Lord of lords, Father of lights, Holy One of Israel, Creator of the ends of the earth, Preserver of men, and the like

Q. What are the attributes of God which we should use reverently?

A. The essential perfections, whereby his nature is described to us, and he is distinguished from all his creatures, such as Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Eternity, Immutability, Infinite Wisdom, Infinite Holiness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Mercy, &c.

Q. Why are these called God's attributes?

A. Because God doth claim them to himself, exclusive of all others.

Q. What are the ordinances of God, which we must use reverently?

A. The sacraments, prayer, praise, preaching, oaths, vows, lots, &c.

Q. What is meant by God's word in the answer?

A Not his essential word, but his written word, or the Bible.

Q. What is meant by God's works?

A. The works of Creation, of Providence, and of Redemption.

Q. When may it be said that the names, titles, and attributes of God are used by us in a holy and reverent manner?

A When we entertain awful, admiring, and loving thoughts of them in our hearts, and mention them with gravity, respect, and tenderness, with our lips.

Q. When do we make use of God's ordinances in a holy and reverent manner?

A. When we make conscience of attending upon them, seek to have a humble reverential frame of heart in all our approaches to God, and earnestly desire communion with God in every ordinance of his

Q. When do we use God's word in a holy and reverent way?

A. When we read it with seriousness, attend to the majesty of God as speaking therein to us, aud endeavour to yield present obedience to his holy will, when revealed to us.

Q When do we use God's works in a holy and reverent way?

A. When we contemplate God's glory in his works of creation, and have an awful regard to his dispensations of providence, submitting patiently to his corrections for sin, and praising him for all his mercies, and especially for Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

QUESTION LV.

Q. *What is forbidden in the Third Commandment?*

A The Third Commandment forbiddeth all profaning or abusing of any thing whereby God maketh himself known.

Q. When do we take God's name in vain?

A. When we use it irreverently, superstitiously, or profanely; or when we abuse any thing whereby he makes himself known to us; such as his names, titles, attributes, ordinances, &c.

Q. How is it that people are guilty of profaning or abusing of God's names, titles, or attributes?

A. Many ways; as, 1. By swearing falsely when called to it by a judge. 2. By cursing or swearing profanely in common discourse. 3. By blasphemy, or speaking reproachfully of God. 4. By using the name of God in charms. 5. By offering prayers or praises to God with formal or careless minds. 6. By using God's name irreverently in common discourse, crying, without any awe, "O Lord, O God, God help me, bless me," or the like. 7. By repeating the oaths of others without concern for him. 8. By rash appeals to God, &c.

Q. Is it lawful to swear by the name of God when called to it by authority?

A. Yes, if what we swear be right and true, and if we have an awful sense of God upon our hearts when we do it, Deut vi. 13. Heb. vi 16.

Q. Is it lawful for a man to swear by his soul, conscience, faith, or the like?

A. No; for these being creatures, to swear by them is idolatry, or a putting of them in God's room, by giving them the worship and attributes which belong to him.

Q. What is the evil or sin of profane swearing and cursing?

A. 1. It is against God's command, both here and in other texts, as Mat. v. 34. Rom. xii 14. 2. It is a rash way of appealing to the great Judge of heaven upon every trifling occasion, which God doth look on as a horrid baffling of his name. 3. It is a sad evidence of a graceless and profane heart: hence the Lord makes it a distinguishing character of the wicked and the righteous, Eccl. ix. 2. "He that sweareth, and he that feareth an oath."

Q. Doth God look upon profane swearers as his enemies?

A. Yes; as in Psalm cxxxix. 20. "Thine enemies take thy name in vain."

Q. What is the danger of profane or false swearing?

A. The Lord will deal with swearers as his enemies, by sending his curse into their houses, Zech. v. 3, 4. and pursuing them with his judgments both here and hereafter; for, with an awful voice from mount Sinai, hath he declared, "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

Q. When are people guilty of profaning or abusing God's ordinances?

A 1. When they attend them hypocritically, or with dead and wandering hearts 2 When they behave irreverently or indecently in the time of them, by talking, laughing, or sleeping.

Q. May lots be used in plays and games, as cards or dice?

A. No; for lots being an appeal to God for deciding things, which cannot otherwise be determined, ought to be gone about with reverence, Prov. xvi. 33. and xviii. 18 Acts i 26.

Q How do men profane or abuse God's word?

A. By profane jesting upon it, or by perverting it to support error or sinful practices.

Q. How do men profane or abuse God's works?

A. By despising God's workmanship, by using his creatures in excess to the pampering of their lusts, by impatience under affliction, and unthankfulness for mercies.

QUESTION LVI.

Q. *What is the reason annexed to the third commandment?*

A. The reason annexed to the third commandment is, That however the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men, yet the Lord our God will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment.

Q. What is the argument for enforcing this commandment?

A. It is contained in that dreadful threatening, "For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

Q. What is the import of that threatening?

A. It imports, that though men should suffer swearers and such profane persons to pass, God will not let them escape without punishment, if they do not repent

Q. How come the breakers of this commandment to pass without punishment from men?

A. Partly because human laws cannot extend to all profanations of God's name, and partly because many of those who should execute the laws against the profaners of God's name are either guilty of the same or like sins themselves, or they are little concerned for God's glory.

Q Though men let them pass, will God let them go unpunished?

A. No: for though he do not always punish them in this life with remarkable strokes, yet he will do it in his own time: for he says, "He will not hold them guiltless."

Q Will he keep an exact account of the sins of the breakers of this commandment?

A. Yes; for he is much concerned for the glory of his name

Q When is it that God doth punish the breakers of this command?

A. Sometimes he inflicts judgment upon them in this life, according to Deut. xxviii. 58. 59. Zech. v. 3, 4. and these plagues are sometimes outward, and sometimes inward. But however they may escape temporal judgments, there are eternal judgments abiding them, which they cannot escape, Rom. ii. 3, 4, 5, 6.

Q. Is it not great folly to venture to break God's law, because of his patience in forbearing to execute his judgments presently against sinners? A. Yes.

QUESTION LVII.

Q *Which is the Fourth Commandment?*

A. The fourth commandment is, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy: Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: In it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: Wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it.

QUESTION LVIII.

Q *What is required in the Fourth Commandment?*

A The fourth commandment requireth the keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his word, expressly one whole day in seven, to be a holy Sabbath to himself.

Q What do you mean by a Sabbath day?

A. A day of holy rest, wherein men are to cease from worldly business, to attend upon the worship of God.

Q How often is this day for the Sabbath to recur?

A. It is to be every seventh day, or still one day after six days labour.

Q. Is this fourth commandment ceremonial and temporary, binding only on the Jews before Christ's coming?

A. No; it is a command moral and perpetual, binding upon all men, Jews and Gentiles, to the end of the world.

Q. How do you prove the morality and perpetuity of this command?

A 1. From its being first appointed in paradise. 2 From its being written by the finger of God upon stone, and put into the ark with the other nine commands, which was not done with any ceremonial precept. 3. The reasons and arguments made use of to enforce this command are moral and perpetual. 4. The Gentiles and strangers, who were not under the ceremonial law, were bound to keep the Sabbath as well as the Jews, Isaiah lvi 4, 6 5 Both the Old Testament Prophets, and Jesus Christ, do speak of the keeping of the Sabbath as a duty in force under New Testament times, when the ceremonial law was to be abolished Isaiah lvi. 1, 2. Mat xxiv 20 6. The consciences of men do still challenge them most severely for breaking of this command, and God doth still pursue the breakers of it with his judgments.

Q Whether is the fourth command authorised by the light of nature and sound reason, as the other nine are, or only by express revelation and a positive law?

A It is authorised by both: For the light of nature doth require that a due part of our time be alloted for the public worship of God, which should frequently recur; and that this time should be the same over all, that so one man's business may not interfere with another man's devotions.—Now, the Author of nature, who best knows what portion of time is most suitable to the exigencies both of our bodies and souls, our present and future state, hath, by express revelation, wisely determined it to be the seventh part of our time.

Q. Doth not God shew special regard to this command, by putting several marks of honour and respect upon it above the rest?

A. Yes: For, 1. As it is placed in the first table, so it is larger, and enforced with more arguments than any of the rest. 2. It is delivered both positively and negatively,

(which no other of the ten is:) for it is not only said, "Keep holy the Sabbath," but also, "In it thou shalt do no manner of work" 3 It hath a solemn *memento* prefixed to it, which the rest have not, "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath;" q. d. See that ye remember this command; forget what ye will, forget not this. 4. It is placed in the midst of the decalogue, as the heart in the body, for enlivening the several parts of it; it is set in the close of the first table, and immediately before the second, to shew that the keeping of both tables doth greatly depend upon the observing of this command.

Q For what special ends hath God appointed a Sabbath?

A. 1. For his own glory, and for the conversion of sinners to himself, by the preaching of the word on that day. 2. For promoting spiritually and heavenly-mindedness in us. He well knew that carnal things would be apt to dull our affections, and make us forget God and heaven; and therefore he thought fit to recal us every week from sensual objects to mind divine things, by enjoining us to keep the Sabbath, which is a lively emblem of heaven, where the saints continually adore, praise, and enjoy communion with God, without any mixture of worldly business.

Q How much of the day appointed for the Sabbath is to be kept holy to the Lord?

A One whole day in seven; a whole natural day, consisting of twenty-four hours, commencing from midnight to midnight, ought to be dedicated unto the Lord, seeing he claims a seventh part of our time It is true, time for eating and sleeping must be allowed upon the Sabbath, as well as on other days, being the works of necessity, seeing without these we cannot perform the duties of the Sabbath.

Q. Is it not sinful for men to encroach upon this day for their own work?

A. Yes; as it was sinful in Ananias and Sapphira to halve their dedicated goods, and give but a part to the Lord; so it is in us to halve it with God in respect of his holy day.

Q. Should not every day be a Sabbath to a Christian?

A. Though Christians should serve God every day, yet they cannot make every day a Sabbath for the public worship of God; because God calls us to other duties relating to secular affairs, which are inconsistent with the work of the Sabbath And though we are bound to be holy and religious at all times, yet we are enjoined to express our religion, in outward acts of worship, more at some times than others.

Q. To whom is the fourth command, and the charge of keeping the Sabbath holy, more especially directed?

A. To masters of families, and other superiors, as the command itself bears, under which surely magistrates are included; for these words, "within thy gates," may be understood of the magistrates dominions, and particularly of city-gates, and those who dwell within them, Neh xiii. 15, 19. Jer. xvii. 24, 25, &c.

Q. Why is this command more especially directed to them?

A. Because God would have them not only to keep it themselves, but to oversee the keeping of it by all that are under their authority, as Nehemiah did, Neh. xiii 15, 16.

Q. Why doth the Lord prefix the word *remember*, to this command?

A 1. To testify his special regard unto it, as being a fence to the other commands, and a help to the keeping of them all. 2. Because he foresaw that satan and his instruments would seek to extinguish the memory of the Sabbath, if they could; and men of themselves would be ready to forget the duties of it, seeing nature's light doth not enforce them so strongly as some others. 2. Because he would have us much to think upon his works of creation and redemption, the compend of all religion, which this command brings to our view. 4. Because he would have us to remember the Sabbath before it come, so as to prepare ourselves for the keeping of it when it doth come.

Q. What reason is there for preparing for the Sabbath before hand?

A. 1. Because we are naturally carnal and unfit for spiritual work; and, being involved in worldly business through the week, some previous care is needful to abstract our thoughts from earthly things, in order to fit us for Sabbath employments and enjoyments. 2. Because God calls us to make near and solemn approaches to him, who is infinitely holy, in the ordinances of the Sabbath; and this requires preparation, according to the Psalmist's example, Psal. xxvi. 6. "I will wash mine hands in innocency: So will I compass thine altar, O Lord" 3. It was the practice of God's ancient people to prepare for the Sabbath upon the foregoing day, which therefore was called the day of preparation, Luke xxiii. 54.

Q. What ought we to do by way of preparation for the Sabbath before it come?

A. 1. Let us remember the great end and design of the Sabbath, so as to instruct those committed to our charge about it; and to break off from worldly business, so as we may have time to think of the work of the approaching day; and to get the guilt of the bygone week removed, that we may have a reconciled God to meet with upon his own day. 2. Let us order all our worldly affairs before-hand, with such prudence and foresight, that the business of the Sabbath may not be interrupted thereby.

Q Hath God appointed any other set times to be kept holy to the Lord besides the Sabbath?

A. None but the Jewish festivals or ceremonial Sabbaths, which being only shadows of things to come, they expired with Christ's coming; but the command for the weekly Sabbath being moral, it continues still in force, Col. ii. 16, 17. Gal. iv 9, 10, 11. 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.

Q. Are we bound to keep the holy-days observed by others, such as days for Christ's birth, passion, and ascension: days dedicated to angels, as Michaelmas; to the Virgin Mary, as Candlemas; besides many others dedicated to the Apostles and other saints?

A Though it be pretended that these days serve to promote piety and devotion, yet we have no warrant from God to observe any of them; nay, it appears to be unlawful to do it: For, 1. God doth quarrel men for using any device of their own for promoting his service or worship, without having his command or warrant for it, as in Deut. xii. 32. Isa. i. 12. Jer. vii. 30. 2. The apostle Paul doth expressly condemn the Galatians for observing such holy-days, Gal. iv. 10, 11. 3. It is a disparaging of the Lord's day which God hath appointed, and an usurping of his legislative power, for men to set days of their appointing on a level with his day, as the institutors do, by hindering people to labour thereupon. 4. It is an idolatrous practice to consecrate days to the honour of saints and angels, for commemorating their acts, and publishing their praise; such honour and worship being due to God alone.

Q. Were not these days appointed by the ancient church, and authorised by great and holy men?

A. It was will-worship in them, seeing they had no power

to institute holy-days: For, 1. Under the law, when ceremonies and festivals were in use, the church appointed none of them, but God himself. 2. We read nothing of the apostles appointing or observing such holy days; not a word of their consecrating a day for Christ's birth, his passion, or ascension; nor a day to Stephen the proto-martyr, nor to James, whom Herod killed with the sword. We read of the apostles observing the Lord's day and keeping it holy, but not of any other. 3. Those other days are left unrecorded and uncertain, and so are concealed, like the body of Moses, that men might not be tempted to abuse them to superstition. 4. Those days have not the divine blessing upon them; for they are the occasions of much looseness and immorality. 5 Though the observing of these days had been indifferent or lawful at first, yet the defiling of them with superstition and intemperance should make all forbear them

Q. May not the church appoint days for fasting and thanksgiving?

A. Yes; if there be just occasion for them; and the church is warranted so to do, both by scripture-precepts and examples, Joel i. 14. Joel ii. 15 Ezra viii. 21. Neh. xii. 27, &c. Dan ix. 3. And that such days are to be continued in gospel-times, is plain from Zech xii. 11, 12, &c. Mat. ix. 15. Acts xiii. 2, 3. Acts xiv. 23. 1 Cor. vii 5. 2 Cor. xi. 27. Moreover, it is God who, by his providence, doth call us to fasting or thanksgiving; the church only doth name the days convenient for these purposes.

QUESTION LIX.

Q. *Which day of the seven hath God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath?*

A. From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the seventh day of the week to be the weekly Sabbath, and the first day of the week ever since to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian Sabbath.

Q Was the Sabbath ever changed from one day of the week to another?

A Yes, it was changed from the *last* day of the week to the *first*.

Q. How long was the seventh or last day of the week observed for the Sabbath?

A. From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, which was about four thousand years

Q. If the fourth command be moral, how could the day appointed in it for the Sabbath be ever altered?

A. The precise day of the week is an alterable circumstance, and separable from the essence of the fourth command; and the changing of it makes no more against the morality of the fourth command, than the change of the means of worship under the gospel makes against the morality of the second.

Q. How doth it appear that the precise day of the week is separable from the substance of the command?

A. Because neither the first part of the command, which is the mandatory, nor the last part of it, which is the benedictory, do mention the seventh day of the week: For the one saith. "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy," and the other, "Wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." He saith not, "Remember the seventh day, nor that he blessed the seventh day," but only the Sabbath; to teach us, that the seventh day in order from the creation is not of the essence of the command, but only a seventh day in number: and that the seventh, in order, might be altered, without infringing the morality of the command.

Q. Wherefore did God at first appoint the seventh in order from the creation for the Sabbath?

A. Because it was the day of God's rest from his works of creation; and therefore God would have men to rest from their works on this day, and to remember his works.

Q When did God institute the Sabbath at first?

A. Immediately after the creation of the world, when Adam was in paradise, Gen ii. 3

Q. What need had Adam of a Sabbath, while in that sinless place and state?

A. Because Adam, though sinless, was but a finite creature, and his ordinary employment of dressing the garden would be some interruption to the solemn worship of God; wherefore God thought fit to appoint him a day in seven, wherein he might have uninterrupted freedom for it

Q. By what authority was the day for the Sabbath changed?

A By the same authority which instituted the Sabbath at first, even Christ's, who is true God and Lord of the Sabbath: For whether Christ did it immediately by himself, or directed his apostles to do it, it is all one. But it is evident that the apostles both observed the first day of the week, and gave directions about it, which they would not have done without instructions from their Lord.

Q. What was the necessity of a new day for the Sabbath?

A. 1. To manifest the greatness and glory of Christ, and his headship over the church 2. He would bury the seventh day Sabbath, to shew that therewith he was to abrogate and bury the Levitical worship and ceremonies which were practised on that day

Q. Why was the change made to the first day of the week?

A. Because on this day the Lord did rest from his work of Redemption, which was greater than that of Creation. When God gave the ten commands, creation was his greatest work; but now he having wrought a greater, it was fit the one should cede to the other The amazing work of redemption, wherein God had so wonderfully displayed his glorious perfections, being now finished, it was necessary that the day of God's resting from it, should be kept in everlasting remembrance Of all days the first day of the week was the most honourable to our Redeemer, and the most joyful to the redeemed: For this day Christ was born from the dead, and declared to be the Son of God with power: This day our glorious Surety was discharged of all our debt, was liberate from prison, and triumphed over all his and our enemies

Q. Have we an express command for keeping the Sabbath on this day?

A. No; though yet we have good warrant from scripture for doing it. The fourth command expressly obligeth us to observe one day of seven as a Sabbath, and the example of Christ and his apostles, in keeping the first day of the week, being universally notour to the whole church, was sufficient to enter them upon the uniform observation of it: And accordingly it hath been the uninterrupted practice of all the churches of Christ through the world, since the apostles days, to keep the first day of the week as the Christian Sabbath.

Q. What grounds have we from scripture for keeping the first day of the week?

A. 1. We are told this was Christ's resurrection day. 2. We have Christ's own example in meeting frequently with his disciples on this day for religious work; on this day he met with his two disciples going to Emmaus, and opened the scriptures to them; on this day he came to the eleven, shewed them his hands and feet, and opened their understandings; on this day he came and blessed them, and gave them the Holy Ghost; on this day he met with them, and graciously convinced Thomas; as we may see in Luke xxiv. 15, 27, 36, 40, 45 John xx. 19, 22, 26, 27. 3. Upon this day, being Pentecost, God sent down that extraordinary effusion of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles and brethren being met together, Acts ii. 1. &c. 4 Upon this day the disciples usually met for divine worship, for preaching and hearing the word, and celebrating the Lord's supper, Acts xx. 7. 5 Upon this first day of the week the apostles ordered their collections to be made for the poor, because of their public assemblies on it, 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2 6 As Christ hath put his name upon the sacrament of the supper, calling it the Lord's supper, because it derives its institution from him; so upon the same account he hath put his name upon the first day of the week, calling it the Lord's day, Rev. i 10.

Q Doth the fourth command transfer all the honour and dignity of the seventh day upon the first day of the week?

A. Yes; because God on this day rested from a far greater work than that of creation, (mentioned only in the fourth ...mmand, because then it was the greatest) and which now by all men ought to be remembered with more thankfulness and praise than it.

QUESTION LX.

Q. *How is the Sabbath to be sanctified?*

A The Sabbath is to be sanctified, by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days, and spending the whole time in the public and private exercises of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up about the works of necessity and mercy.

Q In what sense is God said to sanctify the Sabbath or hallow it?

A. By consecrating or setting it apart to holy uses and employments.

Q. In what sense is man said to sanctify the Sabbath?

A. By keeping it holy to God, or applying it to those holy ends and exercises for which God hath set it apart.

Q What is the holy rest which is required upon the Sabbath?

A. It is a total cessation from worldly enjoyments and recreations.

Q. Why must we abstain from these upon the Sabbath?

A Because God hath forbidden them, and because they would prove a hindrance to his worship and service upon it.

Q. How long must we abstain from our enjoyments and recreations?

A. Through the whole Sabbath day.

Q May we not use some recreations after public-worship is over, such as walking in the fields, or the like?

A. No; 1. Because the whole day is the Lord's, and ought to be kept holy to him; and it is sacrilege to alienate any part of what is the Lord's to our own use or pleasure. 2. We are expressly prohibited to find our own pleasure upon God's holy day, Isa. lviii. 13.

Q. Why are worldly recreations or diversions forbidden on this day?

A. Because they hinder the spiritual work of the Sabbath, and indispose the mind more for spiritual exercises than mens ordinary employments would do.

Q. Is there no kind of work or business of ours lawful on the Sabbath-day?

A No; except it be the works of necessity and mercy.

Q. What are those works of necessity which are lawful on the Sabbath?

A They are such actions as could not be prevented by our previous care, nor safely delayed till afterwards; as the defending ourselves against enemies, or fleeing from them; quenching fire, putting on clothes, and the like

Q. What are the works of mercy lawful on the Sabbath?

A. Actions for preserving life; such as the feeding of our bodies, and of our beasts, relieving them when in distress, attending and visiting the sick, collecting for the poor, and the like.

Q How ought we to manage in doing works of necessity this day, so as not to offend?

A. We must have no active hand in bringing them on, nor any secret complacency in their falling out; we must study to keep our hearts in a spiritual frame while doing them, and dispatch them as soon as possible, that we may return to the main work of the Sabbath.

Q What is the frame of spirit proper for us on the Lord's day?

A It is a holy spiritual frame of heart, such as John speaks of, Rev. 1. 10. "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day."

Q. What is imported in that expression, "I was in the spirit?"

A. It imports, to have our thoughts abstracted from earthly things, and to lay our souls open to the influences of God's Spirit, and to depend upon his assistance in all the duties of the day. It is to have the graces of the Spirit in exercise, and to have spiritual ends in all our Sabbath exercises, not to be seen of men, but to glorify God, and enjoy communion with him.

Q What are the holy duties which are the proper work of the Sabbath?

A The public, private, and secret exercises of God's worship.

Q What are the public exercises requisite?

A. The joining in prayers and praises with the assemblies of God's people, the hearing of the word read and preached, and partaking of the sacraments.

Q What are the private exercises required on this day?

A It is necessary for families to join together this day in the worship of God, by reading his word, singing his praise, and calling upon his name; and to spend some time in catechising of children or servants, repeating the sermons, or christian conference.

Q Are all masters of families bound to worship God with their families? A. Yes.

Q. How do you prove that?

A 1st, From the fourth command, that enjoins every head of a family, with all that are within his gates, be they his children, his servants, or strangers, to keep holy the Sabbath day, which must be by worshipping of God, as well as resting from labour; otherwise he would keep it no better than the beasts; and this worship is not to be restricted to what is public only: for the command is still

binding upon masters of families, tho' no public worship could be had; they must sanctify the Sabbath in their dwellings, Lev. xxiii. 3 2dly, Masters of families are bound to rule their femilies as ministers do the Church, which partly is by going before them in the worship of God, 1 Tim. iii. 4. 5. 3dly, We are enjoined to pray every where, and with all manner of prayer, and consequently with family prayer, 1 Tim. ii 8. Eph. vi. 18. 4thly, Upon the Lord's returning to his people, he promises to pour out a sprit of grace and supplication upon families, so as every family shall mourn apart, Zech. xii. 10, 12, 13. 5thly, Wrath hangs over the families who call not upon God, Jer. x. 25 Lastly, Family worship is powerfully recommended by the examples of Christ and the saints, as Abraham, Joshua, David, Daniel, and Cornelius, Mat. xxvi. 30. Luke ix 18. Gen. xii. 8. and xiii. 4. and xxi. 23. Joshua iv. 15. 2 Sam. vi. 20. Psal. ci. 2. Dan. vi. 10. Acts x. 2.

Q. What are the secret duties requisite on the Lord's day?

A. Secret prayer, reading the Scriptures, and other pious books, meditations upon divine subjects, and self-examination.

Q. What should we pray for upon the morning of the Lord's day?

A For suitable spiritual frames for the work of the day; for the Lord's gracious presence to be with ministers and hearers; and particularly that he may give us the assistance of his Holy Spirit in all the duties of the day; that he may give us attention to hearken, understanding to conceive, wisdom to apply, judgment to discern, faith to believe, memory to retain, and grace to practise what we are to hear, that so the word may prove to us the savour of life unto life, and not the savour of death unto death.

Q. What should we pray for in the Sabbath evening?

A. For pardon of all our short comings in our Sabbath performances, for the sake of Christ's atoning blood: At which times we should confess and bewail our earthliness, formality, wanderings, wearyings, and bye-ends in duty; our dark understandings, hard hearts, cold affections, and treacherous memories: and also we should bless God for the Sabbath, and the joyful sound that we hear therein; and pray that our Sabbath-day's frame may last in some measure through the week, that we may walk with God, and live still in the view of the everlasting Sabbath above.

Q. Is the happiness of heaven like the keeping of a Sabbath?

A. Yes, it is called so, Heb. iv. 9. The word *rest* is in the original a sabbatism, or the keeping of a Sabbath; and so it is in these respects, 1. As the Sabbath is a rest from the toil of the week, so heaven is a rest from the toil which the saints had here with an ill heart and an ill world. 2. As the Sabbath is a day of thankful remembrance of Christ's finishing the work of our redemption, so in heaven they will be always commemorating Christ's mighty acts, and offering eternal thanksgiving and praise for redeeming love. 3. As the Sabbath is a day of holy convocation, so in heaven there is a glorious gathering of all the saints in one body. 4. As the Sabbath is a day of communion with God in ordinances, so in heaven there is eternal communion with God in an immediate way.

Q. Wherein will the Sabbath above excel the Sabbath below?

A 1. The saints hearts will never be out of frame for keeping the heavenly Sabbath, as they are often here. 2. There will be no mixture of mourning with their songs of praise, as here. 3. Their Sabbath-work will never be interrupted through the necessities of the body, by sleeping, clothing, eating, as here. 4 The Sabbath above hath no night to succeed it, nor week-day to come after it; yet none there shall ever say, "What a weariness is it!" as many do here.

QUESTION LXI.

Q. *What is forbidden in the Fourth Commandment?*

A. The fourth commandment forbiddeth the omission or careless performance of the duties required, and the profaning the day by idleness, or doing that which is in itself sinful, or by unnecessary thoughts, words, or works, about our worldly employments and recreations.

Q. What are the evils forbidden in this command?

A. They are three, namely, the omission of the duties required by it, the careless performing of these duties, and all profaning of this holy day, which may be done several ways, as in the answer.

Q. What mean you by the omission of the duties required?

A The neglect of the duties enjoined upon this day, either by forsaking the public assemblies of God's people, or by neglecting the worship of God in our families, or in secret.

Q. Are sins of omission great sins?

A. Yes; for by them God's authority is slighted, and conscience wounded: And hence some eminently pious have been made to cry out on a death bed, "Lord, forgive me my sins of omission."

Q. What is the evil of neglecting to attend upon public ordinances upon the Sabbath?

A. 1. It is a denying God that public homage and service which he hath a just title to from all men, Isa. lxvi. 23. "From one Sabbath to another shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord." 2. It is a despising the ordinary means which God hath appointed for converting of souls, weakening of corruptions, and strengthening of grace. 3 The damned will bewail the neglecting of such opportunities to all eternity.

Q. Is it a sufficient excuse for such neglect, for persons to say, they were taking physic or letting blood on this day, or they wanted such apparel, or the day was cold, or stormy, or the like?

A. The excuses of persons for neglecting God's ordinances, which would not detain them from a gainful worldly market, will not be sustained at God's bar.

Q. What mean you by the careless performances of the duties of the Sabbath, here forbidden?

A. When people attend ordinances without any care or delight, or in a formal, dead, wandering, wearying, or drowsy manner.

Q. Is not the Sabbath otherwise profaned than by sins of omission, or the careless performance of duty?

A. Yes, by manifold sins of commission, sins both of the heart and of the life.

Q. What are the sins of the heart, whereby the Sabbath is profaned?

A. They are many; such as Atheism, or unbelief of God's truths preached to us on this day, ignorance of these truths, aversion to the duties of the Sabbath, hypocrisy and formality in these duties, wearying of them, drowsiness or sleeping in time of them, thinking upon worldly things, pre-

judice at Christ's truths, and those who publish them, undervaluing of gospel news, and slighting the offers of precious Christ made to us

Q. What are the sins of the life or outward man, by which the Sabbath is profaned?

A. There are many of them; such as, 1. Speaking our own words upon this day, or talking of worldly affairs. 2. Doing our own works, to wit, pieces of servile work, which might either have been done the day before, or delayed until the day after. 3. Finding our own pleasures, by using worldly diversions or recreations upon the Lord's day; all which are expressly forbidden, Isa. lviii. 13. (See before, page 373.) 4. Doing things on this day which are in themselves sinful, whereby sin is greatly aggravated; which persons are guilty of, when, instead of attending upon God's worship upon the Sabbath, they spend this holy day in drinking, swearing, unclean practices, jesting upon sacred things, or reproaching the serious worshippers of God.

QUESTION LXII.

Q. *What are the reasons annexed to the Fourth Commandment?*

A. The reasons annexed to the Fourth Commandment are, God's allowing us six days of the week for our own employments, his challenging a special propriety in the seventh, his own example, and his blessing the Sabbath day.

Q What is the first reason for enforcing this command?

A. The first is taken from the great goodness and condescension of God, in allowing us six days of seven for our own affairs, and reserving but one of them for himself; when he might have taken six, and left us but one.

Q In what words of the command is this reason contained?

A. In these words, "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work."

Q What is the second reason for enforcing this command?

A It is taken from God's right and title to the seventh day of our time; he challengeth a special propriety in it.

Q. In what words of the command do we find this reason?

A. In these words, "But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God"

Q. But are not all the days of the week the Lord's?

A. Yes; but he hath a peculiar interest in the seventh above the rest, as having sanctified and set it apart from common use, for his own worship and service

Q Would it not be a high degree of sacrilege to rob God of his own day, or any part of it, seeing he claims it as his own? A Yes.

Q What is the third reason for enforcing this command?

A. God's example, in resting from his works of creation upon the seventh day, which should prevail with us to imitate him, by keeping every seventh day as a holy rest after six days labour

Q In what words of the command is this reason contained?

A. In these: "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day."

Q How can it be said that God rested then from creating, seeing he still creates mens souls, and daily produceth multitudes of creatures?

A. The meaning is, that God rested from creating any new species or kinds of creatures after the first six days, but not new individuals

Q What is the fourth reason for keeping this command?

A God's blessing the Sabbath day, in these words:—"Wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it"

Q What is the import of these words?

A That God hath not only sanctified this day for his service, but he hath ordained the Sabbath to be a means and time for conveying blessings to those that keep it; and we may hope for a blessing from God, if we duly wait on him this day in his ordinances.

QUESTION LXIII.

Q. *What is the Fifth Commandment?*

A. The Fifth Commandment is, "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee"

QUESTION LXIV.

Q *What is required in the Fifth Commandment?*

A. The Fifth Commandment requireth the preserving the honour and performing the duties belonging to every one in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals.

Q Who are meant by *father* and *mother*, in the fifth command?

A. Not only our natural parents, but all our superiors: for these also get the title of *fathers* and *mothers* in scripture: kings and queens are our fathers and mothers in a political sense, Isa xlix. 23 Aged persons are so called, 1 Tim. v. 1, 2. Ministers are spiritual fathers, 1 Cor. iv. 15. Heads of families are œconomical fathers, 2 Kings v. 13. And those who are eminent in gifts, grace, or station in the world, are stiled fathers, Gen iv 20, 21, 22. 2 Kings ii. 12. Gen. xlv 8. Acts vii. 2.

Q. Why are superiors stiled father and mother?

A To teach them, like natural parents, to treat their inferiors with love and tenderness, as if they were their children, and not to slight or despise them.

Q What is meant by the honour we are required to give our superiors by this command?

A. It comprehends all that esteem, respect, submission, obedience, and duty, which we owe unto them by the law of God

Q. What is the general scope of the fifth command?

A. It is to enjoin us the performance of these duties which we owe to our neighbours in their several stations and relations, whether they be our superiors, inferiors, or equals.

Q. Why is this command called, "the first commandment with promise?" Eph vi 2

A. Because it is the first command of the second table, and is the foundation of obedience to all the other commands of it; and it hath a promise annexed to it, to shew its dignity above them.

Q Who are meant by superiors in the answer?

A. Not only our natural parents, but also magistrates, ministers, masters, husbands, the aged, and those who excel us in gifts or grace.

Q. Who are meant by inferiors?

A. Those who are in lower stations, as subjects, children, and servants, and those who are weak in gifts and grace.

Q. Who are meant by equals?

A. Those who are in like stations and conditions in the world.

Q. Why is the *mother* mentioned in the command as well as the *father*?

A. That children might not disregard her upon the account of her weakness or subjection to her husband. Nay, the Lord mentions the mother before the father, Lev. xix. 3. "Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father:"— Why? To meet with the humour of those who would diminish the respect and duty they owe to their mother.

Q. What duties are required of children to their parents?

A. To esteem and love them; to honour, reverence, and to obey them; to hearken to their counsels and instructions, and to submit to their reproofs and corrections; to marry with their consent; to cover their infirmities; and to supply them when in straits, Mal. ii. 6. 1 Kings xix. 29. 1 Kings ii. 19. Eph. vi. 1. Heb. xii. 9. Prov. xxiii. 22. Judg. xiv 2. Gen. ix. 23. and xlvii. 12.

Q. What shall children do when parents advise any thing contrary to God's word?

A. Children are only to obey parents in the Lord, and they must love and obey God before all men; for, "he that loveth father or mother (saith our Lord) more than me, is not worthy of me," Mat x. 37.

Q. What duties are required of parents to their children?

A. To love them tenderly; to educate them in the knowledge and fear of God; to reprove, chasten, and keep them in subjection; to pity and pray for them; to instruct them in the ways of the Lord, and be good examples to them; to encourage them therein with endearing language; to provide and lay up for them, and put them in suitable callings, and to be concerned for a better portion to them than things of the world, Tit. ii. 4. Prov. xxii. 6. 1 Tim. iii. 4. Prov. xxix. 15, 17. Eph. vi. 4. Psalm ciii. 13. Gen. xvii. 18. 2 Sam. xii. 16. Exod xii. 26, 27. Deut. iv. 9, 16 Psalm ci. 2, 3. Prov. xxxi. 2, 3. 1 Tim. v. 8. 2 Cor. xii. 14. Gen xxv. 5, 6 2 Chron. xxi 3. Luke xv. 12. Gen. iv. 1, 2. Gen xlviii 1. Mat. xix. 13, 14.

Q. May parents reprove their children when they are in passion?

A. Reproofs at that time seldom do good; it were better for them to forbear until their passion be over, that they may reprove in the spirit of meekness, Gen iii. 8. Gal. vi 1.

Q May we not lawfully be angry with children for their faults?

A. The best way to be angry, and not sin, is to be angry at sin; wherefore, when children offend, we should not be angry so much with them as with their sin.

Q. What duties are required of subjects to their magistrates?

A. To pray for them, to honour them, and be subject to them, to obey their just laws, to pay them tribute, to protect and defend them, to bear injuries from them patiently, and to be faithful to them, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2. 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14, 17. Rom. xiii. 1, 6, 7. 1 Sam xxvi 9, 10, 15.

Q. What are the duties of magistrates to their subjects?

A. To make good laws, and appoint faithful officers to execute them; to be careful of the peace and safety of the subjects; to be encouragers of virtue, and punishers of vice; to govern with prudence, justice, and clemency; to relieve the oppressed; to provide means of grace for all the souls in their dominions; and to be nursing fathers to the church, 2 Chron. xix. 5, 6, 7. and xvii. 8, 9, 12. 1 Pet. ii 14. 2 Chron. i. 10. and ii. 1 Isaiah xlix. 23 2 Kings xii. 7. and xviii. 4. and xxiii. 21. Neh. xiii. 10, 11.

Q. What duties are required of people to their ministers?

A. To esteem and love them dearly for their office and works sake; to pray for them, and attend upon the ordinances dispensed by them; to submit to their reproofs and censures; to hearken, to apply and conform to their doctrine; to shut their ears against malicious reports raised against them, and communicate to them in temporal good things, 1 Thes. v. 5, 12, 13, 25. Rom. xv. 30. Luke x. 16. Heb. xiii. 17, 18. James i. 21. 1 Tim. v. 19. Gal. vi. 6. 1 Cor. ix 14.

Q. What are the duties of ministers to their people?

A. To preach the word faithfully, and dispense all ordinances to them; to have tender love and affection to their souls; to pray fervently for them; to reside amongst them, and watch carefully over them; to be partners of godly living unto them; and to be willing to make the greatest condescensions for the edification and good of souls, 2 Tim. iv. 2, 3, 5. 1 Thess ii 7, 8, 9, 10. Eph. i. 15, 16 1 Pet. v. 2, 3. Tit. ii. 7. 1 Cor 19, 21, 22. 2 Cor xii. 19.

Q. What duties are required of servants to their masters?

A. To love, honour, and obey them; to be faithful in all things intrusted to them; to be diligent in their work, and study to please them in all things; to bear their rebukes patiently, not answering again, Mat. vi. 24 1 Tim vi. 1. Col. iii. 22. Tit. ii 9, 10 1 Pet ii. 18, 19. Gen. xxiv. 12.

Q. What are the duties of masters to their servants?

A. To rule over them with gentleness, and not with rigour; to give them sufficient food, and pay them their wages justly; to be careful of them under sickness; to reprove sin in them, instruct them, and command them to keep the ways of the Lord, and particularly his Sabbaths, Eph. vi. 9. Lev xxv 43. Prov. xxvii. 27. Deut. xxiv 14, 15, Mat. viii. 6. Prov. xxix. 19 Gen. xviii. 19. Exod xx. 10.

Q What are the duties of wives to their husbands?

A To love them and be faithful to them in all things; to give them due respect and reverence, and to be obedient to them; to study to please them, and to be helps to them in family affairs; to warn them of any evils or dangers they may be exposed to; to study, by a meek, quiet, chaste, and loving conversation, to adorn religion, and win over their husbands to the love of it, Tit. ii. 4. Prov. xxxi. 12. 1 Tim. iii 11. Heb. xiii. 4 Eph. v. 33. 1 Pet. iii. 1. to 7, 1 Cor. vii 21. Prov. xxxi. 27. Gen. ii 18. Mat. xxvii. 19

Q What are the duties of husbands to their wives?

A. To love them, and live chastely with them; to nourish and cherish them; to cover their infirmities, and protect them from injuries; to study to please them; to counsel and advise them, pray with them and for them, and praise them when they do well, Eph. v. 28, 29. Prov. v 18, 19, 20. 1 Pet. iv. 8. 1 Sam xxx. 18. 1 Cor. vii. 33. 1 Pet. iii 7. Gen. xxv. 21. Prov. xxxi 28, 29.

Q. What are the duties of the younger and inferior in gifts and grace, to the aged and superior?

A. To rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man; to speak to them with respect, give them the place in speaking, submit to their advice, and imitate their holy lives, Lev. xix 32. 1 Tim. v. 1, 2. Job xxxii. iv. 6, 7. 1 Pet. v 5. 1 Cor. xi. 1.

Q. What are the duties of the aged and superior to the younger and inferior?

A To bear with their weakness, and to lay themselves out for their good, by instructing them, and praying for them; to study to adorn their old age by a holy and exemplary life, Rom xv. 1. Gen. xlviii. 15, 16. Tit ii. 2, 3, 4.

Q What are the duties of equals one to another?

A. To submit to one another, to be pitiful, to be courteous, to be at peace among themselves, to be kindly affec-

tioned one to another, in honour preferring one another; to seek one another's wealth, and rejoice in others welfare, 1 Pet. v. 5. and iii. 8. Rom. xii. 10, 15. 1 Cor. x 24.

QUESTION LXV.

Q. *What is forbidden in the Fifth Commandment?*

A. The fifth commandment forbiddeth the neglecting of, or doing any thing against the honour and duty which belong to every one in their several places and relations.

Q. How many ways may this command be broken?

A. Two ways: 1. By neglecting the duties of the stations and relations in which God hath placed us, whether we be superiors, inferiors, or equals. 2. By doing things directly contrary to the honour and duty which we owe to our superiors, inferiors, or equals.

Q. What are these sins which inferiors are commonly guilty of against their superiors?

A They are many, such as slighting and despising them, envying their elevation, reviling and cursing them; disobedience to their just commands and counsels, contempt of their reproofs and corrections, mocking and studying to expose them, making a shew of reverence and obedience without reality, not imitating their good examples, and the like

Q. What are the sins which superiors are commonly guilty of against their inferiors?

A. They are, such as commanding unlawful things, enjoining things not in their power to perform; advising and encouraging them to what is evil, dissuading and discouraging them from what is good; cruel treating of them, and provoking them to wrath; proud imperious carriage towards them; reproving with bitterness, or correcting with rigour, oppression, and tyranny; debasing themselves, and losing their authority; not giving good examples, and the like.

Q. What are the sins of equals against one another?

A. Hatred, anger, malice, envy, evil-speaking, injuring, reproaching or backbiting one another; affecting pre eminence one over another, tempting and encouraging one another, and the like.

Q. Is it a sin in children to dispose of their parents goods as their own?

A Yes, Prov. xxviii. 24. "Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression, the same is the companion of a destroyer."

Q. Is it not a great dishonour done to parents for children to dispose of themselves in marriage without their consent?

A. Yes, Exod xxii. 17. Num. xxx. 5. Deut. vii 3. Jer. xxix. 6 1 Cor. vii 38 Col. iii. 20.

Q What if children set light by their parents, or expose their weaknesses?

A They draw down the curse of God upon themselves, Deut. xxvii. 16 "Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother: And all the people shall say, Amen."

Q. Do you read of any upon whom this curse came for so doing?

A. Yes, of Ham the son of Noah, Gen ix. 22 25, 26.

Q. What shall become of those who curse their parents?

A. Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness, Prov. xx. 20. Nay, death is threatened to them, Exod xxi. 17.

Q. What is threatened against these who not only disobey, but mock their parents?

A The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it, Prov. xxx. 17.

Q. What is due to those children who beat their parents?

A. He that smiteth his father or his mother, shall be surely put to death, Exod. xxi. 15.

Q. What if the magistrate neglect to punish such disobedient children?

A. God will take the punishing of such into his own hand.

Q Do you read of any instances of his so doing?

A Yes, I read of Eli's sons, 1 Sam ii. 25. "They hearkened not to the voice of their father, because the Lord would slay them." And of David's rebellious son Absalom, that was taken up by an oak between the heaven and the earth, to hang as a monument of God's justice for breaking the fifth command, 2 Sam xviii 9.

Q What became of the little children of Bethel who mocked Elisha as he passed by, saying, "Go up, thou baldhead," &c.?

A God sent forth two she-bears out of the wood, that tore forty and two children of them, 1 Kings ii 24.

Q. Are not those children guilty of dishonouring their parents, who despise them when they are poor or old, or suffer them to be in want? A. Yes.

Q. Is it not monstrous ingratitude in children to requite their parents so badly for their love and tenderness toward them? A. Yes.

Q. What may such expect for it?

A. To meet with the same usage from their own children in this world, and with dreadful punishments in the other, if they repent not.

QUESTION LXVI

Q. *What are the reasons annexed to the Fifth Commandment?*

A. The reasons annexed to the fifth commandment is a promise of long life and prosperity, (as far it shall serve for God's glory and their own good) to all such as keep this commandment.

Q Since the light of nature doth so clearly teach us to honour our parents, why is there such a promise annexed to it?

A. To shew how greatly concerned God is to support the authority of parents.

Q. How is the fifth commandment called the first with promise, Eph vi. 2. seeing the second hath a promise in it of God's shewing mercy to thousands?

A. The promise in the second doth likewise extend to the keeping of all the other commands, but the promise in the fifth is made to the keeping of it only.

Q. What doth God here promise to those who keep the fifth command? A. Long life

Q What is included in the promise of long life here?

A. It includes a promise of prosperity, with the blessings and comforts of life: For, without this, long life would not be a reward; death being more eligible than long life in misery, Eph. vi. 3. Rev. ix. 6.

Q. What course then should children take to live long and happy lives?

A. They should honour and obey their parents.

Q. Is this promise of long life and prosperity to obedient children, to be understood absolutely, or with limitation?

A. It is to be understood, as other temporal promises, with this limitation, so far as the following of it shall serve for God's glory, and their own good

Q. What if God sometimes take away obedient children in their youth?

A. We are then to think that God did not see long living here to be for their good, but thought fit in place of it to give them a long life in heaven, which is far better, Phil i. 23

Q. May not then disobedient children look for short and miserable lives here? A. Yes.

QUESTION LXVII.

Q *Which is the Sixth Commandment?*

A The Sixth Commandment is, "Thou shalt not kill."

QUESTION LXVIII.

Q *What is required in the Sixth Commandment?*

A. The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavours to preserve our own life, and the life of others

Q. Is there not a comely order among the commands of the second table?

A. Yes; for the fifth command, or first of the second table, prescribes in general, what respect men should shew to one another in their several stations and relations. In the next place, we have particular directions with respect to those things which are most valuable to men; the first is with respect to our lives, in the sixth command; the next relates to our chastity, in the seventh command; the third is concerning our estates, in the eighth command; the fourth is with respect to our good name, in the ninth command; the last is concerning the inward frame of our hearts in reference to our own estate and the estate of others, in the tenth command

Q. Whose life is it that we are bound to preserve by the sixth commandment?

A. Both our own life and the life of others; and this is to be understood, not only of the life of the body, but also of the soul

Q Doth this command require us to study and endeavour by any means whatsoever, to preserve our own life and other mens?

A. No; we are only to use all lawful means and endeavours for that end

Q May we use no unlawful endeavour, or venture upon any sin, to preserve our own life, or the life of others?

A No.

Q. Did not Isaac tell a lie, in calling his wife his sister, to save his life, Gen. xxvi 7. And did not Peter deny Christ, to preserve his life?

A Isaac's lie and Peter's denial were sins against God, and are recorded, not for imitation, but for caution; for "we must not do evil that good may come," Rom. iii 8 Nay, to go about to save our lives by such sinful means, is the way to lose our lives and our souls for ever, Mat. xvi 25, 26 and x 33.

Q. What are the lawful endeavours which we should use to preserve the life of our bodies?

A Just self-defence against violence; the temperate use of meat, drink, clothes; bodily exercise, and physic when needful; likewise we should study a cheerful peaceable, and contented temper of mind, without harbouring anger, envy, grief, or such passions as prejudice the health. Luke xxii. 36 Eph. v 29. Prov xxv. 16, 27 1 Tim. v. 23. Isa xxxviii. 21. Prov. xvii 22 Col iii 12, 13.

Q. What are the endeavours we should use for preserving the bodily life of others?

A. A pleading for, and labouring to rescue, the innocent in danger of death; hiding the persecuted, or warning them of danger; relieving those that are in wants; bearing injuries without revenging them, and the like, Prov. xxxi 8, 9. 1 Sam xiv 45. and xix 4, 5 1 Kings xviii. 4. Acts xxiii 16 Rom xii. 17, 20 Job xxxi 19. Mat. xxv. 35

Q. What endeavours should we use for preserving the life of our souls?

A Attending upon the outward means of salvation, believing, repenting, mortifying sin, and studying holiness. Prov viii. 34, 35, 36 Mark xvi 16 Ezek xviii 31, 32. Rom viii. 13 Heb xii 14.

Q What endeavours must we use for preserving the souls of others?

A. We must use all the means which God hath appointed for reclaiming men from evil, and promoting their conversion; such as warning, reproof, instruction, prayer, holy example, and recommending Christ to them, James v. 20. 1 Cor. vii 16. 1 Pet. iii. 1 1 Thess v 14. Rev xix. 17. Acts xx. 26, 27. and xvi. 31.

QUESTION LXIX.

Q *What is forbidden in the Sixth Commandment?*

A. The Sixth Commandment forbiddeth the taking away of our own life, or the life of our neighbour unjustly, and whatsoever tendeth thereunto

Q. Whose life is it that this command forbids to take away?

A. Our own life, or the life of our neighbour.

Q. Doth it forbid the taking away of our neighbour's life in any case?

A. No, but the taking it away unjustly.

Q When is it that our neighbour's life may be justly taken away?

A. 1 In case of public justice by a magistrate. 2. In case of a lawful war. 3 In case of necessary self-defence.

Q. Is killing in any other case to be looked upon as murder?

A. Yes, except when it is done by pure accident, without knowledge or design of harm, in which case there were of old cities of refuge for the slayer to flee to, Deut. xix 5, 6.

Q. How doth it appear that the magistrate hath power to take away mens lives, notwithstanding of the sixth command?

A. Because God hath appointed several crimes, particularly murder, to be punished with death, Gen ix 6 "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Exod xxi. 12 "He that smiteth a man so that he die, shall be surely put to death" And this is confirmed in the New Testament, Mat. xxvi. 52 Rev. xiii 10.

Q. May the magistrate spare or pardon a murderer?

A No; for God hath forbidden it, Num. xxxv 31, 33. "Ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death; but he shall be surely put to death. For blood it defileth the land, and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it."

Q. How doth it appear to be lawful to kill in a just war?

A. Because it is done by the authority of the supreme magistrate, who even under the New Testament is warranted to bear the sword against evil-doers, Rom. xiii 4 And we are frequently assured, that true piety is very well consistent with the office of a soldier, Luke iii. 14. Mat. xviii. 9, 10. Acts x. 1, 2. and xiii. 12. And those soldiers are recorded with signal honour, who through faith subdued king-

doms, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens, Heb vi. 33, 34.

Q. How doth it appear to be lawful to kill in our own defence, when attacked by robbers or murderers?

A. From Exod. xxii. 2. "If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall be no blood shed for him." And Luke xxii. 36, 38. Christ approves of the disciples having swords for their protection, although they might not use them when Christ's hour was come. And Prov. xxiv. 11, 12. we are called to defend our neighbour in danger, and much more ourselves.

Q. What are we to think of those who shed blood in duellings?

A. They are the devil's martyrs, and murderers in God's sight; for they usurp God's right of vengeance, which he hath expressly reserved to himself, Rom. xii. 19

Q. If another challenge me to fight, how can I avoid to accept of it, without losing my honour?

A. In that case we must leave our name and credit with God, and not to be drawn on by airy notions of honour to the God-dishonouring sin of murder, or to set ourselves above all laws both of God and man, and thereby throw our precious souls a prey to the devil.

Q. Did not David fight a duel with Goliah?

A. He did that by public authority in a lawful war for the good of his country, by the motion of God's Spirit, and not from any passion or corrupt affection of his own For God forbids all men to be their own avengers, Rom xii. 19

Q. Is it not the worst kind of murder for a man to kill himself?

A Yes; for, in other murders, a man may live to repent of his sins; but in this, if he die immediately, the man dies in his sin, without time for repentance.

Q What are the temptations which usually prompt men to destroy themselves?

A. It was impatience under a cross, or dishonour he met with, that provoked Ahithophel to do it, 2 Sam. xvii 23. It was horror of conscience, under guilt and despair of mercy, that drove Judas to it, Mat. xxvii 4, 5. It was fear of torture, or an ignominious death from others, that pushed Saul to do it, and the jailor to attempt it, 1 Sam. xxxi. 4. Acts xvi. 27.

Q. Are not the temptations of men to self-murder contrary to all reason?

A. Yes; seeing it is most foolish and unreasonable for a man to adventure upon unspeakable torture and anguish which will last for ever, that he may shun a small distress here that would soon be over.

Q. Did not many of the ancient heathens applaud mens killing themselves, in some cases, as an act of heroism and magnanimity?

A. These men were not illuminated by gospel light, otherwise they would have reckoned it an act of rebellion and treachery, for a man to break prison or desert his post, until he was fairly dismissed by his sovereign Lord; yea, an act of pusillanimity and cowardice, for a man to flee from a small conflict or trial, which God had appointed for the discovery of his valour.

Q Did not Samson kill himself in pulling down Dagon's temple? Judges xvi. 30.

A. His intention was not against his own life, but against Israel's enemies; besides, he acted as a judge in Israel, being moved by the Spirit of God to deliver God's people, but not from despair; and so his action is not imitable by us.

Q. Doth the sixth command forbid only the direct taking away of our own or our neighbour's life?

A. It doth also forbid whatsoever tendeth thereunto.

Q. May not a man thus be guilty of self-murder, without putting violent hands on himself?

A. Yes; as when he neglects or refuses food or physic, or necessary means of preserving life. Or, 2. When he is guilty of surfeting, drunkenness, or any kind of intemperance. 3. When he indulges excessive sorrows, distracting cares, sinful anger, envy, or such hurtful passions which breed distempers in the body, Luke xxi. 34. Eccl. ii. 22, 23. and vi 2. Prov. xiv 30 and xvii. 22.

Q. How may a man be guilty of murdering his own soul?

A. By neglecting the outward means of salvation, refusing Christ the only remedy for sin, despising warnings, counsels, and reproofs, and continuing obstinate in sinful courses, Prov. viii. 36. Ezek xviii. 30, 31. John v. 40. Prov vi. 32.

Q. How may a man be guilty of murder with respect to others?

A He may be guilty of murder with respect to their bodies, and with respect to their souls; and this he may be guilty of in thoughts, in words, and in deeds.

Q. How may a man be a murderer in his thoughts?

A. By entertaining sinful anger, hatred, envy, and desire of revenge; by contriving or consenting to the death of others, 1 John iii. 15, "Whoso hateth his brother is a murderer" Mat. xv. 19. "Out of the heart proceeds murder." See also Mat. v 21, 22. Zech viii. 17. Eph iv. 31. Gen. xxxvii 11, 20 and xlix. 6. Acts xxii. 20.

Q. How may a man be a murderer in words?

A. By backbiting his neighbour, or using opprobrious words against him, which cause murders; by cursing or imprecating evil upon him; by informing or bearing false witness against the innocent, or swearing to kill him, Mat. v. 22. Eph. iv. 31. Prov. xii. 18. and xv. 1. Psal. lvii 4 and lxiv. 3 Jer. xviii 18. 1 Sam. xxii. 9, 10, &c. 1 Kings xxi. 10. 1 Sam xxv. 10, 11. Acts xxiii. 12.

Q. How may men be murderers by their deeds?

A. Many ways, both directly and indirectly; as by striking, wounding, or hurting the bodies of men, or doing any thing that tends to the destruction of their lives; by oppressing or robbing the poor or not relieving them when ready to starve; by murdering the innocent under the forms of law and justice; by setting them in dangerous posts to be cut off; by not hindering their death, when in their power; by not executing the law against murderers, so that they are spared to shed more blood, Num. xxxv. 16, 17, 18, &c. Ezek. xxii. 7. 2 Sam. xi 15. and xii. 9. 1 Kings xxi. 12, 13. Prov. xxiv. 11. Isaiah i. 15.

Q. How are men guilty of murdering the souls of others?

A. By counselling or commanding them to do evil; by tempting and enticing them to sin; by giving a bad example to them; by not reproving sin, and giving warning against it; by ministers not warning sinners of their danger, or teaching them unsound doctrine, 1 Sam. xxii. 18. 2 Sam. xiii 5 Prov vii. 10 2 Kings x 29. Lev. xix. 17. Ezek iii. 18 2 Peter ii 1

Q. Have we not many evidences of God's special hatred and abhorrence of the sin of murder?

A Yes; in his commands and threatenings against it, his strict injunctions concerning its punishment, in his making inquisition for blood, and the strange methods of his providence for bringing secret murder to light, and the judg-

ments he inflicts for it, when it is past unpunished by men.

Q. Wherefore is murder so hateful to God?

A. 1. Because it destroys a creature made after the image of God, and a creature which the Son of God shed his blood to ransom 2. It is an usurping of the power and prerogative of God, who saith, "Vengeance is mine" 3 It is an imitating of the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning; upon all which accounts the blood of murdered persons cries loudly to God for vengeance And therefore all who are guilty in any degree, should flee to the blood of Christ for refuge and cleansing, crying, "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God," Gen. ix. 6. Rom xii 19. John viii. 44. Gen. iv. 10 Psalm li. 14

QUESTION LXX.

Q *Which is the Seventh Commandment?*

A The Seventh Commandment is, "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

QUESTION LXXI

Q. *What is required in the Seventh Commandment?*

A. The Seventh Commandment requireth the preservation of our own and our neighbour's chastity, in heart, speech, and behaviour.

Q. What is it that ought to be the dearest to us next to our life? A. Our chastity.

Q. Whose chastity doth the seventh command require the preservation of?

A. Our own and our neighbour's.

Q In what must we preserve our own and our neighbour's chastity?

A In heart, speech, and behaviour.

Q What is meant here by chastity?

A Not abstinence from marriage, but abstinence from all uncleanness and filthiness, whether in a married or unmarried state.

Q. May persons be both chaste and married?

A Yes; for the apostle recommends to married women a "chaste conversation coupled with fear," 1 Pet. iii 2.

Q What is meant by that chastity in heart, speech, and behaviour, which we must study to preserve?

A 1. That we must entertain no thoughts nor desires but what are pure and chaste, whatever company we be in 2. That our discourse one with another must be grave and uncorrupt, and such as may tend to edification. 3 That our whole conversation, gestures, and actions, must be chaste, modest, and decent, as becometh Christians.

Q Why should we be so careful to preserve our chastity?

A. Because we are rational creatures, and not brutes; Christians, and not Heathens; and the bodies of Christians should be members of Christ, and temples of the Holy Ghost, and consequently ought to be kept clean and pure Nay, it is God's express command, that we should abstain from fornication and all uncleanness, and that we should possess our vessels in sanctification and honour, 1 Cor vi. 15, 18, 19. 1 Thess iv. 3, 4, 5 Eph iv. 17, 18, 19 Eph. v. 3.

Q. By what means shall we preserve our chastity?

A. By faith and prayer; by watching over our hearts and eyes; by temperance in our diet, diligence in our callings, keeping of chaste company, and avoiding all temptations to, and occasions of uncleanness, Acts xv. 9 Mat. vi 13. Prov. iv. 23. Job xxxi 1. Jer. v 8 Gen. xxxiv. 1, 2. Prov. ii. 16. Gen. xxxiv. 10. 1 Cor. ix 27. Prov v. 8.

QUESTION LXXII.

Q *What is forbidden in the Seventh Commandment?*

A. The Seventh Commandment forbiddeth all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions.

Q. Doth this command forbid all lustful thoughts and desires?

A Yes, Mat. v. 28. "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart"

Q. Is not adultery here to be understood of any sort of uncleanness? A. Yes.

Q. Doth this command forbid all obscene speeches, lascivious jests and songs?

A. Yes, Eph. v. 4. "Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient"

Q. What are the unchaste actions, or acts of uncleanness here forbidden?

A Adultery, fornication, polygamy, rape, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lust; prohibiting of lawful marriages, and dispensing with those that are unlawful; unjust divorce or desertion; keeping or allowing of stews; and all other actions which have a tendency to promote or encourage unchastity and uncleanness, Heb. xiii. 4. 1 Cor vi 18. Gal v. 19. Mal. ii. 14, 15, 16. Mat xix 5. Deut. xxii. 25. Lev. xviii 6, 20, 22, 23. Gen. xxxviii. 9. Rom. i. 25, 26. 1 Tim. iv. 3 Mark vi. 18. 1 Cor v. 1. 2 Cor vi. 11. Mat. v. 32. 1 Cor. vii. 12, 13. Lev xix. 29. Jer. v. 7.

Q. Who are these who prohibit lawful marriages?

A. The Papists, who forbid the marriages of ecclesiastical persons, and those who (they pretend) have spiritual affinity together, as god-fathers, god-mothers, and the children they present to baptism.

Q. Have they any ground for such prohibitions from scripture?

A. No: For the scripture doth declare marriage to be lawful and honourable in all, as being instituted by God before the fall; and doth condemn the forbidding to marry, as false doctrine. Besides, the prophets and priests were married under the Old Testament, as were Peter and other apostles under the New, Heb. xiii. 4 Gen ii. 18, 22, 24. Lev. xxi 7, 13. 1 Cor. vii. 2, 9. and ix. 5. Luke iv. 38. Acts xxi 8, 9. 1 Tim. iii. 2, 4

Q. Who doth dispense with unlawful marriages?

A. The Pope, who for money doth dispense with incestuous marriages, that is, of persons near a-kin, and within the degrees forbidden by the word of God

Q Where are those degrees explained in which incest is committed?

A. In Lev. xviii. 7, 8, 9, &c. and xx. 11, 14. Deut xxvii. 20, 22, 23.

Q. In what cases can married persons be divorced, or their marriage disannulled?

A. Only in the cases of adultery and wilful desertion, Mat xix. 9 1 Cor. vii. 15.

Q. Who teach otherwise?

A. The Papists, who hold that they may be divorced when either the man or the woman think fit to retire into a cloister.

Q. What other actions or things are there forbidden in this commandment, which have a tendency to promote or encourage uncleanness?

A. They are such as drunkenness, gluttony, idleness, frequenting light company, listening to filthy speeches or songs,

lascivious books and pictures, plays and dancings, immodest attire, wanton looks and gestures, and the like.

Q. What are the evils of this sin of uncleanness?

A. It is most hateful and dishonourable to a holy God: It debases a man from the excellency of his nature, and levels him with the beasts: It is an infatuating sin, that takes away the heart, blinds the mind, and stupifies the conscience: It wastes the means, destroys the body, rots the good name, and damns the soul. Nay, it murders two souls at once,— 2 Sam. xi. 27. 1 Cor vi 15, 18, 19 Hos iv. 11 Prov vi. 26, 32, 33 Prov. v 7, 9, 10, 11. Eph. v 3, 4, 5. Rev. xiii. 4. Rev. xvi. 8. and xxii 15.

Q. What are the remedies against this sin?

A We must pray to God, for Christ's sake, for a new heart to hate all sin, and to be kept from temptation to it; shun lewd company, and watch over the heart and eyes; keep up the remembrance of God's all-seeing eye being still upon us, and think often upon the burning flames prepared for these who burn with lust.

QUESTION LXXIII.

Q *Which is the Eighth Commandment?*

A. The Eighth Commandment is, "Thou shalt not steal."

QUESTION LXXIV.

Q. *What is required in the Eighth Commandment?*

A The eighth commandment requireth the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others.

Q Whose wealth and estate doth this command concern?

A. Both our own and other mens

Q. What doth it require of us with respect to them?

A To use means to procure and preserve them.

Q May we use any means whatsoever for that end?

A No; for we must use only lawful means to profit ourselves or others.

Q Doth not this command suppose, that there is no community of goods, but that every man hath a propriety in his estate?

A. Yes: For otherwise there would be no place for this command; no man could say, This is mine, or, That is thine; nor could he give alms to others. A community of goods cannot take place but by consent of the proprietors in a time or case extraordinary, Acts ii 44.

Q. Is it lawful to seek to encrease our worldly estate more than it is?

A. Yes, Gen. xlvii. 14 Deut. viii 18. Prov. xiii 11.

Q For what ends should we endeavour to encrease it?

A. 1st, We should chiefly aim at the glory of God, that we may be capable to honour him with our substance, and be kept from sinning against him by stealing or false swearing, as in Prov xxx. 8, 9 2dly, That we may help others, Eph iv 28 3dly, That we may keep ourselves and families from being burdensome to others. And, lastly, That we may avoid idleness.

Q. What means must we use to procure and further our worldly estate?

A We must be diligent and laborious in honest and lawful callings; we must live soberly and frugally, and manage our affairs with prudence and discretion; we must look to the Lord for success in our endeavours, be just in all our dealings, be ready to supply the needy, use proper means to obtain what belongs to us, but avoid unnecessary law-suits and suresyship, 1 Cor. vii 20. Gen iv. 2. Prov. x. 4. Eph. iv. 28. Tit ii. 12. Psal. cxii 5. Prov x 22. 1 Pet. v. 7. Prov. x 6. and xi. 24, 25. 1 Cor. vi. 1, 2, &c. Prov. vi. 1, 2.

Q. Is it unlawful for Christians to go to law, to defend or recover their own? A. No

Q Doth not the apostle blame them for going to law with one another, saying, "Why do ye not rather take wrong?" &c. 1 Cor. vi. 7.

A. He is there blaming them for going to law about smaller matters before heathen magistrates, and telling them that they should make up differences among themselves, or suffer wrong, rather than by wrangling to bring a scandal upon their holy religion, and stumble the heathen at Christianity.

Q. Doth not Christ say, Mat v. 10. "If any man will sue thee at law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also?"

A. His meaning is, That we should part with some smaller thing, such as a coat or a cloke, rather than involve ourselves into a vexatious law-suit: But not that we should let any man undo us, when God hath blessed us with good laws for our protection.

Q. May we seek after the world as our treasure?

A. No, but as a help under God in our journey: We must lay up our treasure in heaven, and secure a portion for ourselves there through eternity

Q. Should we not be ready to assist poor widows and orphans with our money, and lend to those who are in need?

A Yes, James i. 27. Psalm cxii. 5.

Q. What must we do to promote and further the wealth of others?

A. We must be true and just in all our transactions with others, and render to every one his due: We should preserve our neighbour's goods, and restore them to him if they be in our hands: We should wish and seek their good as well as our own, and do in all things to them as we would have them to do to us, Psal. xv. 2, 4. Zech. xiii. 16, 17. Rom xiii. 7. Lev. vi. 2, 3, &c. 1 Cor x 24. Mat. vii. 12.

QUESTION LXXV

Q *What is forbidden in the Eighth Commandment?*

A The eighth commandment forbiddeth whatsoever doth or may unjustly hinder our own or our neighbour's wealth, or outward estate.

Q. What is implied in the sin of stealing, here forbidden?

A The injuring of ourselves or others in worldly estates, and the using unlawful means to gain the world.

Q What way may we injure our own worldly estate, and thereby steal from ourselves and families?

A By idleness, sloth, negligence in our calling; by rash engaging in suretyship and imprudent bargains; by prodigality, and wasteful spending, in gluttony, drunkenness, lewd company, costly apparel, gaming, and the like, 2 Thess iii. 11 Prov. xviii. 9. and xxiii. 21. and xxii. 26, 27 and xxviii. 19. and 21, 17.

Q Is it a sin for men to live above their incomes or gains?

A. Yes; for hereby they destroy their own estate, hinder their own charity, and waste the substance of others also.

Q. Is not the using of unlawful ways and means, to enrich or subsist ourselves and families, a sin against the eighth commandment?

A. Yes; for this is no better than stealing and dishonesty in the sight of God, however matters be disguised with fair clokes and pretexts before men.

Q. What are these unlawful things of enriching or subsisting ourselves?

A. They are such as these; immoderate cares and labour, covetousness, hastening to be rich, excessive narrowness, gaming, usury, monopolies, running of goods, lying, false swearing, breaking the sabbath, bribery, simony, selling masses, pardons and indulgences, using unlawful callings and occupations, or taking any ways to defraud or overreach others to gain money.

Q. How is covetousness against the eighth command?

A. Because the covetous man is guilty of stealing from severals: 1. From God and his church, in not giving any thing to pious uses. 2. From his neighbour, in refusing to help him in straits. 3. From himself and his family, in depriving them of the necessary comforts of life. All which are against Prov iii. 9. Mal. iii 8, 10. 1 Cor. ix 14 Gal. vi. 6. Isa lviii. 7. Eccl. iv. 8. and vi. 2. 1 Tim v 8.

Q. Do niggards, who have no hearts to use what they have, sin greatly?

A. Yes; for they defraud themselves and their families of the comfort and use of those good things which God hath bestowed on them, and so cannot be thankful to God the bountiful giver. They are uncharitable to those in need; for he that will not allow it to himself, will not love another better than himself. They are hurtful to the society and generation they live among; for they hoard up that, which if others had, the poor would be employed, and others would be the better of it, Eccl. iv. 8 and vi. 2. 1 Tim. v. 8 Psal xxxvii. 3, 26, 27. Job xxix 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. Psal. cxii. 3, 5, 9.

Q. Is the gaining of money by usury unlawful?

A. Yes, Prov. xxviii. 8. Psal. xv. 5.

Q. What is usury?

A. The taking of unlawful profit for money that is lent out.

Q. Is it lawful to take any interest or gain for money lent?

A. Yes, when it is taken according to the laws of the land, and from those who make gain by it, by trading or purchasing of lands; seeing it is equally just for the owner of money to ask a share of the profit which others make by it, as for the owner of land to demand farm from the tenant of it; money being improveable by art and labour as well as land.

Q. What is the unlawful profit for money which may be called usury?

A. The taking profit for money from the poor who borrow for mere necessity, or taking needful things from them in pawn for it; or the taking more profit from any than law allows, as they who take ten, fifteen, or twenty in the hundred, Exod. xxii. 25, 26 Deut. xxiv. 12, 17. Ezek. xviii. 7, 8.

Q But the people of Israel were discharged to take any usury or profit for lent money from their brethren, Deut. xxiii.

A. This law seems to have been peculiar to the Jewish state, and that in regard of their estates being so divided, settled and secured to their families by the year of jubilee, and their not being employed in trading or making purchases like other nations, so that they had no occasion to borrow money but for the present subsistence of their families But for strangers, who had another way of living, the Israelites were allowed to lend to them upon usury, and to share with them in their profits, Deut. xxiii. 20 Which shews that the taking of interest is not oppressive in itself; for they are frequently prohibited to oppress a stranger, and yet allowed to take usury from him, Exod. xxii 21 and xxiii. 9.

Q. What is meant by monopolies, here forbidden?

A. The ingrossing or buying up of some commodities, especially corn and provisions for the poor, in order to exact great prices from them afterwards, Prov. 11. 26 "He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him: But blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it."

Q. What is the evil of running of goods?

A. It is a denying to render custom to whom it is due; besides, there are many other sins which commonly attend this practice, as perjury, bribery, lying, Sabbath-breaking, bloodshed, &c.

Q. What is meant by bribery, which is here forbidden?

A. It is the taking or giving of bribes or gifts to pervert justice, Prov. xvii. 23 "A wicked man taketh a gift out of the bosom, to pervert the ways of justice."

Q. What is meant by *Simony* here forbidden?

A It is a buying and selling of the offices and places of ministers, and other spiritual things, for money, good deeds, or favour. A vile practice! it being a token that the design of the purchasers is to make money by them. It is a sin marked out as odious by the Spirit of God, for it tends to destroy all true religion. It is called Simony, from that wicked person, Simon Magus, Acts xviii. 19 "He offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost"

Q Who are those who sell pardons, indulgences, and masses?

A. The Popish priests do it for money, like the Pharisees, who, under a pretence of long prayers, devoured widows houses, Mat xxiii 14. So the priests, under pretence of long prayers for the dead, and saying soul-masses, enrich themselves by devouring the houses of the widows and fatherless, Rev xviii. 13.

Q. Who are those who use unlawful trades and occupations to gain money?

A Highwaymen, thieves, bawds, stage-players, jugglers, fortune-tellers, usurers, smugglers, ingrossers, gamesters, and these who make gain by carding, dicing, and such lottery-games: Also those who make a trade of harbouring such people in their houses, or letting out houses to them; and particularly those change-keepers, who, for the love of gain, do entertain drunkards, unclean persons, thieves, profaners of the Lord's day, and such loose persons.

Q. How are people guilty of breaking the eighth command, by plain stealing from others, or injuring them in their worldly estate?

A. Besides what hath been already mentioned, people are guilty of it by thieving, robbing, man-stealing, resetting of thieves and stolen goods, frauds in merchandizing, unfaithfulness in contracts and matters of trust, falsehood in promises, denying just debts, or not paying them, vexatious law suits, borrowing what we cannot pay, detaining any thing strayed or lost, or what we have wrongously taken; all extortions and oppression, unjust inclosures and depopulations, removing ancient land-marks, sacrilege, wronging the coin, denying public taxes, withholding the wages of servants and labourers, rigorous exacting of debts, stopping the ear at the cry of the poor, Eph. iv. 28 Psal. lxii. 10 1 Tim. i. 10. Prov. 29, 24. 1 Thess iv. 6. Psal. 37, 21. Luke 16, 12. Hos. iv, 1. Deut. 22, 1, 2, &c. Prov. iii 28, 29, 30 1 Cor. vi. 6 Luke 19, 8. Ezek. 22, 12, 29. Lev. 25, 17. Isa. 8. Mic. 2, 2. Prov. 23, 10. Rom. 2, 22. Mat. 22, 21. Rom. 13, 6, 7. Lev. 19, 13. Mat. 18, 28. Prov. 13. Deut. xv. 7.

Q. What are those frauds in merchandizing here forbidden?

A Circumvening or over-reaching others in buying or selling; taking advantage of their ignorance or necessity; imposing on them lyes; deceitful commending of goods when selling, and undervaluing them when buying; selling things bad for good; using false balances, weights, or measures; taking exorbitant prices; undermining others in their trade, by withdrawing their customers, or wronging their credit, Lev xxv.14. Prov. xx 14 Lev xix 35, 36 Deut xxv. 13, &c. Prov. xi 1. Amos viii. 5, 6. Prov. xxviii. 22. 1 Cor. xiii 4 Phil. ii 4.

Q. What is the sin of sacrilege here forbidden?

A. Robbing or taking things away from God or his church, that do properly belong unto them: or alienating any thing dedicated to sacred uses: Which, among other things, doth include the sins of non-residence and negligence of pastors; and the robbing Christian congregations of their right of calling their own ministers, Mal. iii. 8, 9. Prov xx. 25 Josh. vii 20, 21. 2 Cor. xxviii 21. 2 Tim. iv. 2. 1 Pet. v. 2, 3. Acts i. 23. and vi. 3 Jer xxiii 1 2.

Q Is stealing a way to be rich?

A. No, it brings poverty; for the curse of God is against the thief, Zech. v. 3, 4

Q. Is not the thief of kin to an Atheist?

A Yes; for he practically denies God's omnipresence and his all-seeing eye over him, and that he is a righteous Judge who will call him to account.

Q Must not all guilty of wronging others in their goods, repent and make restitution, as they would have mercy from God?

A. Yes, Lev. vi. 4. Ezek. xxxiii 15. Luke xix. 8.

QUESTION LXXVI.

Q. *Which is the Ninth Commandment?*

A. The Ninth Commandment is, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

QUESTION LXXVII.

Q. *What is required in the Ninth Commandment?*

A. The Ninth Commandment requireth the maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man, and of our own and our neighbour's good name, especially in witness-bearing.

Q. How many duties doth this answer mention as required of us by the Ninth Commandment?

A They are four: 1. The maintaining and promoting of truth between man and man 2. Maintaining and promoting of our own good name. 3 Maintaining and promoting of our neighbour's good name 4. Being concerned for all these, especially in witness-bearing.

Q Why especially in witness-bearing?

A. Because then we are solemnly required to tell the truth, as being before a judge, and upon oath, whereby God is appealed to

Q. How ought we to maintain and promote truth amongst men?

A By loving the truth, speaking the truth sincerely, standing and appearing for the truth, and judging and deciding for the truth, Zech. viii 16, 19. Prov. xxxi 8, 9. Exod 21. Psalm xv. 2.

Q. Why are we required to speak the truth sincerely, or from the heart?

A. Because the devil and bad men sometimes speak the truth from an evil design, Mark i 34. 1 Sam xxii. 9, 10.

Q. Wherefore ought we to maintain and promote our own good name?

A. That we may be capable to glorify God, and do the more good in our day and generation.

Q. Doth an evil report of men hinder their usefulness?

A. Yes

Q Who are more especially concerned to maintain their good name?

A Magistrates, ministers, and professors of religion.

Q. Is commending ourselves, or carrying proudly, the way to maintain or promote our good name?

A. No, but rather the way to procure contempt.

Q What are the proper means then to obtain a good name?

A We must study to be humble, harmless, sober, meek, chaste, and just; to keep our word exactly; to be ready to serve others; and, in a word, to practise "whatever things are true, honest, lovely, and of good report," Col. iii. 12. Phil ii 15 and iv. 8

Q Ought we not to vindicate ourselves when we are reproached?

A. Yes; but with meekness, and readiness to forgive those who reproach us

Q What if they do not hearken to us, nor believe us?

A. We must commit the cause to him that judgeth righteously

Q What is incumbent upon us to maintain our neighbour's good name?

A We ought to have a due esteem of all the good we see in them, and be willing to express this seasonably for their encouragement in the ways of God: we should be ready to hearken to a good report, and unwilling to receive a bad report concerning them; conceal their infirmities, discourage tale-bearers, speak well of them behind their backs, and stand up in their defence when we know them traduced,—Phil ii 3 Heb. vi 9 Rom i. 8 1 Cor xiii. 6. Psal. xv. 3. Prov xxv 23 Prov xvii 9 1 Sam xxii. 14.

Q But what should we do when the bad reports we hear of our neighbours are evidently true?

A. We should be grieved for their miscarriages, and contribute what we can, by our admonitions, advices, and prayers, for their amendment, and for the recovery of their good names again, 2 Cor. ii 4. Mat. xviii 15, &c.

QUESTION LXXVIII.

Q. *What is forbidden in the Ninth Commandment?*

A. The Ninth Commandment forbiddeth whatsoever is prejudicial to truth, or injurious to our own or neighbour's good name.

Q. What evils doth this answer set forth, as forbidden in this command?

A Three: 1. Saying or doing any thing that is prejudicial to truth. 2 Saying or doing any thing injurious to our own good name. 3. Saying or doing any thing injurious to our neighbour's good name.

Q What are those things here forbidden, which are prejudicial to truth?

A The wronging of truth, or anywise acting against it, in courts of judicature; the speaking of untruth, falsehood, or telling lies upon any account whatsoever; equivocating, perverting the truth, falsifying our word, and the like.

Q. How do men injure the truth in courts of judicature?

A. By persons informing against, or accusing others falsely; by the accused person's denying that of which he is guilty; by suborning false witnesses; by witnesses concealing or disguising the truth, or witnessing falsely; by persons agenting and pleading against the truth, for an evil cause by forgery, or making use of false writings; by perverting of men's words to a wrong meaning; by undue silence in a just cause, or not acting faithfully for it; by passing unjust sentences, justifying the guilty, or condemning the innocent, Luke xxiii 2. Acts xxix. 2, 5. Gen. iv 9 Acts vi. 13. 1 Kings xxi. 13 Isa v. 23. Psalm cxix 69 Lev. v. 1. 2 Tim. iv. 16. Isa. x. 4. Prov xvii. 15. and xxxi. 8, 9.

Q. Is every man that speaks an untruth guilty of lying?

A. No; he is not, if he really think the thing to be true which he speaks, although it may be false.

Q What is it you mean by a lie then?

A. A man's speaking of any thing which he knows to be false, and telling it with a design to deceive.

Q. What is the evil of lying?

A. 1. It is a sin most hateful to God, who is a God of truth. 2 It tends to destroy all human society and commerce among men. 3 It makes a man a child of the devil; for he is a liar, and the father of lies, Prov. vi 17. John viii. 44. Deut. xxxii. 4

Q. Doth not God testify his high displeasure against the sin of lying?

A. Yes, and that even in this world; for God struck Ananias and Sapphira dead with a lie in their mouths.

Q. What is the portion of liars hereafter?

A. All liars have their part with the father of lies in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; for God hath said it, Rev. xxi. 8.

Q. Is it not then one of the worst of names to call a man a liar?

A. Yes; and therefore we should guard against doing it.

Q. But what if the persons so called do deserve the name?

A. Then we should be grieved for it, and reprove him, not in passion, to expose him, but in the spirit of meekness, in order to amend him.

Q. May not a man tell a lie to preserve his own or his neighbour's life?

A. No; for we must not do evil that good may come. Nay, we may not lie, though it were to advance the glory of God, Job xiii. 7. Rom iii. 7, 8. And, though some of the scripture saints may have failed in this respect, we must not follow their example, but live by precept.

Q. What think you of the popish doctrine and practice of equivocations, and of keeping no faith with heretics?

A. They are abominable

Q What do you think of those who lie in jest, to make sport to others?

A. God calls them fools that make a mock of sin, Prov. xiv. 9.

Q. What are those things injurious to our own good name, which the ninth command forbids?

A They are such as thinking or speaking too highly, or too meanly of ourselves; flattering, vaunting, and vain-glorious boasting; accusing ourselves of what we are not guilty; aggravating smaller faults too much; excusing or extenuating sins, when called to a free confession; denying the gifts or graces which God hath given us; rash exposing our infirmities before the wicked; speaking or doing any thing which may be a blot upon our name, Rom. xii. 16. Luke xviii. 11. Exod. iv. 10. 2 Tim. iii. 2. Psalm xii. 3. 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5. Mat. vii. 3. Prov. xxviii. 13. Gen. iii. 12, 13. Job xxvii. 5. Col. ii 18. Prov. 14, 34.

Q. What are the things injurious to our neighbour's good name, here forbidden?

A. All slandering, backbiting, reproaching, scolding, taking up and spreading evil reports, evil speaking, rash judging, or censuring, whispering, tale-bearing, misconstructing the actions, words, or intentions of others; not covering their infirmities, stopping our ears against their vindication; not clearing their innocence when we know it; speaking truth with an ill design against them; being glad at their miscarriage or disgrace; scornful contempt, scoffing; fond admiration of some to the disparagement of others, Psalm l. 20. Job xix 3. Psalm xv. 3. James iv. 11. Rom i. 29, 30 Lev xix. 6. Neh. vi. 6, &c. Rom iii. 8. Psalm lxix. 10. 1 Sam. i. 13, 14. Acts vii. 57. 1 Sam. xxii. 9. Jer. xlviii. 27. Psalm xxxv. 15, 16. Gen xxi. 9. Jude 16.

Q. Though we may not raise a false report, yet may we not repeat it after hearing it?

A. No; for that is to spread it: Wherefore though a false report be laid at our foot, we should be unwilling to take it up, Psalm xv. 3.

Q. Ought we not to discourage all backbiters and talebearers?

A. Yes; for such do "sow discord among brethren, and separate chief friends." And we may suspect, that those who bring such tales to us, will be ready also to take some away, Prov. vi. 19. and xvii. 9. and xxv. 23.

QUESTION LXXIX.

Q. *Which is the Tenth Commandment?*

A. The Tenth Commandment is, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's."

QUESTION LXXX.

Q. *What is required in the Tenth Commandment?*

A. The Tenth Commandment requireth full contentment with our own condition, with a right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbour and all that is his.

Q. In what verse of the New Testament have we this command summed up and explained?

A. In Heb. xiii. 5. "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have."

Q When the answer bears that the command requires full contentment with our condition, doth it mean that we should be content to live in a sinful condition?

A. No; for God quarrels with sinners for such a contentment, Rev. iii. 17.

Q. Doth it mean that we should be insensible or unconcerned under an afflicted condition?

A. No; for God is displeased with this too, Jer. v. 3. Hos vii. 9.

Q. What is the meaning of it then?

A. That we should be well satisfied with that portion of the necessaries and comforts of this life, which God in his wisdom sees fit to bestow upon us, without grudging or repining at his will, but freely acquiescing in God's determination, as that which is best and most fit for us.

Q. Who are those that attain to this contentment?

A. Those who have their spirits suited to their condition.

Q. Are not those the happiest persons in the world?

A. Yes; for they have a mercy that is better than the greatest fulness of earthly things.

Q. May a man as soon attain to this happiness of contentment with a little of the world, as with much of it?

A. Yes: for the apostle Paul, who had *little* of it, was well contented with his *little;* and, upon the occasion of a small supply sent him from Philippi, he saith, "I have all, and abound; I am full," Phil iv. 11, 18. Whereas Ahab, who had a kingdom, was full of vexation and discontent for want of Naboth's vineyard; and so was Haman, though laden with riches and honours, for want of a bow from Mordecai, 1 Kings xxi. 4, 5, 6. Esther v. 11, 12, 13.

Q How do believers arrive at such contentment with a little of the world?

A. They learn it of God, who teacheth them to believe and think upon their own unworthiness; to consider that their Lord had no where to lay his head; that God will give them what is best for them, and that their portion in Christ and eternal life is large enough for all their wants.

Q. How is it that riches do not afford contentment to the men of this world?

A. Besides that the world is but vanity, there is a secret curse attending their enjoyments, which blasts the comfort of them; hence the earthly heart is, like the grave, never satisfied, but still would have more, Eccl. v. 10. Prov. xxx. 15, 16.

Q. Is it covetousness for a man to desire more of this world than what he hath?

A. No; if he desire it for good ends, with submission to God's will, and use honest means to get it.

Q. What then is the covetousness here forbidden?

A. It is to desire the good things which another enjoys, and to grudge at their having of them.

Q May not a man wish for the estate of another, if he design to do more good with it than he doth?

A. No; for the heart is most deceitful, and its purposes variable: Hence he is called a "fool that trusteth in his own heart," Prov. xxviii. 26. Jer. xvii. 9.

Q. Are they not strangers then to their own hearts, who think they would be contented if they had a little more of the world than what they have?

A. Yes; for the desires of the heart enlarge with the estate

Q. Are not those far wiser, who are desirous to obtain the true riches of saving grace, and the promises of the covenant?

A. Yes; for these will abide with them, when other riches will make themselves wings, and fly away from them, and even then when they stand most in need of help.

Q. How may those who are poor attain to contentment with their lot, and be kept from covetousness?

A. By placing their chief happiness in the enjoyment of God; and by considering that their worldly condition is of God's carving, and that they have more than they deserve; that many better have been in worse circumstances; that many are the worse for riches, but few or none the better; and that as they brought nothing into this world, so they shall carry nothing out, Psalm xvi. 5, 6. Hab. iii. 17, 18. Gen. xxxii. 10 Job. i. 21. Heb. xi. 38. Eccl. v. 13. 1 Tim. vi. 7, 8.

Q. Is not to be truly godly the short way to contentment?

A. Yes; for godliness is that unto which only true contentment is annexed, 1 Tim. vi. 6. Christ hath purchased this grace unto all who believe in him.

Q. Have not the godly poor some special arguments to make them easy under their straits?

A. Yes; by considering that God designs these very straits for their good, to keep them humble and depending; that he sees riches would be a snare to draw their hearts away from God; that it is rare to see a rich man eminent in grace; that God hath been far kinder to them in giving them a portion in his well-ordered covenant, a goodly heritage, which is infinitely more excellent and durable than any other.

Q. How shall the rich attain contentment in their full condition?

A. By seeking this grace from God, and not expecting happiness from the things of time; by studying to employ their riches for the glory of God, and the good of others; by keeping still in mind that God in Christ is the soul's portion, that the world cannot give them true comfort, that it cannot lengthen out their lives, nor profit them at the hour of death, Luke xii. 15. Psalm lxii 10. Prov. xi. 4. 2 Cor. xi. 7, 8.

Q. How shall these be content and easy who are reduced from a prosperous state to low circumstances?

A. By considering that God hath absolute dominion over us, hath right to do with his own what he will; that he taketh nothing from us but what he gave, or rather lent to us for a time; that he is holy, just, and wise, and knows what state is fittest for us.

Q What are the advantages of this grace of contentment?

A. It produceth much inward peace, composeth the soul for duty, calms the spirit in adversity, and preserves from many temptations, snares, and sins, which those that are discontented fall into, such as fretting, murmuring, passion, bitterness, envy, lying, stealing, injustice, swearing rashly or falsely, and many others.

Q. What is meant by the right and charitable frame of spirit toward our neighbour and all that is his, which this command requireth?

A. It is to be kindly affectioned to others, to wish their good, to rejoice in their prosperity, and to be sorry for their afflictions, Rom xii. 10, 15. 3 John ii. 3. Heb. xiii. 3.

QUESTION LXXXI.

Q. *What is forbidden in the Tenth Commandment?*

A The Tenth Commandment forbiddeth all discontentment with our own estate, envying or grieving at the good of our neighbour, and all inordinate motions and affections to any thing that is his.

Q. After God had forbidden the sins of stealing and adultery, in the preceding commands, why doth he add, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, nor his wife?"

A. To assure us of the spiritual extent and meaning of the law, and that it forbids the very first motions or risings of sin in the heart; the consideration whereof opened Paul's eyes to see his vileness through indwelling sin, though he was free of gross vices, Rom. vii 7. "I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."

Q. What is the first sin which the answer mentions as here forbidden?

A. Discontentment with our estate, which is the sin of both rich and poor.

Q. Whence do mens discontents with their condition arise?

A. From pride, love to the world, and distrust of God's providence.

Q. How doth it arise from pride?

A. Because it appears that they who are discontented with God's carving, have too high thoughts of themselves: They either think they deserve better at God's hand, or that they could have ordered matters better for themselves than God hath done.

Q. What are the evils of discontentment?

A. Besides those mentioned a little before, it makes men unthankful for mercies, unfit for duties, uneasy to their relations and neighbours; it breeds strifes, debates, law-suits, rebellions, and murders; it robs men of the comfort of their lives, makes their crosses heavier, and provokes God to prolong and add to them.

Q. What is the second sin here forbidden?

A. Envy, which is a secret discontentedness at the prosperous state of others, or a grudging or grieving at their wealth, qualifications, or honours.

Q. What are the evils of this sin of envy?

A. It is heart-murder, and a sin against all reason; yea, it is devilish to be a man's enemy for no other reason but because God is kind to him: 'Tis a quarreling with God's wisdom and goodness; it is a rottenness to the bones; it produceth confusion and every evil work, Mat. xx. 15. Prov. xiv. 30. James iii. 16.

Q. What are those inordinate motions and affections to the things of our neighbour, which are here forbidden?

A. All desires after these things which we cannot have by lawful means, or without wronging our neighbour; and all inclinations to coveting, Col. iii. 5.

QUESTION LXXXII.

Q. *Is any man able perfectly to keep the commandments of God?*

A. No mere man, since the fall, is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them, in thought, word, and deed.

Q. Why is it said in the answer, "No mere man?"

A. To except the Man Christ Jesus, who did perfectly keep God's commands.

Q. Was not Christ a mere man?

A. No; he was both God and Man.

Q. Why is it said, "since the fall?"

A. To except our first parents when in the estate of innocence, who then were able to keep God's commands perfectly.

Q. Why is it said, "is able in this life?"

A. To except the saints in heaven, who are perfectly able to do it there.

Q. Can no saint on earth attain to perfection in keeping God's law?

A. No; for "there is not a just man upon earth that doth good and sinneth not," Eccl vii. 20. 1 John i. 8, 10.

Q. How comes it to be so?

A. Because the best saints here are but renewed in part, and they have remains of corruption in them, which fight against the spiritual and renewed part, Gal. v. 17. And we find the best of scripture saints acknowledging this, and complaining of their imperfections, Job ix. 2, 3. Psalm ix. 13. and cxxx. 3. and cxliii. 2. Isaiah lxiv. 6. Dan. ix. 5. Rom. vii 18, &c.

Q. Are not Noah, Job, and Hezekiah, called perfect men? Gen. vi. 9. Job i. 8. 2 Kings xx. 3.

A. That is not meant of an absolute perfection, or a perfection of degrees; but only of the perfection of sincerity, or a perfection of parts; as the body of an infant is reckoned perfect, though it be not come to the highest perfection. And that the scripture doth not mean absolute perfection, is evident from its recording the sins and imperfections of these very persons which are called perfect, Gen. ix. 21. Job. iii. 1, 3. 2 Chron xxxii. 25.

Q. What is meant by sincerity, or a perfection of parts?

A. A sincere or upright aiming at conformity to the will of God in all things, and a constant pressing on for farther degrees of holiness.

Q. Doth not David say, Judge me, O Lord, according to thy righteousness?" Psalm vii. 8.

A. He speaks there, not of the righteousness of his person, but of the righteousness of his cause, which he defended against his adversaries, and to which he appealed.

Q. Doth not the apostle say, whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin? 1 John iii. 9.

A. The sense is, That the regenerate do not commit sin as they once did, with delight, or full consent of the will; they do not allow sin to reign in them. But that they are not without sin, is evident from 1 John i 8.

Q. Why doth Christ require us to be perfect, Mat. v. 48. if we cannot attain to it?

A. 1. To let us know what he hath right to demand of us. 2. To humble us, and drive us to Christ for perfect righteousness. 3. To teach us to desire, aim at, and press toward perfection in holiness.

Q. In what respect are we guilty of breaking the commands of God?

A. We are guilty of it daily, in thought, word, and deed.

Q. Doth God look upon thoughts of sin as breaches of his law?

A. Yes, Gen. viii. 21. Mat. v. 28. and xv. 19. Jer. iv 14.

QUESTION LXXXIII.

Q. *Are all transgressions of the law equally heinous?*

A Some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.

Q Are all sins equal?

A. No, some are more heinous than others.

Q What is that for sins to be heinous?

A. It is to be more hateful and offensive to a holy God, than others are.

Q. How doth it appear that some sins are more offensive to God than others?

A. From these things; 1. The sin-offering under the law was to be greater than the trespass-offering. 2. Some sins are more severely threatened and punished than others. 3. Some sins are declared not capable of pardon, Lev. ix. 3. Mat xxiii 14. and xii 31.

Q. Why is it said in the answer that some sins are more heinous in the sight of God than others?

A. To teach us by what rule we should judge of the greatness of sins, seeing many are apt to make light of that which is heinous before God, who certainly is the proper judge in this matter.

Q. What is it that makes some sins more heinous than others?

A. Some sins are more heinous in themselves, or in their own nature; and some by reason of certain aggravations attending them.

Q. What are those sins which are more heinous in their own nature than others?

A. Sins against the first table of the law, or those which are committed more immediately against God, are more heinous than sins against the second table, or those which are immediately against man; as, for instance, sacrilege is more heinous than theft, idolatry than adultery, blasphemy against God, than defaming of our neighbour, 1 Sam. ii 25.

Q. Are not some of the sins against the first table more heinous than others?

A. Yes; and we find atheism and idolatry marked out as sins of the greatest magnitude, Exod v. 2. Jer. xliv. 4.

Q. Are not some of the sins against the second table more heinous than others, in their own nature?

A. Yes; and murder is noted for a most heinous and crying sin; and so is oppression, especially of the widow and fatherless, Gen. iv. 10. Exod. xxii. 23.

Q. Are heinous and crying sins capable of forgiveness?

A. Yes; upon true faith and repentance, Isa. i. 18 1 Cor. vi. 11.

Q. What are the only fountains of pardon which sinners must look to?

A. The free grace of God, and the meritorious blood of Jesus Christ, Luke vii 42. Eph. i. 7. 1 John i. 7.

Q. What are the most heinous of all sins in the world?

A. The sin against the Holy Ghost, being a sin unto death, which is not forgiven, Mat. xii. 31. 1 John v. 16.

Q. What is the sin against the Holy Ghost?

A. It may be described, an apostacy, or turning from God, and his truths and ways, after clear illumination and a fair profession; and sinning wilfully, with hatred, malice and despite, against Christ and his people, and continuing impenitent therein to the end, Mat. xii 31, 32. Heb. vi 4, 5, 6 and x, 26, 29.

Q. What are the aggravations which make some sins more heinous than others?

A. They are the particular circumstances which do attend them, that make them greater than otherwise they would be. And from scripture we find sins do receive their aggravations, 1. From the persons offending. 2. From the parties offended. 3 From the means against which sins are committed. 4 From the manner of committing sin. 5. From the time of sinning. 6. From the place where sins are committed.

Q. How is sin aggravated from the person offending?

A. Sin is aggravated, if the person guilty be of age and experience, or be eminent for his gifts, profession, station, or office in the world; so that his example may encourage or draw others into sin, 2 Sam. xii. 14. 1 Kings xiv. 16. Mic. iii. 5. Rom. ii 24. Gal. ii. 13.

Q. Are not the sins of Christians more heinous than the sins of Heathens? A. Yes.

Q. Are not the sins of those children who have had religious education and examples, more heinous than the sins of others? A. Yes

Q. How is sin aggravated from the parties offended?

A. Sin is aggravated, when it is committed immediately against God and his perfections, against Christ and his grace, against the Holy Spirit and his operations; against men in eminent stations, our superiors and friends to whom we are much obliged; against the souls of men, and those who are dear to Christ, Psal. li. 4. Rom. ii. 4. Mat. xxi. 38. Heb. xii. 25. Eph. iv. 30. Acts vii. 51. Num. xii. 8. Isa. iii. 5. Prov. xxx. 17. Psal. xli. 9. Ezek. xiii. 19. Mat. xviii. 6. 1 Cor. viii. 12.

Q. How is sin aggravated from the means against which it is committed?

A. Sin is much aggravated, when it is committed against a clear and lively dispensation of gospel-light and love, against the most gracious calls and offers, against the light of nature, and the convictions of conscience: against mercies, threatenings, and judgments; against counsel and admonitions; against long patience and good examples; against church-censures and civil punishments; against prayers and purposes, vows, and covenants, Mat. xi. 21, 23. John xv. 22. Rom. i 26. Dan. v. 22. Deut. xxxii. 6. Amos iv. 9. Jer v 3. Prov. xxix. 1. Tit iii. 10. Prov xxiii. 35. Psal. lxxviii 36, 37. Eccl. v. 4 Lev. xxvi 25.

Q. How is sin aggravated from the manner of committing it.

A. When a man sins wilfully and without temptation, presumptuously and without fear, deliberately and with contrivance, obstinately and with resolution, impudently and with boasting, willingly and with delight, maliciously and with despite, customarily and with continuance, openly and with contempt. Likewise sin is much aggravated, when a man is guilty of doing that which he condemns in others, of relapsing into sin after repentance, of doing evil under a cloke of religion, or of teaching and encouraging others to sin, Jer. vi. 16. Num. xv. 30. Psal. xxxvi. 4. Psal. lii. 1. Prov. ii 14. Isa. lvii. 17. Zech. vii. 11. 2 Pet. i. 20. Rom. i. 32. and ii 21. Rev. ii 14.

Q. How is sin aggravated from the time of sinning?

A. Sin becomes more heinous, when it is committed upon the Sabbath-day, or when the person ought to have been at divine worship, or after solemn ordinances and engagements to be the Lord's, or in time of affliction, when the Lord is calling to humiliation, Ezek xxiii. 38 Isa. xxii. 12, 13. and lviii. 3. Num. xxv. 6 2 Chron. xxviii. 22. Isa. i. 1.

Q. How may sin be aggravated from the place of sinning?

A. When it is committed in a land of light, in a place dedicated to the worship of God, in a place of gracious deliverances, or in a public place before others, who may thereby be tempted and ensnared, Isa xxvi. 10. 1 Sam. ii. 22. Psal. cvi. 7. 2 Sam. xvi. 22.

QUESTION LXXXIV.

Q *What doth every sin deserve?*

A Every sin deserveth God's wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come.

Q. What is meant by God's wrath and curse due to sin?

A. Those dreadful punishments, which are the effects of the sin-revenging justice of God, and the condemning sentence of his broken law, both here and hereafter.

Q. Doth the least sin deserve eternal punishment?

A. Yes.

Q. How is that evident?

A. Because every sin is an offence done against an infinitely holy and righteous God, and his just law; wherefore God's justice doth demand infinite satisfaction for it, Gal. iii. 10 Rev. vi. 23. Ezek. xviii. 4.

Q. How doth it appear that there is so much evil in every sin?

A. Because every sin in its own nature is a walking contrary to God, and a contemning of him who is infinitely good: It strikes against his sovereignty, his infinite power, his wisdom, his goodness, and holiness, Lev. xxvi. 40. Psal. x. 13. James ii. 10, 11. 1 Cor. x. 22. Jer. ii. 5. Heb. i. 13.

Q. Is there no ground for the Popish distinction of sins venial and mortal?

A. No; for every sin in its own nature is mortal and deadly; and though every sin be venial or pardonable through Christ, yet in itself it deserves eternal punishment, Rom. vi. 23. Deut. xxvii. 26. Rom. i. 18.

Q. Is there not more evil in the least sin, than the sufferings of a finite creature can make atonement for?

A. Yes; and therefore the sufferings of the damned, being never satisfactory, must be eternal.

Q. Cannot the least sin be expiated by any thing but the blood of Christ?

A. No; Heb. ix. 22.

QUESTION LXXXV.

Q. *What doth God require of us, that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us for sin?*

A. To escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, God requireth of us faith in Jesus Christ, repentance unto life, with the diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption.

Q. How know you that the wrath of God is due to us for every sin?

A. Because the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness of men, and every sin is a contempt of an infinite God, Rom. i. 18. Psal x 13.

Q Hath God revealed any way for escaping that wrath which is due to us for sin?

A. Yes; namely, the way of faith and repentance, with a diligent use of all the means of grace.

Q. Doth God require faith, repentance, and the use of means, in order to satisfy for sin, and purchase salvation to us?

A. No; for that would be to make a Saviour of our duties, and to render Christ's death in vain, Gal ii. 21.

Q. Why then doth God require these things of us?

A. He requires them only as means for applying the purchase of Christ's death, and communicating the grace he hath merited unto us, Luke xxiv 47. Rom. 1. 16, 17. Luke xxi. 36

Q. Are faith, repentance, and other duties, the conditions of our salvation?

A Yes; they may be called so, if by conditions we understand no more but that they are necessary means of our salvation, as being appointed by God for applying the righteousness of Christ, which is the only meritorious and pleadable condition of our salvation.

Q Could not God save us by Christ's righteousness, without faith, repentance, or any other means?

A. Whatever God might do in his absolute sovereignty, it ought to satisfy us, that God hath expressly revealed his will in this matter, and hath declared that it is through the use of these means only that he will communicate to us the benefits of redemption; and this makes them absolutely necessary to all who expect salvation by Christ: And indeed it would not be for the honour of God to pardon or save any that go on in sin, and neglect Christ and his worship.

QUESTION LXXXVI.

Q. *What is faith in Jesus Christ?*

A. Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.

Q. Is not faith taken in different senses in scripture?

A. Yes; sometimes it is taken for the doctrine of faith, and sometimes for the grace of faith.

Q. How is it otherwise distinguished?

A. Into historical faith, the faith of miracles, and saving faith.

Q. Is it saving faith for a man to believe that there is a God, or that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of sinners, or that the Bible is true?

A. No; for that is only historical faith, and the devils come this length, James ii. 19.

Q What is historical faith?

A. It is the assent of the understanding unto the truths revealed in the word, whereby a man believes and gives credit to them as he doth to the truths of a history. So did these, Mat. xiii. 20. John ii. 23. Acts viii. 13 and Acts xxvi 27.

Q. What more is there in saving faith than for a man to assent or give credit to the divine testimony?

A. If the assent be strong and full, it will indeed bring along with it the other acts of faith; that is, if a man not only assent to the things revealed in the gospel as true, but also firmly believe that they are as valuable and excellent as they are held forth to be, then he cannot but close with them. But if our assent doth only regard the truth of the things proposed, and not their goodness and suitableness to us, it is not true and saving: for, where faith is true, there is not only an assent of the mind to the verity of gospel-truths, but also a consent of the heart unto them, as worthy of all acceptation, 1 Tim i. 15. Rom. x. 10.

Q. What is the faith of miracles?

A. It is a peculiar confidence in the power of God, for producing of miraculous effects, which many had in the first times of the gospel both actively and passively. Some had faith to heal, and others to be healed; and both these were sometimes found in persons void of saving faith, as in Judas and the unthankful lepers.

Q Why is faith in the answer called a grace?

A Because it is God's free gift without any deserving in us, Eph. ii 8.

Q. Why is it called a saving grace?

A. Because there is no salvation without it, and all those who have it shall be saved, Mark xvi 16.

Q How is it that faith doth save us?

A. Not by virtue of any worth in faith, or of its being a deed or work of ours; but because faith is the grace that takes hold of the righteousness of Christ, by which only we are justified and saved.

Q. Why then are we said to be justified and saved by faith?

A. Because faith is the instrument and means of our justification and salvation.

Q Is not faith the fruit of Christ's purchase?

A. Yes: For it is given in the behalf of Christ to believers; he sends his Spirit to work faith, and hence he is called both the "Author and Finisher of faith," Phil i 29. Eph i. 17, 19. Heb. xii. 2.

Q What mean you by the righteousness of Christ, which is the matter and ground of our justification before God?

A Christ doing or dying, or all that he did and suffered for us as our Surety and Cautioner. See before, Question 53. page 349

Q. Is it the same righteousness then, which we find sometimes called the righteousness of God, and sometimes the righteousness of faith? Rom. x. 3, 6.

A. Yes, it is the very same; and is called the righteousness of God, because it is of God's devising and of God's performing, he being God that wrought it out for us. It is called the righteousness of faith, because it is by or through faith that the righteousness of Christ becomes ours; and hence we find it sometimes called the "righteousness of God by faith," Phil iii. 9.

Q. What is the proper object of faith?

A. The general object of faith is the whole word of God; faith doth assent and consent to all its truths, offers, commands, promises, and threatenings: But the special object of faith is Christ and his Surety-righteousness; for it is to this the penitent soul doth look as the only ground of his justification before God, 2 Cor ii 2.

Q. What are the principal acts of justifying or saving faith?

A There are two mentioned in the answer, namely, receiving and resting upon Christ

Q What are we to understand by these two acts of faith?

A. 1. To receive Christ is to make choice of Christ, and embrace the offer of him as our Surety, and to consent with a hearty approbation to the gospel way of justification and salvation through Christ 2. To rest upon Christ is to adventure our all upon a crucified Jesus, by trusting in him alone, and laying the full weight and stress of our souls and our whole salvation upon him, as the only foundation and ground-stone laid in Zion for perishing sinners to rest on, Psalm ii. 12. 1 Pet. ii. 6

Q. Why is faith said to rest upon Christ alone in the answer?

A. To shew that sinners must not rest partly upon Christ and partly upon their own doings for salvation, but upon Jesus Christ alone

Q. Doth not the soul's resting on Christ import that it is laden and burdened when it comes to Christ?

A. Yes; for the soul is burdened, not only with the fears of wrath, but also with the guilt and pollution of sin, and with the power of indwelling corruption, which it longs to get rid of.

Q What is there in Christ to give rest to the burdened soul?

A. There is in him a fullness of merit to expiate guilt, satisfy justice, and obtain cleansing and purity to the soul; yea, there is a fullness of the Spirit in him, to renew and sanctify the natures of all who come to him.

Q. Must not we by faith receive and rest on Christ in all his three offices, of Prophet, Priest, and King?

A. Yes, we must receive and rest on Christ, 1. As our Priest, by renouncing all confidence in our own doings, and being content to be justified by Christ's sacrifice and righteousness only. 2. We must receive and rest upon Christ, as our Prophet, by renouncing all our carnal reasonings, and submitting to be taught by Christ, and to learn and believe according to the revelation of his word. 3 We must receive and rest upon Christ as our King, by renouncing our own wills and inclinations, and subjecting our whole man, hearts and wills, to Christ, to be inclined and ruled by his Spirit, according to the directions of his word.

Q. Hath saving faith any other act besides these of receiving and resting upon Jesus Christ?

A. Yes; for saving faith doth also receive and believe the whole word of God, and that because of the divine testimony; and acteth differently upon the several parts thereof, giving credit to its histories and prophecies, yielding obedience to its commands, trembling at its threatenings, and embracing its promises as infallibly true and certain: Though still the receiving and resting upon Christ, as tendered in the gospel promises for salvation, be the chief and main acts of saving faith, John iv. 42. 1 John v. 10. Acts xxiv. 14. Rom. xvi. 26. Isaiah lxvi. 2 Heb xl. 12. Isaiah xxvi. 3.

Q. For what ends are we by faith to receive and rest upon Christ?

A. For salvation, *that is*, for our complete salvation, not only from wrath, but from the filth, power, and being of sin, and all the effects of it; so that it includes justification, sanctification, and eternal glory.

Q. What is the ground upon which we are warranted to receive and rest upon Christ for salvation?

A. Upon this, that he is offered to us in the gospel.

Q. Unto whom is Christ offered in the gospel?

A. Not to believers only, but to all who hear the gospel, even the greatest sinners, Mark xvi. 15. Rom. x. 18. Isa. xlv. 22. and xlvi. 12.

Q. By whom is Christ offered to us in the gospel?

A. By his father, by himself, by his Spirit, and by his ministers, Mat. xxii. 2, 3. Isaiah lxv. 1. Rev. iii. 20, 22. Mark xvi. 15.

Q. Upon what terms is Christ offered unto us?

A. He is offered, 1. Freely, without money or price, or without regard to any good thing in us, but merely to our need, Isaiah lv. 1. and lxv. 1. 2. Christ is offered to us wholly and undividedly, in all his offices, of Prophet, Priest, and King; in all which we must receive him as before mentioned.

Q. Do any refuse Christ who have him offered to them?

A. Yes; the most part do refuse him, John i. 11. Isaiah liii. 1.

Q. Who are they that will be reckoned refusers of Christ?

A. All who do not believe the report of the gospel, and embrace the offer made unto them.

Q Is saving faith a sure proof of our being elected to eternal life?

A. Yes; and therefore it is called the faith of God's elect; and it is said, "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed," Tit. i. 1. Acts xiii. 48.

Q Why is faith called precious in scripture? 1 Peter i. 7. 2 Peter i 1.

A. Because it is honoured of God to be the instrument of our justification, to be the eye that discerns Christ, the hand that takes hold of him, and the bond of our union with him, it is the spring of the other graces, and doth set them a-work; it is the means of our spiritual life and supplies, and of our peace and joy, Rom. v 1, 2, 3, &c. Eph. iii. 17. Gal. ii 20 Rom. xv. 13.

Q. Why doth God put such respect upon faith above the other graces?

A. Because faith puts the highest honour upon his beloved Son, and approves of God's device of saving us through him; it strips the creature of all ground of boasting, and doth highly exalt free grace; it gives God all the glory of our salvation, which is most acceptable to him, Mat. xvii. 5. 1 Pet. ii. 7. Rom. iii. 27. and iv 16. Eph ii 7, 8.

Q. By what marks may we know if we have saving faith?

A. True faith produceth a high esteem of Christ, and worketh by love; it softens and purifies the heart; it vents itself much in prayer and good works, and looses the heart

from earthly things, 1 Peter ii. 7. Gal. v. 6. Mark ix. 24. Acts xv. 9. Heb. iv. 14, 16. James ii 18. 2 Cor. iv. 18.

Q. Have all believers saving faith in the same degree?

A. No; for some are weak, while others are strong.

Q. How doth the weakness of faith discover itself?

A. In much doubting and staggering at the promises, in depending upon the means more than Christ; in living much by sense, in distrusting of God, and fainting in the day of adversity.

Q. How may we know if there be faith in reality amidst such weaknesses and signs of unbelief?

A. It is a hopeful evidence, if the soul in the meantime be mourning for its unbelief, crying for more faith, and looking sincerely to Christ for righteousness and strength.

Q. What are the evidences of a strong faith?

A. Where faith is strong, the soul will be aiming at the Redeemer's honour in all its actions. The love of Christ will constrain more powerfully to hate sin, and live godly, than the fear of hell or hope of reward can do: The soul will rejoice in tribulation, and be much in the exercise of praise; it will trust God in time of danger, and look through all discouragements to the faithfulness of God, and rely upon him.

QUESTION LXXXVII.

Q. *What is repentance unto life?*

A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of the true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavour after new obedience.

Q. Why is repentance called a grace, and a saving grace?

A. See the answers before concerning Faith.

Q. Why is it here called repentance unto life?

A. So true repentance is called, Acts xi. 18 because it is a necessary means to attain eternal life, and to distinguish it from the sorrow of the world that worketh death, 2 Cor. vii. 10.

Q. What is that sorrow of the world?

A. It is that which we call a legal repentance, that hath no good effect; being a sorrow only for some gross sin, for fear of wrath, but not a sorrow for all sin as it dishonours God, such as gospel-penitents have.

Q. Can a man by his own natural powers attain to gospel-repentance?

A. No; for the heart by nature is like a stone, and none but the Spirit of God can take it away, and give a heart of flesh, according to Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

Q. What are the parts of true repentance, held forth in the answer?

A. There are six: 1. A true sense of sin. 2. An apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ. 3. A grief for sin. 4. A hatred of sin. 5. A turning from sin. 6. A turning to God, and the ways of new obedience.

Q. What is the true sense of sin, which is necessary to repentance unto life?

A. It is a heart-affecting discovery of the guilt, malignity, and aggravations of sin, our undone state by it, and our inability to deliver ourselves from it, which wounds and distresses the conscience, and fills the mind with perplexity and restlessness, until it can see some ground of hope, Psal. xxxviii. 3, 4. Acts ii. 37.

Q. Wherefore is such a sense of sin necessary in penitents?

A. To make sin hateful, and Christ desirable in their eyes; for it is only such sick souls who will value the physician, Mat. ix. 12, 13.

Q. Are there not many who may be affected with a sense of sin, who never become true penitents?

A. Yes; there is frequently conviction and trouble for sin, without conversion.

Q. What is the difference between the convictions and trouble of unconverted persons, and those of true penitents?

A. The convictions and trouble of the one are only for some gross sins, arising from a natural conscience, and fears of hell; they are of short continuance, and are cured by natural means: But the convictions and trouble of the other are for all sins whatsoever, inward and outward, secret and open; they arise from the Holy Spirit, a view of the evil of sin, and the injury done to God thereby: they are abiding, and are only cured by the blood of Christ.

Q. What mean you by the apprehension of the mercy of God, which is needful to true repentance?

A. That it is needful to bring a lost sinner to true repentance, that he discover that God is merciful, ready to forgive, and willing to be reconciled to repenting and returning prodigals.

Q. Why is this needful?

A. Because, without it, a deep sense of his sin is ready to overwhelm the soul with despair, as it did Judas.

Q. After what way and manner is the mercy of God discoverable to guilty sinners?

A. Only in and through Christ the Mediator, who hath given satisfaction to the justice of God for sin.

Q. Can then the general goodness of God, or his absolute mercy, be any relief to convinced sinners?

A. No; because God is also infinite in justice and holiness, and therefore must be a consuming fire to sinners out of Christ.

Q. What is that true grief for sin which is necessary to true repentance?

A. It is a hearty sorrow and mourning of the soul for committing such an abominable thing as sin is, and that mainly because sin hath contemned and dishonoured God, it hath crucified Jesus Christ, it hath grieved the Holy Spirit, it hath deformed and defiled our souls, it hath disabled us from glorifying God, and debarred us from communion with him.

Q. What is that hatred of sin which is necessary in true repentance?

A. It is an inward abhorrence of sin, as the most abominable thing, and a loathing of ourselves because of it, Jer. xxxi. 19.

Q. Can any who hate sin make a sport of it?

A. No.

Q. Whence is it that a true penitent doth hate sin?

A. Because sin is most hateful to God, it is the murderer of Christ, and an enemy to his own soul.

Q. What kind of hatred doth the true penitent bear to sin?

A. 1. It is a deep and implacable hatred, which makes him aim at the utter ruin and extirpation of sin in his soul. 2. It is an universal hatred; for seeing the true penitent doth hate sin as sin, he must hate every sin, whether secret or open, pleasant or profitable, in himself or in others, Rom. vii. 24. Psalm cxix. 128.

Q. Is not the soul's turning from sin an essential part of true repentance? A. Yes.

Q. What kind of turning must it be?

A. 1. It must be a turning from sin in heart, with a real grief for it, and hatred of it, Psalm xxxviii. 18. Ezekiel xxxvi. 31. 2 It must be an universal turning from sin, both in the heart and in the life, without reserving of one known sin, Ezek. xviii. 31. 3. It must be attended with turning to God, and the ways of new obedience, Isaiah i. 16, 17. Isaiah lv. 7.

Q. Is turning from sin always a sure sign of true repentance?

A. Not always; for we read of some who turn, but not to the Most High; they may cease to do evil, and not learn to do well; they may turn from one sin to another, from profaneness to superstition, or from presumption to despair, Hos. vii. 16. Jer. iv. 1.

Q. Is not turning from sin, when it is followed with turning to the Lord, a certain evidence of true repentance?

A Yes; for these two are the very essential parts of it.

Q. What is this "turning to the Lord," which is essential to true repentance?

A. It imports, 1. Our applying to God in Christ for pardon of sin, and cleansing from it. 2. Our making choice of God for our God. 3. Our having the outgoings of our hearts and affections to him, as our portion and happiness 4. Our giving up ourselves to his service and obedience, Isaiah lv. 7. Jer iii. 22. Isaiah xxvi. 8. Psalm cxix. 57, 58, 59.

Q. How may we know if our "turning from sin to God," be true and real?

A. When it is accompanied with a full purpose of, and sincere endeavours after new obedience; for purposes to continue in sin, or negligence in God's service, are inconsistent with true repentance.

Q. Why is the patient believer's obedience called "new obedience?"

A. 1 Because it springs from new principles, faith and love. 2. It is done for new ends, not for worldly interest, but to please God, and to advance his glory. 3. It is performed in a new manner, to wit, with the heart, and by faith looking to Christ for strength to do it, and for righteousness to make it acceptable to God.

Q What may we think of their repentance, who live in the neglect of duty, or in the practice of sin afterwards?

A. We may think that their profession of repentance hath not been sincere

Q. Can any man look for pardon or salvation without repentance?

A. No; for Christ hath expressly told us, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," Luke xiii. 3.

Q. May a man delay his repentance until he come to a death-bed?

A. By no means; for many die very suddenly, neither have we power of ourselves to repent when we will, and men turn hardened in sin by continuing in it.

Q. Is there room for repentance for old sinners, and those who have been notoriously wicked?

A. Yes; for if they repent, God hath said he will abundantly pardon, Isaiah lv. 7. And we have instances of his doing so, 1 Tim. i. 13, 14, 15.

Q. But how shall we attain to true repentance?

A. We must cry earnestly to God for it, and plead his promises of giving it to those who ask it of him, James i. 5. Ezek. xxxvi. 36, 37. And we must look frequently to Christ crucified, whom we have pierced with our sins, Zech. xii. 10.

Q. Is it not said of Esau, that he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears? Heb. xii. 17.

A. It is not said there, that Esau sought the grace of repentance from God to his own soul, but only that he sought of his father Isaac that he might repent of giving the blessing to his brother Jacob; which indeed he could not obtain: But it had been well for him, had he been as careful to seek God's blessing as his father's.

Q. Hath not repentance several counterfeits, which we ought to beware of?

A. Yes: For Saul confessed his sin, Ahab had outward expressions of mourning, Judas and Felix had great convictions and terrors; but none of these did turn from their sins to God in Christ for mercy.

Q. Do we need repentance only at our first turning to God?

A Believers, through their whole lives, have need to be daily repenting and making application to Christ's blood, because they are daily sinning by infirmity, and falling short of their duty.

QUESTION LXXXVIII.

Q *What are the outward means, whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption?*

A. The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption, are, his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation.

Q What do you mean by Christ's ordinances here?

A. All those means of grace and salvation which he hath appointed in his word.

Q. May not ordinances of man's appointment be made use of for our spiritual benefit?

A. No; for these the Spirit of God doth call *will-worship* and *vain things*, upon which we cannot expect his blessing, Col ii. 23. Mat. xv. 9.

Q. What are these benefits of redemption which are communicated to us in the use of Christ's ordinances?

A. They are many; such as knowledge, conviction, conversion, faith, repentance, pardon, peace, spiritual life, strength, &c.

Q. What are the ordinances of Christ, by which he communicates these benefits to us?

A They are, the word, the sacraments, prayer, praise, a gospel ministry, church government and discipline, religious fasting, vowing, conference, meditation, self-examination, &c.

Q. Why are these ordinances called means of grace, or of salvation?

A Because by them, or through them, the Holy Spirit conveys grace into his people's souls, and thereby promotes their salvation.

Q. Which of these ordinances doth he chiefly make use of for that end?

A. Especially the word, sacraments, and prayer; but not excluding the rest from being also useful that way.

Q. Why are these three called the *outward* means of salvation?

A. To distinguish them from meditation, faith, repentance, and such inward means.

Q. Why are they called the *ordinary* means?

A. Because they are God's common and usual way of conveying grace.

Q. Doth not God sometimes make use of extraordinary means for converting sinners?

A. Yes; as, in the primitive times, he frequently made use of the miraculous gift of tongues, healing, casting out devils, inflicting of judgments, and sometimes voices from heaven, and earthquakes, as means to convert souls; as in the case of Paul and the jailor.

Q. Are the ordinances means of salvation to all who enjoy them?

A No; instead of that, they are the savour of death unto death, to many who have them and abuse them, 2 Cor. ii. 16. Isaiah lv. 11.

Q. To whom are they made effectual to salvation?

A. To the elect only.

Q. Whence have the ordinances that efficacy?

A. Not from themselves, but from the blessing and Spirit of God, 1 Cor. iii. 7.

QUESTION LXXXIX.

Q. *How is the word made effectual to salvation?*

A. The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation.

Q. Who is it that makes the word effectual to salvation?

A. The Spirit of God.

Q. How are we to use the word, if we would have it made effectual to salvation?

A. We must both read it, and hear it preached.

Q What need we go to hear sermons, when we can read the bible, or as good sermons at home?

A. Because it hath pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe; and he calls us to hear, that our souls may live; for (saith he) "Faith comes by hearing," 1 Cor. i. 21. Isaiah lv. 3. Rom. x 17.

Q. Do they not slight God's ordinances for saving souls, who slight the preaching of the word? A. Yes

Q. Is not the reading of the word God's ordinance for the conversion and salvation of souls, as well as the preaching of it?

A. Yes, as is evident from Deut. xvii. 19. Acts viii. 28, 29. Col. iv. 16.

Q. Why is it said in the answer, especially the preaching of the word?

A. Because it pleaseth the Lord to honour the preaching of the word more frequently and usually to convince and convert souls; as is manifest both from scripture and experience, 1 Cor. i. 21. Mat. xxviii. 19. Rom i. 16. and x. 14, 15, 16, 17. Acts ii. 37, and iv. 2, 4. and vi. 7. and viii. 5, 6. and x. 44. and xi. 19, 20. and xiii 48. and xvii. 3, 4. and xviii. 8, 9, 10 and xxvi. 18.

Q. Whence is it that the preaching of the word is so honoured?

A. Because it is an ordinance instituted for explaining and applying the word, which God makes use of to awaken, convince, rebuke, exhort, and comfort souls; and to speak directly and particularly to the consciences of men. And, seeing God hath thought fit to institute a standing ministry in his church, for these very purposes, we may expect he will own and bless it, 2 Tim: iv. 2. Acts xxvi 18. 2 Cor. v. 20. Eph. iv. 12. As, under the law, God had those who gave the sense of the word, and caused the people to understand it; so, under the gospel, he hath a convincing ministry, by which the secrets of mens hearts are made manifest, Neh. viii. 8. 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.

Q. Would it not be a better way to convince and convert souls, to send an angel, or one from the dead, unto them?

A. No; for we have greater evidence of the truth, certainty, and divinity of the word of God, than we could have of any such apparition; so that, if men do not hear the prophets and apostles, neither would they be persuaded though one rose from the dead, Luke xvi. 31.

Q. What use doth the Spirit of God make of the word, in order to the salvation of men?

A. He makes use of it to convince and convert sinners, and to build up the saints, as set forth in the answer.

Q. How is the word made the means of convincing sinners?

A. By searching out hidden sins, and discovering the thoughts and intents of the heart; and by laying before us the evil and malignity of sin in contemning God, the pollution of sin in making us odious in his sight, and the guilt of sin in drawing eternal wrath and damnation upon us, Heb. iv. 12. Acts ii. 37.

Q. How is the word made the means of conversion?

A. The Spirit of God writes the threatenings, precepts, and promises of it upon the heart; so that the soul is brought under the affecting impressions of the reality of the things of the other world, the evil of sin, and excellency of Christ and holiness; whereby the man is gradually changed into a new creature.

Q. Is there not a difference between the words, *convincing* and *converting* of a sinner?

A. Yes; for a sinner may be convinced without being converted, but he cannot be converted without being convinced.

Q. Is not the efficacy of the word very powerful in conversion?

A. Yes; and upon that account the scripture likens it to rain, to light, to fire, to a hammer, and to a sword, Isa. lv. 10, 11. Psalm cxix. 105. Jer. xxiii. 29. Heb iv. 12.

Q. Wherein doth the wonderful efficacy of the word appear?

A. In this, that one plain word or sentence of it will prevail more with the soul than the most rhetorical discourses, or cogent arguments of men; it doth sometimes of a sudden turn the tide of the heart and stream of the affections to another course; it dispossesses satan, and throws down his strong holds; it persuades men to mortify darling lusts, and resist the strongest temptations to sin; it causes men to see things in another light, to abhor what they loved, and love what before they abhorred:—Yea, so great is the change that the word makes upon men, in conversion, that the scripture calls it a creation, a regeneration, and a resurrection.

Q. What is conversion?

A. It is the implanting of new habits and principles in the soul, whereby there is an universal change wrought in the mind, heart, and life; the whole man is turned from the creature to God, from self to Christ, and from sin to duty: the soul is conformed to the image of God, and the will is subdued to his will; and the man studies to please God in a holy life. In a word, conversion is the same thing with regeneration, or effectual calling. (See more of it before, Question 31. page 347)

Q Of what use is the word to those who are converted?

A. It doth build them up in holiness and comfort, through faith unto salvation, Acts xx. 32. 2 Tim. iii. 15. Rom xv. 4.

Q. What is imported in building up of the converted?

A. 1. It supposes that there is a good foundation laid, by their believing and resting upon Christ crucified, and receiving grace from him. 2 It imports their growing in grace, and that there is added to them more knowledge, more faith, more love, more strength, more holiness, and more comfort.

Q. What mean you by holiness?

A. It is a principle of new life, which inclines the soul to hate all sin, and to love what is pure and pleasing to God, and to study conformity in the whole man to the nature and will of God.

Q. How doth the word build up converted persons in *holiness*?

A. 1. By discovering to them the defects of their graces and duties. 2. By finding and reproving every lust and hidden sin. 3. By shewing them more and more of the evil and deformity of all sin. 4. By fortifying them against the suggestions of satan, wicked men, and the corrupt heart. 5. By pointing forth their duty, and discovering to them more and more of the beauty and necessity of holiness. 6. By setting before them the attractive examples of Christ and the scripture saints 7. By directing them where to go for strength for every duty.

Q. How doth the word build them up in *comfort*?

A. 1. By furnishing them with marks and evidences of the work of grace in their souls. 2. By bringing to them the refreshing promises of pardon through the blood of Jesus Christ. 3. By discovering to them the promises of persevering grace, and of new supplies of strength, both for work and warfare, duty and difficulty. 4. By assuring them of the unalterable nature of Christ's love, and of the well-ordered covenant. 5 By holding forth to them the great and glorious things laid up for them hereafter.

Q. How doth the Spirit, by the word, build up the saints in holiness and comfort?

A. He doth it through faith, or by their exercising faith upon the truths and promises of the word; whereby they firmly embrace them, and feed upon them, Acts xv. 9. Rom. xv. 13. 1 Peter i 5, 6.

Q. Wherefore hath the word so little efficacy in converting and building us up in our duty?

A. Because we have provoked the Spirit of God to withdraw from the preaching of the word, and we come not to it with preparation and prayer, faith and attention; or else the good seed falls upon rocks, upon the high-way-side, or among thorns.

QUESTION XC.

Q. *How is the word to be read and heard, that it may become effectual to salvation?*

A. That the word may become effectual to salvation, we must attend thereunto with diligence, preparation, and prayer, receive it with faith and love, lay it up in our hearts, and practise it in our lives.

Q. Is the word of God effectual to the salvation of all who read and hear it?

A. No; for many do read and hear it, yea, understand and remember it too, who do not truly believe it.

Q. Is it warrantable for common people to read the scriptures?

A. Yes; for Christ commands it, and the Bereans are commended for it, John v. 39. Acts xvii. 11.

Q. Have they warrant to preach the word also?

A. None have warrant to preach the word but those who have gifts for it, and are duly called to it, Rom. x. 14, 15.

Q. Ought not all true Christians to bear a great love to God's word?

A. Yes; for it is the directory of our lives, our counsellor in straits, our support in the day of affliction, and the book in which we find our evidences for heaven.

Q. Should not the consideration of the Author, design, and usefulness of this book, engage us to read it carefully?

A. Yes; for we should look upon it as a *golden epistle*, indited by the Spirit of God; we should receive it as a *love-letter* from heaven, opening up God's designs of love to our souls; we should go to it as for our daily food and subsistence, and daily enquire in it for the will of God, and hereby consult with God about our duty in all cases.

Q. At what times ought we to read the Bible?

A. Not only upon the Lord's day, but also upon week-days, both morning and evening, seeing we have such constant occasion for it to quicken us in duty, encourage us in trials, resolve us in doubts, and strengthen us against temptations

Q. In what manner ought we to read the word of God?

A. We should first look up to God for his blessing upon it, and then we should read with faith, reverence, and application to ourselves, as if we were particularly named in the precepts, promises, reproofs, threatenings, and consolations of it; and carefully observe those which are most applicable to us. And, in reading every part, we should still keep Christ in our eye, as the end, scope, and substance of the whole scriptures.

Q. In what manner ought we to hear the word read and preached to us?

A. Something is to be done before, something in time of it, and something after it.

Q. What things are needful before hearing the word, that it may be effectual to our salvation?

A. Two things; namely, preparation and prayer.

Q What is that *preparation* which is needful before hearing of the word?

A. We must study to lay aside all worldly thoughts and cares, and get awful impressions of the majesty of God, whose word we are to hear; and be willing humbly to be taught of him. We should enquire into our state, our wants and sins, and be content to put away every sin that the word condemns, and comply with every duty that the word calls for.

Q. What is the need of such preparation before solemn duties?

A. The greatness and jealousy of that God whom we approach, do call for it; and it is a good token of the success of duty when the heart is prepared for it, Psalm x. 17. "Thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear"

Q Hath the word no success at any time upon unprepared souls?

A. Though they have no right to expect it, yet God, in his sovereign mercy, is sometimes found of them that sought him not, Isaiah lxvi. 1.

Q. May any man go to the word, depending upon his own preparation?

A. No, but only in dependence on Christ's merits, and the Spirit's assistance

Q What kind of prayer is requisite before hearing the word?

A. Humble and fervent prayer, both in secret and in our families.

Q. What should we pray for, if we would have the word effectual?

A. We should pray that God may direct the minister rightly to divide the word of truth, and to speak a word in season to all; that God may pour out his Spirit upon us, and upon the whole congregation; and that he may give a blessing to his word, for convincing, converting, and edifying of our souls.

Q. What is required in time of hearing the word, to make it effectual to salvation?

A. We must hear it with attention, faith, love, meekness, and tenderness, Luke xix. 48. Heb. iv. 2. Luke xxiv. 32. James i. 21. 2 Chron xxxiv. 27.

Q. What is that attention which is needful in hearing the word?

A. It is a diligent hearkening to the word, with our minds fixed upon it, and guarding against all earthly and impertinent thoughts in time of it.

Q. Whence do wandering thoughts proceed in time of hearing?

A. From an earthly heart, from a careless mind, from a wandering eye, or from an evil custom.

Q. What is the evil of wandering thoughts, in time of hearing?

A. They are provoking to God, a contempt of his omniscience; they keep us from remembering the word, and hinder the impressions and success of it.

Q. How shall we be delivered from wandering thoughts?

A. We ought to pray and watch against them; over-awe our hearts with God's presence, and all-seeing eye; and study to bring more love to the word: For what we love we fix our minds upon.

Q. How shall we prevent dullness, drowsiness, or sleeping, in time of hearing?

A. By considering that the great God is speaking to us, that life and death are set before us, and we are called to hear for our life, 2 Cor. v. 20. Deut. xxx. 19. and xxxii 46, 47.

Q. What is that faith which is required in reading and hearing the word, that it may be effectual to our salvation?

A. It is the soul's believing and giving credit to the truth of the word, because of the divine testimony supporting it. If our faith in hearing be of the right stamp, we must believe that the word is God's, and that what he saith in it is infallibly certain, and we must receive it as such; and particularly the record which God hath given us of his Son. Again, we must believe that God speaks to us in particular, in the promises, threatenings, and reproofs of his word; and therefore we must apply them to ourselves, and not put them by us

Q. Why did not the word preached profit the Israelites?

A. Because it was not mixed with faith in them that heard it, Heb. iv. 2.

Q. Do they who hear the word in faith, receive it also with great love and esteem? A. Yes.

Q. How doth that appear?

A. By their diligent attendance on it, and by their prizing it above the most valuable things here below, such as gold, silver, or even their necessary food, Psalm xix. 10. and cxix. 72, 127. Job xxiii. 12.

Q. What is required of us after hearing, so as the word may be effectual to salvation?

A. We must lay up the word in our hearts, and practise it in our lives.

Q. What do you mean by laying up the word in our hearts?

A. It is to give the word such a place in our understandings, memories, and affections, that the things of the world shall not be able to thrust it out, but we shall continue to remember, ponder, and meditate upon it long afterwards.

Q. What is the advantage of laying up the word in this manner?

A. It would serve as a bridle to keep us back from sin, Psalm cxix 11. "Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee"

Q. What shall I do with a bad memory, that doth not retain the word after I hear it?

A. Labour to feel the power of the word, and get a high esteem of it; for what we highly value we will not forget; as a bride will not forget her jewels, Psalm cxix. 16, 93. Jer. ii 32.

Q. What is it to practise the word we hear, in our lives?

A. It is to be ready to obey and put in practice whatever thing the word of God informs us to be our duty, James i. 22, 25.

Q. What shall we think of those who hear the word, but walk contrary to it, and still go on in sin?

A. They are to be looked upon as unbelievers, and enemies of Christ and his gospel.

QUESTION XCI.

Q. *How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?*

A. The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth administer them, but only by the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them.

Q. What hath God appointed sacraments for?

A. To be the means of salvation, and particularly to promote grace and comfort in his people while in their sojourning state.

Q. Is not the word sufficient for that end without the sacrament?

A. It should satisfy us that a wise God had thought fit to appoint us to make use of both the one and the other, as means of salvation.

Q. How do the word and sacraments differ as means of salvation?

A. The one is for begetting faith, the other for confirming it; the one is directed to the ear, the other to the eye.

Q. Why hath Christ added sacraments to his word?

A. To be visible signs of his love to mankind, to cure our unbelief, to help our faith, and to quicken all our graces and affections. He knows our frame, that we are more affected by things which our eyes see, than by those which we only hear of by the ear.

Q. Do the sacraments prove effectual means of grace and salvation to all who partake of them?

A. No; but to the elect only.

Q. What is the reason they prove not effectual to all?

A. Because their efficacy and virtue is not from themselves, but from God the Author, who, being a free Agent, communicates virtue to them according to his pleasure.

Q. Have the sacraments then no virtue in themselves, or by the external action, to confer grace upon the partaker?

A. No.

Q. Have the sacraments their virtue from the intention, the preparation, the learning, the holiness, or zeal of the administrator? A. No.

Q. From whence then have the sacraments their efficacy and virtue?

A. Only from the blessing of Christ, and the working of his Spirit.

Q. Should any man rest upon his bare attendance upon ordinances? A. No.

Q. What ought we always to seek and look after under ordinances?

A. Christ's blessing, and his Spirit's working.

Q. What doth the Spirit, by his working, in order to make the sacraments effectual?

A. He puts life and virtue in the ordinances, and by them doth convey and apply Christ and his benefits to the souls of men.

Q. Doth not the Spirit by his working put life in all the powers and faculties of the soul? A. Yes.

Q. What may we think of those who deny or scoff at the working of the Spirit upon souls under ordinances?

A. They are sensual, not having the Spirit; and they are strangers to the grace of God.

Q. Is not the case of such very deplorable?

A. Yes; for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," Rom. viii. 9.

Q. In whom doth the Spirit make the sacraments effectual?

A. Not in all who receive them, but only in those who by faith receive them.

Q. Is not this faith, by which other blessings are conveyed, also wrought in the soul by the Holy Ghost?

A. Yes.

QUESTION XCII.

Q. *What is a Sacrament?*

A. A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.

Q. Is the word sacrament to be found in scripture?

A. No; but the thing signified is there, and the word is very significant, and ancient.

Q. What words have we in scripture instead thereof?

A. We have signs and seals, Rom. iv. 11. Gen. xvii. 11. Exod. xxvii. 13.

Q. From whom is the word sacrament borrowed?

A. From the Romans, who understand by it a military oath, whereby soldiers bound themselves to be true and faithful to their general: But gradually it came to be applied to baptism and the Lord's supper, because in them we engage to be faithful soldiers to Jesus Christ, the Captain of our salvation.

Q. Why is it called, in the answer, a *holy ordinance*?

A. It is called an *ordinance*, as being a thing ordained of God; it is called *holy*, because it is ordained by a holy God, for holy persons and for holy purposes.

Q. Why is it said to be instituted by Christ?

A. To let us know that Christ, who is the head of the church, hath only power to appoint sacraments to her; and that they are not true sacraments which are not instituted by him.

Q. What is the use of sacraments?

A. The use of them is to be visible signs and seals to the church, of the benefits of Christ's mediation and purchase.

Q. What are the two parts of a sacrament?

A. There are, 1. The outward visible or sensible signs. 2. The invisible things signified and represented by them.

Q. What mean you by sensible signs?

A. The elements and actions used in the sacraments, called *sensible*, because they are perceived by our outward senses.

Q. What are these sensible signs used in the sacraments?

A. In baptism, there is water sprinkled on the body. In the Lord's supper, there is bread broken and eaten, and wine poured out and drunk.

Q. Are not these elements and actions seals as well as signs? A. Yes.

Q. What is the difference between their being signs and seals?

A. As they are signs, they signify or represent blessings or benefits to us; as they are seals, they ratify and confirm our right to them.

Q. What are the blessings or benefits which are represented, sealed, and applied to us by these signs and seals?

A. They are Christ and the benefit of the new covenant; that is, the blessings of Christ's purchase, which are exhibited and tendered to us in the covenant of grace.

Q. Do the sacraments seal and confirm these benefits to all who partake of them?

A. No; but to believers only, who are within the covenant; for those who are not within it, do apply God's seal to a blank.

Q. Why is the covenant of grace called the new covenant?

A. It is called new, 1. In opposition to the old covenant of works made with our first parents, which they brake. 2. It is sometimes called the new covenant or testament, in opposition to the old manner of dispensing of the covenant of grace by types and sacrifices, before Christ's incarnation.

Q. Had the old covenant of works any sacraments annexed to it?

A. Yes; it had two, to wit, the tree of knowledge, and the tree of life.

QUESTION XCIII.

Q. *Which are the Sacraments of the New Testament?*

A. The Sacraments of the New Testament are, baptism, and the Lord's supper.

Q. What were the sacraments of the covenant of grace under the Old Testament?

A. They were two, namely, circumcision and the passover; in place of which we have now baptism and the Lord's supper.

Q. Are the sacraments of the Old and New Testament the same for substance?

A. Yes; for they are seals of the same covenant, and they both represent Christ and his benefits.

Q. Wherein do they differ?

A. The Old Testament sacraments represented Christ as to come, and that in a darker way; but the New represent Christ as already come, and in a more clear and plain manner.

Q. What is the difference between baptism and the Lord's supper?

A. Baptism is for initiation, and to be received but *once* by us, as circumcision was: The Lord's supper is for *nutrition*, and to be received *often*, as the passover was.

Q. What was the passover?

A. It was a lamb slain, roasted with fire, and eaten wholly, with bitter herbs, and unleavened bread, whereby was represented Christ and his sufferings; and the receiving of him by faith, with sincere repentance.

Q. How doth it appear that there are no more sacraments under the New Testament than two?

A. Because Christ the Head of the church hath instituted no more for sacraments, than baptism and the Lord's supper; neither are any more needful, seeing the one is a sign and seal of our spiritual birth, and the other of our spiritual nourishment.

Q. Do not the Papists add more sacraments to these two?

A. Yes; they add other five, to wit, confirmation, penance, ordination, marriage, and extreme unction.

Q. Why may not these be received as sacraments?

A. Because none of them are instituted by Christ for sacraments; and though ordination and marriage be of divine appointment, yet neither they nor any of the rest have the parts of true sacraments, nor are they seals of the covenant of grace.

QUESTION XCIV.

Q. *What is Baptism?*

A. Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's.

Q. What doth the word *baptism* signify?

A. It is a Greek word, and signifieth a *washing*: so it is rendered in Mark vii 4 Luke xi 38.

Q. What are the two parts in this sacrament?

A. 1. There is the outward visible or sensible sign made use of. 2 There is the invisible or spiritual thing signified by it.

Q What is the sensible sign here?

A. It is the sprinkling or washing of the body with water, and using of the words of institution.

Q. What is the spiritual thing signified by the washing with water?

A There is, 1. The washing away of the guilt of sin, by the blood of Christ, in our justification. 2. The washing away of the filth of sin, by the Spirit of Christ, in our regeneration and sanctification, Rev. i 5. John iii. 5.

Q. Wherein lies the resemblance between water, and Christ's blood, or the blessings purchased thereby?

A. In these things: 1. Water washes away the filth of the body, so the blood of Christ cleanseth the soul from sin. 2. Water doth extinguish fire, so Christ's blood quenches the fire of God's wrath. 3 Water doth mollify the earth, so Christ's blood softens our hard hearts. 4. Our bodies cannot live without water, neither can our souls without the blood of Christ. 5. Water is cheap and free to all, so is the blood of Christ with its benefits. 6. Water hath no effect upon us unless it be applied, so neither hath the blood of Christ without the application of faith.

Q. Is it lawful to add any thing to the water made use of in baptism?

A. No: For though the Papists mix oil, salt, cream, and spittle with the water, and likewise use the sign of the cross at baptism; yet all these are but vain and sinful additions, without any warrant from God's word.

Q. Why may not the sign of the cross be retained in baptism, seeing it is designed to teach all those who are baptized, not to be ashamed to own a crucified Christ?

A. The Papists give plausible reasons for the other additions, as well as for this: But seeing the sign of the cross was brought into the church by the Papists, as well as the cream and spittle; it ought to be laid aside with them, as unscriptural and antichristian inventions.

Q. Is it necessary to dip or plunge the whole body into the water in baptism, as, some say, was the practice in the primitive times?

A. Whatever might be done with some in hotter countries, it would be highly dangerous, especially for infants in our colder climates, to plunge them in water; and therefore we must rest with sprinkling of them: And for this practice we find sufficient warrant in the scriptures.

Q. What warrant is there in scripture for baptizing by sprinkling?

A. 1. We find the washing of tables is termed baptizing. Mark vii. 4. which we know is done, not by dipping, but by sprinkling. 2. The Israelites are said to have been "baptized unto Moses in the cloud," 1 Cor. x. 2. which was by sprinkling them with its rain. 3 When it is said that all things under the law were purged by blood, we are told at the same time that this was done by sprinkling them with the blood of the sacrifice, and not by dipping them in it, Heb. ix. 21, 22. and hence Christ's blood is called the blood of sprinkling. 4. The circumstances of many of the persons baptized, recorded in scripture, make it highly probable that it was done by sprinkling or pouring water on them.

Q What instances are these you refer to?

A. 1. We read of three thousand baptized by the apostles in a part of one day, Acts ii. 41. which could not have been done in so short a time, had they taken them all to a river, and plunged them one by one into it. 2. When Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch, Acts viii. 38. it was not likely he would strip him and plunge him in the river when he was in a journey and nowise provided for it; but rather that they went into the water to the ancles, being barefooted, according to the custom, where he sprinkled water upon him, according to the prophecy in which the Eunuch had been reading, Is lii 15. "So shall he sprinkle many nations." 3. When Ananias went to baptize Paul, we find he was in the house, Acts ix. 17, 18, 19. Neither is it likely he would go out of it, to be plunged in a river, in the weak and faint case his body was in at that time. 4. When Cornelius and his friends were baptized, they were in the house, and water was called for there to do it, Acts ix. 47, 48. 5. Likewise the jailor in Philippi, and his family, were in the house when they were baptized by Paul and Silas, Acts xvi. 32, 33. For it cannot be imagined that the jailor would leave his post and go out of the city with all his family in the middle of the night, and let Paul and Silas, who were prisoners, go too, to seek a river to plunge them in. 6. It was the custom of the primitive church to baptize the sick upon their beds, who hence were called Clinei; and surely these could not be plunged, but sprinkled only.

Q. Do we not read of John's baptizing at Jordan and Enon, because of the plenty of water there; and of persons baptized going down into the water, and coming up out of the water? Acts viii. 38, 39.

A. John chose these places, because the waters there were common, which was not the case in other parts of that dry country. And for going down into the water, and coming up out of it, this is said of the baptizer, as well as of the baptized, and so cannot infer dipping. Besides, the words may be rendered, they went into the water, and they came up from the water.

Q. What doth the sprinkling with water in baptism declare unto us?

A. It declareth unto us, that we are filthy and polluted by nature, by reason of original sin and corruption; and that we stand greatly in need of being washen from it.

Q. Can the water in baptism wash us from it?

A. No; it is only the blood of Christ, represented by the water, that can do it.

Q. How is it that the blood of Christ doth wash us from sin?

A. It is by the Holy Spirit's applying the merits and virtue of Christ's blood unto our souls.

Q. In whose name are persons to be baptized?

A. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Q. What is signified and meant by using these words in baptism?

A. Several things; as that the ordinance is dispensed by divine warrant; and that the person baptized vows subjection to God's authority; and that he is thereby consecrated and bound to the faith, profession, worship, and obedience, to the Holy Trinity; and that he will always depend upon the favour, grace, and protection of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Q. Is not baptism the sealing of a covenant between God and us? A. Yes

Q. What is here sealed and engaged on his part?

A. That he will be our God, ingraft us into Christ, and entitle us to all the benefits of the new covenant which Christ hath purchased by his blood.

Q. What is here sealed and engaged on our part?

A. That we will be the Lord's, in soul and body, in practice as well as profession, to serve him, and fight for him all the days of our lives.

Q What is meant by that privilege of our being ingrafted into Christ?

A. It is for us to be cut off from the old stock of nature, and to be united to Christ as our blessed root, from whom we may draw sap for our growth and fruitfulness, John xv. 5. Rom. xi 17.

Q. Is this privilege sealed to us by baptism? A. Yes.

Q. What are the benefits of the covenant of grace, which are sealed to us in baptism?

A. They are all these blessings which Christ hath purchased by his blood; such as admission into the visible church, and a right to all church-ordinances and privileges, spiritual illumination, remission of sin, deliverance from wrath, friendship with God, regeneration and sanctification, the conduct of the Spirit, fatherly protection and provision, increase of grace and perseverance in it, meetness for heaven, victory over death, and resurrection to eternal life.

Q. Doth baptism seal and apply these blessings and benefits equally to all who are baptized?

A. No: for, to those who are truly elect, or believers, it doth seal them absolutely; but, to those who are only such in profession, it seals them but conditionally, that is, upon condition they are what they profess to be.

Q. Do believers partake immediately of the benefits sealed to them in baptism?

A. Though their right be then sealed, yet God is a free agent, and not tied to that moment of time; but doth confer his grace, and make his ordinances effectual, when and how he pleaseth.

Q Have unbelievers any benefit by their baptism?

A Yes; for, by it they are outwardly separated from the rest of the world, and from the devil and the flesh, and are solemnly consecrated to Christ and his service; they are become members of the visible church, and have a sealed right and claim to plead the ordinances, offers, and promises of the gospel, if they do not forfeit these by their after carriage, Rom. ix 4. 1 Cor vii. 14.

Q. Doth not baptism take away original sin, and regenerate all those who partake of it; as Papists and others do teach?

A. No; for Simon Magus remained still in his unregenerate state after he was baptized, and the best of God's people are troubled with the inherence of original sin all their lives.

Q. Is baptism absolutely necessary to salvation?

A. No; for the converted thief was saved without it. It is not the want, but the contempt of baptism, which exposeth to damnation.

Q. What is the necessity then of baptism?

A. It is necessary by virtue of Christ's command, who hath thought fit to appoint it, 1. As a badge of Christianity. 2. As a channel of grace. 3. As a sign for teaching us our pollution by sin, and our remedy by Christ. 4. As a seal for confirming believers' right to the blessings of his covenant. 5 As a bond for engaging us to his service.

QUESTION XCV.

Q *To whom is baptism to be administered?*

A. Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized.

Q. Is baptism to be administered to all persons whatsoever? A. No.

Q To whom is baptism to be administered?

A. Not to Heathens or infidels, nor to those who call themselves Christians, if they be ignorant, or if their lives be vicious and scandalous.

Q. Why may not these be baptized?

A. Because they are not to be looked upon as members of the visible church, nor within the covenant, and so have no right to the seals of it, Eph ii. 12.

Q. Upon what terms may such persons be admitted to baptism?

A. Only upon submitting to the gospel, and their professing of repentance, and of their faith in Christ, and resolutions of obedience to him, Acts ii. 38. Mat. iii 6. Acts viii. 13.

Q. Who are they that properly have a right to baptism?

A. Those who are members of the visible church, and their infant-offspring, Acts ii. 39.

Q. What is it you call the *visible* church?

A. It is a society made up of all the professors of Christ throughout the world, who openly embrace the true religion, together with their children, 1 Cor. vii. 14. Acts iii. 39. Rom. 11, 16. Gen. xvii. 7.

Q. What are the privileges of the visible church above the rest of the world?

A. The visible church is entitled to God's preserving care in the midst of dangers and enemies, to the enjoyments of a gospel-ministry and ordinances, and to the communion of saints, 1 Tim. iv. 10. Isa. xxxi. 5. Eph. iv. 11, 12. Mark xvi. 15, 16. Acts ii. 39, 42.

Q. What is it you call the invisible church?

A. The whole body of true believers; that is, those who not only profess Christ outwardly, but have a real and vital union with Christ as their head, whereby their souls are inwardly renewed, which God only sees, and therefore called *invisible*.

Q. What are their privileges above others?

A. They have communion with Christ both in grace and glory.

Q. Have infants a right to baptism?

A. Yes; the infants of those who are believers or members of the visible church have a right to baptism, but not others.

Q. How do you instruct their right to baptism?

A. Because the infants of believing parents are within the covenant, as well as the parents themselves; so God told Abraham in the covenant he made with him, and did thereupon establish and declare the right of his infant-seed to the initiatory seal of the covenant, Gen. xvii. 7. 10. "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And, every man-child among you shall be circumcised." Now, Abraham's covenant being the covenant of grace, of which Christ is the Mediator; and believers now being Abraham's children by faith, and heirs of the same covenant with him, which is everlasting, and its promises and privileges the same now as of old, though its seals be changed: Wherefore the infant-seed of believers now have the right to baptism that Abraham's seed of old had to circumcision, which was the same in substance with it. And this right of succession we find expressly declared by the apostle Peter, Acts ii. 38, 39. "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, for the promise is unto you, and to your children." And hence the apostle Paul calls the children of believers now holy, 1 Cor. vii. 14. that is *federally* holy, as the Jews were called a holy nation, being by circumcision instated within the covenant, solemnly dedicated to the Lord, and made visible church-members, as our infants are by baptism.

Q. How doth it appear that baptism is come in the place of circumcision?

A. It is evident from Col. ii. 11, 12. Besides, it is plain that both of them represent the pollution of our nature, and the way of our purification, by the shedding of Christ's blood.

Q. What further warrant have you from scripture for infant baptism?

A. 1 Christ commanded his apostles, Mat. xxviii. 19 to go disciple and baptize all nations, of which infants are a considerable part. There was no need to mention them there expressly, seeing their privilege was settled for many ages before by circumcision: though soon after we are told that their right continued as formerly, Acts ii. 38, 39 And indeed it were most unreasonable to think that their condition should be worse by Christ's incarnation than it was before. 2. We are assured that the privilege of the Gentiles now is as large as that of the Jews was, they being all one in Christ. Rom. iii. 29. and x. 12. Gal. iii. 14, 28. 3. We are told, Rom. xi. that the Jews shall be grafted again into their own olive-tree, as they were broken off. From which it is easy to infer, that their seed, which were broken off with them, shall be grafted in with them as before. 4. The scripture declares infants to be capable of the divine blessings of pardon, of the Spirit, of faith, of grace, and of glory; upon which account Christ doth kindly invite and take them into his arms. See Isa. xliv. 3 and lxv. 23. Jer. i. 5. Mat. xviii. 6. Mark x. 14, 16. Luke i. 15. And therefore the sign and seal of these blessings must also pertain to them. 5. We read of the apostles baptizing whole housholds together, and including the infants therein, Acts xvi. 15, 33. 1 Cor. i. 16. And in this they followed the example of the Jews, who circumcised all the proselytes that came over to them, and their children also. And, after the example of the apostles, it is notour the ancient church did baptize the infants of the Christian parents.

Q. Do not we read of the apostles teaching, and of persons professing their faith, before they were baptised?

A. Yes; but these were only the adult or aged without the visible church, who were first to be won to the Christian faith before they or their children might be baptized. But infants, who are not capable of being taught, or of professing their faith, are to be deemed as parts of their parents, and to be judged of by them till they come to the use of reason; so that if parents be holy, and among the blessed of the Lord, their infant offspring are to be deemed so with them, according to Rom. xi. 16. and Isa. lxv. 23. In the covenant made with Abraham and his seed, of which circumcision was the seal, and they all partook, God said not to the infants, but to Abraham, Gen. xvii. 1. "Walk before me, and be thou perfect."

Q. If children be admitted to baptism, why not also to the Lord's supper?

A. Because it is required of all who partake of the Lord's supper, to examine themselves, and to discern the Lord's body; which children cannot do, not having the exercise of reason. And, upon the same account, the children of the Jews, who did partake of circumcision, were not admitted to the passover; they not being capable to ask, or to be instructed concerning the meaning of it, according to Exodus xii. 26. The initiatory seal is for conveying a right, but the other is for commemorating a benefit, which necessarily supposeth understanding.

Q. To whom doth it pertain to present the infants of the visible church to baptism, and to act as sponsors for them?

A. Infants being considered as parts of their parents, and having a right to baptism as such, it belongs properly to parents to present them to God in baptism, and in their name to consent to the covenant of grace; and not to those who are called god-fathers or god-mothers. It is only the parents who have the power of their education, and who are accountable to God for them; and, till they be capable to chuse their own way, the will of the parents only is to be taken for theirs.

Q. Are not Christian parents bound by the strongest ties to bring their children to God in baptism?

A. Yes; 1. Because they have dedicated themselves and all they have unto the Lord. And, 2. They being the instruments of conveying original sin to them, they are bound in justice to repair the injury, (so far as they can) by bringing them to the fountain of Christ's blood for their cleansing, and to the congregation of God's people for the help of their prayers.

Q. Are all those in covenant with God, and entitled to

heaven, who get this seal of it; particularly those children who are born of truly godly parents, that gave them up sincerely to God in baptism?

A. 1 If such children die young before they do any thing to disinherit themselves, we have ground to believe they are saved. 2. These children, by their birth and baptism, are entitled to many external privileges and mercies more than others; hence baptism is resembled to Noah's ark, by which all Noah's family were saved from the temporal deluge as well as himself, 1 Pet. iii. 21. 3. Children of godly parents have a stronger claim to the blessings of the covenant than others, seeing they can not only plead, "They are the Lord's," by baptismal dedication, but that God is truly "their father's God," and they are the seed of his people, with whom the covenant was established, and to whom the promises were made. But, 4. They should remember, if they do not put in their claim when they come to age, take hold of the covenant for themselves, and ratify their parents deed, they forfeit their right and claim to the saving blessings of the covenant.

Q. How should parents be affected and exercised when they present their infants to God in baptism?

A. They should look back to their own baptismal dedication, transact with God in secret, both for themselves and their infants, and endeavour to make it sure that they are really in covenant with God, since this is of the utmost concern, both to them and their posterity; for the promise runs, "I will be your God, and the God of your seed." They should earnestly pray for grace to enable them to give them good instructions and a good example, that they may, like Abraham the father of the faithful, "command their children and their houshold after them to keep the ways of the Lord," Gen. xviii 19

Q. How should children improve their baptism when come to age?

A. 1. Children of godly parents should bless God that they are born of such parents, and that their claim to the covenant blessings is so much strengthened thereby. 2. They should timeously ratify their baptismal covenant and their parents' deed, by a personal transaction with God, and giving away themselves unto the Lord: and this they should do solemnly at the sacrament of the Lord's supper, that so they may become Christians by their own consent, as well as by their parents' dedication. They should plead their baptism, as God's seal and pledge to them of the remission of sins, through the blood of Christ, which was then sacramentally applied to them. 4. They should improve their baptism as a spur to holy living, a shield against temptation, and an incitement to the courageous owning of Christ and his truths, without being ashamed of him before men.

QUESTION XCVI.

Q. *What is the Lord's Supper?*

A. The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is shewed forth; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

Q. What are the usual names given to this ordinance?

A. It is called the Lord's supper, 1 Cor. xi. 20. It is called the Lord's table, 1 Cor. x. 21. The communion, 1 Cor. x. 16. Breaking of bread, Acts ii. 42. The cup of blessing, 1 Cor. x. 16 Christ's Testament, Luke xxii. 20. The feast, 1 Cor. v. 8. The ancients usually called it the Eucharist, and we commonly call it the Sacrament.

Q Why is it called the LORD's Supper?

A. From the time when the LORD JESUS its Author did institute it, which was in the same night wherein he was betrayed.

Q. Why did he appoint it at night?

A. Because the passover was to be eaten at night, and supper then was the principal meal of the family; and it may teach us, that this feast is only for the members of Christ's family, who dwell with him both day and night.

Q Are we then necessarily bound to celebrate the sacrament at night, as was done at its first institution?

A. No; for the reason of doing it at night, and in a private family, doth not now subsist: This was done at first only upon the account of the passover-supper that was to be so eaten, and in the room of which the Lord's supper was to succeed; but, in numerous assemblies for worship, the night would be highly inconvenient for it.

Q. Why did Christ appoint the supper immediately after the passover?

A. To shew that the one was to come in the room of the other, and that they are both the same in substance.

Q. How doth it appear that they are the same in substance?

A. In regard the Israelites kept the lamb four days tied to their bed-posts before it was slain; that by its constant bleatings they might be kept in mind of their sore bondage in Egypt, from which God wonderfully delivered them, and also put in mind of the sorrows and agonies which the Messiah was to suffer to deliver them from sin and hell: So, in like manner, the Lord's supper is a standing memorial of our salvation by the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, our glorious deliverer from sin and wrath.

Q. Why did Christ appoint this ordinance the same night in which he was betrayed?

A. 1. That he might give a strong proof of his love to his disciples, in providing more for their comfort than for his own safety; and that at a time when he saw heaven, earth, and hell coming all in battle-array against him. 2. That we might observe the charge he gave us about this ordinance, as the words of a dying Jesus, who was going to do more for us than all the world could do.

Q Is the Lord's supper a *sacrifice* as well as a *sacrament*?

A. No: For though the Papists have horridly corrupted this ordinance, and turned it to the sacrifice of the mass, whereby they disown the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice on the cross to take away sin, and are guilty of the vilest superstition and idolatry; yet the Lord's supper is no more but a sacrament, which is of a quite different nature from a sacrifice: A *sacrament* being the commemoration of a benefit received from God; but a *sacrifice*, the offering of something propitiatory to God for sin, which was done at once by Christ upon the cross, and can never be repeated.

Q. In what posture ought we to receive the sacrament?

A. In a table posture, such as is common at meals; which we find Christ and his apostles used, Mat. xxvi 20, 26. Luke xxii. 14. where it is said "they sat down" at the table.

Q. Is it not more decent and reverent to use kneeling at this time?

A. We are not to be wiser than Christ, nor to accuse the

apostles and primitive church (who used sitting) of indecency and irreverence.

Q. Who then appointed kneeling, and when came it in?

A. It was Pope Honorius the second, in the beginning of the thirteenth century.

Q. Upon what pretence did he appoint kneeling?

A. It was in consequence of the doctrine of transubstantiation, which had been decreed not long before by Pope Innocent the Third. Then it was judged proper to kneel for worshipping the sacramental bread, which they believed to be turned into Christ's real body.

Q. Should any Protestant symbolize with Papists and idolaters in their errors and superstitions?

A. No.

Q. What are the elements or visible signs appointed in the Lord's supper?

A. Bread and wine.

Q. How are these to be disposed of?

A. After consecration, the bread is to be broken, given, and eaten; and the wine being poured forth, is to be given, and drunk.

Q. Why are both these signs appointed?

A. The more to confirm our faith, and give us the more distinct representation of Christ's death and sufferings, and to shew us the plentiful redemption and rich supplies we have in a crucified Christ for our perishing souls.

Q. May we make use of wafers instead of bread, as the Papists do?

A. No; for then we should not have a fit sign of spiritual nourishment, nor any *breaking* of bread, according to Christ's institution.

Q. What is signified by the bread here?

A. Jesus Christ the bread of life, who is given for the life and nourishment of our souls.

Q. What is signified by the wine?

A. Christ's precious blood, with all the rich blessings and refreshing comforts proceeding from it to us; such as deliverance from wrath, pardon of sin, peace with God and conscience, access to God in duty, strength and increase of grace, intimation of God's love, and sweet views of Immanuel's land.

Q. What is signified by the breaking of the bread, and the pouring forth of the wine?

A. All the sorrows and sufferings of Christ for us, and particularly the breaking and wounding of his body on the cross, and the shedding of his blood for our sins

Q. What is signified by giving the bread and wine to the communicants?

A. It signifies God's giving a whole crucified Christ, with all his offices and benefits, to believing partakers

Q. What is signified by communicants receiving the bread and wine?

A. It signifies their stretching forth faith's hand to receive a whole Christ, according to the gospel offer, and that with close and particular application to their souls necessities.

Q. Have the people a right to the cup as well as to the bread?

A. Yes; and none may deprive them of it, seeing Christ appointed a full feast and complete nourishment to his people, and said to the first communicants, "Drink ye all of it," Mat. xxvi. 27.

Q. How should we be affected and employed when beholding and receiving the bread broken, and wine poured forth.

A. We should contemplate a broken and bleeding Saviour, with contrite and broken hearts, for our sins, that pierced him: Our hearts should be warmed with love and gratitude to him, that loved us in such a manner, as to give himself to be a propitiation for our sins: We should lodge our souls in his wounds, as our only refuge from the avenger of blood, and plead Christ's blood and merits for all that we want from God.

Q. What is the chief end of this institution, first mentioned in the answer?

A. It is to shew forth Christ's death, according to 1 Cor. xi 24, 25, 26.

Q. How are we to shew forth Christ's death in this ordinance?

A. By recalling it into our minds with admiration, giving thanks to God for such a sacrifice, and pleading it with him as the only ground of our hope: And also by proclaiming before the world the wonderful love of Christ in dying for us, and our hope and confidence in the merits thereof; publicly owning ourselves to be his disciples, and declaring by this action that we are not ashamed of his cross, but do glory in it.

Q. Why will Christ have us to shew forth his death in this manner?

A. To testify our thankfulnes for it, and that we do believe it to be the only foundation of our salvation; and also because this commemoration is an excellent means to subdue sin, quicken grace, melt our hearts, and administer comfort to us under all discouragements.

Q. Who are those meant by the *worthy receivers* mentioned in the answer?

A. They are believers, who are fit to receive, and do exercise faith and love in the act of receiving: Not that they are worthy in a legal sense of any mercy, but called worthy, because they receive in a suitable and becoming manner, both with respect to their state and frame; which is worthiness in a gospel sense.

Q. May those who have weak faith, and many fears, be admitted to join with worthy receivers?

A. Yes; for weak believers are among Christ's friends whom he invites, and are those who have a right to the children's bread; besides, this ordinance is appointed as a means of our spiritual strength and growth in grace.

Q. But may not these weak and doubting souls keep back till they arrive at comfort and strengh?

A. No; for strength and comfort are attained in the way of believing, and using the means which God hath appointed for that end; and we have no ground to expect them while we neglect this ordinance, which is one of these means.

Q. What advantage do worthy receivers reap by this ordinance?

A. They are made partakers of Christ's body and blood, with all his benefits.

Q. How are worthy receivers made partakers of Christ's body and blood?

A. Not corporally, but spiritually.

Q. How do they partake of these spiritually in the sacrament?

A. When they get their title secured to the benefits or fruits of Christ's broken body and shed blood, as by sasine or infeftment; or when their souls do actually share of these benefits here in part.

Q. What are these benefits or fruits of Christ's body and blood, which worthy receivers partake of?

A. They are pardon of sin, deliverance from wrath, the subduing of sin, the strengthening of grace, curing of heart-plagues, resolving of doubts, loosing of bands, sweet views of God's love, and of eternal glory, and the like.

Q. Are we not made partakers of Christ's body and blood in a corrupt and carnal manner in the sacrament?

A. No.

Q. What is meant by these words in the answer?

A. That there is no transubstantiation or turning of the bread and wine in the sacrament, into the very body and blood of Christ, as the Papists do maintain.

Q. Is not Christ really present in the sacrament?

A Yes; he is spiritually present by his Spirit and grace, but not present in a bodily manner.

Q Do the elements remain still bread and wine after the consecration?

A. Yes; for our reason and senses do plainly testify them to be so, and Christ and his apostles do expressly call them so. The apostle Paul, speaking of the bread, doth three times over call it bread after consecration; and Christ calls the cup, when distributing it, the *fruit of the vine.* See 1 Cor. xi. 26, 27, 28. and Mat. xxvi. 29.

Q. What is the meaning then of these words of Christ, "Take, eat; this is my body broken for you?"

A. The plain and obvious meaning is, That the broken bread doth signify and represent Christ's body as it was to be broken and wounded for us. In like manner, Christ said, "This cup is the New Testament;" not that he meant the very cup was turned into the New Testament, but only that it was a sign and seal of the New Testament and its blessings

Q. Must not Christ's body continue in heaven until the resurrection of all things, at his second coming?

A. Yes; the apostle Peter saith so, Acts iii. 21. Nay, Jesus Christ himself said, "Now I am no more in the world," John xvii. 11.

Q. Can a true human body be in heaven, and on earth, and in many thousand places of the earth at the same time?

A. No.

Q Is it consistent with the glorified state of Christ's body to have it still liable to sufferings and contempt?

A. No.

Q. Would it not be liable to these, if transubstantiation was true?

A. Yes; for so it might still be pierced, nay, torn in pieces, or burnt: It might be eaten by wicked men, nay, by beasts, and thrown out to the dunghill; which is absurd to imagine concerning the glorified body of the Son of God

Q. Seeing such absurdities would follow, ought not we to understand Christ's words, "This is my body," in a figurative sense?

A. Yes; especially seeing our Lord frequently used this way of speaking to his disciples, calling himself *bread,* a *door,* a *way,* a *vine,* &c. and particularly concerning the sacraments, saying of circumcision, "This is my covenant;" and of the lamb, "It is the *Lord's* passover," Gen. xvii 10 Exod. xii. 11. And we see how expressly the Holy Ghost saith of believers, 1 Cor. xii 27. "Ye are the body of Christ." Yet all agree to take these words figuratively; and why not also Christ's words, "This is my body"

Q. Seeing believers are not partakers of Christ's body and blood in the sacrament in a corporal manner, how is it they do partake of him?

A. They are partakers of Christ by faith in the sacrament, when the fruits and benefits of Christ's death are applied by faith unto their souls, by which they get spiritual nourishment and growth in grace, Heb. iii. 14. 1 Cor. x. 16. John vi. 35, 47, 58, 63.

Q How is faith to be exercised in communicating?

A. Many ways: 1. In discerning a crucified Christ and his benefits under the elements, and looking to him for healing and salvation 2. In fleeing into the clefts of his wounds for protection from wrath. 3. In embracing Christ in all his offices, and with all his benefits, as he is offered to us in the giving of the bread and wine. 4. In being firmly persuaded of the truth of the gospel-revelation, and of the promise of salvation by the blood and merits of Jesus Christ. 5. In applying the virtue and efficacy of the blood and merits of Christ to ourselves, for silencing conscience, renewing the soul, subduing of sin, and for quickening and strengthening of grace. 6. In pleading his blood with God for pardon and acceptance, for sanctification and glorification. 7. In yielding up ourselves both soul and body to Jesus Christ, to be taught by his Spirit, governed by his laws, and saved by his blood.

Q Do believers get spiritual nourishment and growth in grace by exercising faith in partaking in the foresaid manner? A. Yes.

Q. How may we know if we receive spiritual nourishment and growth in grace, in and by the sacrament?

A. We may know it by these marks: 1. If we have a better taste and relish of spiritual things than we had before. 2 If we draw virtue from Christ's death for crucifying of sin, which hinders our strength and growth 3 If we be more rooted and established in grace, confirmed in our faith, and increased in humility and spiritual-mindedness. 4. If we abound more in prayer, and in the fruits of holiness, and in the duties which we owe both to God and man.

QUESTION XCVII.

Q. *What is required to the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper?*

A It is required of them that would worthily partake of the Lord's supper, that they examine themselves of their knowledge to discern the Lord's body, of their faith to feed upon him, of their repentance, love, and new obedience; lest, coming unworthily, they eat and drink judgment to themselves.

Q. Can unbelievers, while remaining so, be worthy partakers?

A No; for they, not being in covenant with God through Christ, have no right to this confirming seal of the covenant.

Q Is this an ordinance appointed for conversion?

A No.

Q. Is it not dangerous to come to it unworthily?

A. Yes.

Q. How shall we prevent that danger?

A. By seeking after both habitual and actual preparation for it; that is, by labouring both to be in a state of grace, and to have grace drawn forth into exercise.

Q. How shall we attain to this preparation?

A. By examining ourselves, 1 Cor. xi. 28.

Q What is it for a man to examine himself in this case?

A It is for a man to retire from the world, and to pose his own heart with certain questions concerning his qualifications for the Lord's table, and to urge his heart to make plain answers.

Q. What are the things we should examine ourselves about, in order to our partaking of the Lord's supper?

A. The answer mentions five special things which we are to examine ourselves about, namely, our knowledge, faith, repentance, love, and new obedience.

Q. For what end must we have knowledge?

A. That we may be able to discern the Lord's body in the sacrament.

Q. What is it to discern the Lord's body in the sacrament?

A. It is to distinguish rightly between the outward signs, and the spiritual things signified; and to have a due uptaking of the value and excellency of the body and blood of Christ, and the blessings thereby purchased; and also to discern the greatness of our Lord's sufferings, so as to be duly affected with his love manifested therein, and grieved for our sins, that were the procuring cause of them.

Q. What are we to examine about our knowledge?

A. Two things: 1. If it be competent in its measure. 2. If it be saving in its quality.

Q. What is that competent measure of knowledge needful for worthy partaking?

A. We must have the knowledge, 1. Of God in the unity of his essence and trinity of persons. 2. Of man in his estate both before and since his fall. 3. Of Christ the Mediator, in his two natures and three offices. 4. Of the covenant of grace, and of the way of our justification by faith in the Surety's righteousness. 5. Of the seals of this covenant, and particularly of the holy supper, and the design of it

Q. How may we discern if our knowledge be saving in its quality?

A. We may reckon it is so, 1. If it be humbling, and cause us to mourn for sin, Zech xii 10. 2. If it take us off from self, and lead to Christ and his righteousness as the only ground of our hope, Phil iii. 8, 9 3 If it influence both heart and life, and make us breathe after conformity to Christ our Head, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

Q. What is the use of faith in the Lord's supper?

A. To feed upon a crucified Christ, or to apply the fruits and benefits of his death unto our souls See more of its usefulness before, page 401.

Q. What is implied in faith's feeding on Christ in the sacrament?

A. It imports the soul's hungering and thirsting after Christ, and embracing of him by faith: Also it imports the soul's union with Christ, and partaking of the benefits of his death; its having great satisfaction in him, and deriving life, strength, and growth from him

Q. How may we know if our faith be true and saving?

A We may judge it so, if it soften and purify the heart, if it make Christ precious to us, if it work by love, if it carry us above the world, and make us fruitful in good works.

Q. What is the use of repentance in partaking of the Lord's supper?

A. That, in renewing covenant with God, we may be sorry for former breaches and backslidings: That, in looking upon a bleeding Saviour, we may mourn for our sins, which brought all these sufferings upon him: That we may receive a broken Christ into broken hearts, and firmly resolve in his strength, that we will not pierce him any more.

Q. How may we know if our repentance be true?

A. It is so, if our sense of sin drive us to Christ the only remedy; if our grief for sin be universal, for the corruption of our nature, as well as the outbreakings of our life; if we sincerely desire deliverance from all sin and corruption, study universal holiness, endeavour to avoid all known sins, and to perform all known duties both to God and our neighbour.

Q. Why is love so needful at the Lord's table?

A. Because it is a love-feast, wherein we have the greatest discovery of God's love to sinners ever was given, which requires suitable returns of love from us, namely, love to God and Christ, and to his people, and to our very enemies.

Q. How may we know if our love to God and Jesus Christ be true?

A. We may judge it so, if we love God above all things; if we keep his commands, if we be afraid to offend him, if we be tender of his honour, if we rejoice in the success of his gospel, if we mourn under his absence, long for his presence, and desire to be like him

Q. Is not every worthy communicant resolved in Christ's strength to perform new obedience, by forsaking all sin, and following the Lamb whithersoever he goeth?

A. Yes

Q Is not self-examination with respect to all these things very useful before partaking?

A Yes; for it serves to discover how it is with us, to humble us for defects, and to excite us to go to the fullness that is in Christ, for the supply of all our wants.

Q. Is it not most dangerous to neglect self-examination before communicating?

A. Yes; for the answer saith, "All must examine themselves, lest coming unworthily they eat and drink judgment to themselves."

Q. Is not self-examination to be joined with earnest prayer? A Yes.

Q. What should we pray for before we come to the Lord's table?

A. That God would prepare our souls for so near an approach to God; that he would quicken all the sacramental graces, and bring them to a lively exercise in us; and that he would save us from coming unworthily to his holy table.

Q. Who are those that come unworthily to the Lord's table?

A. Those who are ignorant or graceless, and they who live in any know sin, or come without reconciliation to God and their neighbour: Also they who neglect to prepare themselves by self-examination, and prayer for exciting of grace before they come.

Q What is the sin of those who come unworthily?

A. They are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, being accessary to the Jews sin who crucified him, by their harbouring the murderer sin, 1 Cor xi 27

Q. What is the danger of those who come unworthily?

A. They eat and drink judgment to themselves, 1 Cor. ix 29, 30.

Q. What judgments were inflicted on the unworthy communicants at Corinth?

A Sickness and death, 1 Cor. xi 30.

Q Is this sin pardonable upon repentance?

A. Yes; the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin

Q. May those who want assurance come to the Lord's table?

A. Yes, if they have a sense of their need of Christ, and earnest desires to be found in him; for this sacrament is a means for strengthening weak grace, and obtaining the evidences of God's love to doubting souls.

Q. What shall those do, who, after all their endeavours,

cannot get their hearts brought to any suitable frame for approaching to God in this ordinance?

A. They ought to bewail their case before the Lord, and yet, in obedience to his command, they should come to put honour upon their dying Saviour, who has appointed this ordinance as a means for bringing such exercised souls into a right frame. It is our best course, even in our worst cases, to lay ourselves in God's road, who has promised to meet such as remember him in his ways, and doth many times surprize his people with supplies of life, when he sees them struggling with their deadness in the use of appointed means

QUESTION XCVIII.

Q. *What is Prayer?*

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires to God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgement of his mercies.

Q. What are the parts of prayer mentioned in this answer?

A. They are three; petition, confession, and thanksgiving

Q What are our petitions to God called in the answer?

A. They are called an offering up of our desires to God.

Q. Doth God account the offering up of the words of the mouth, as petitions or prayers to him?

A No, without the desires of the heart: Though he will accept of the desires of the heart, if sincere, without the words of the mouth, as in the cases of Moses and Hannah, Exod. xiv. 15. 1 Sam. i. 13.

Q. Are we not to make use of our voice and words in uttering our desires to God?

A Yes, when the circumstances of the time and place allow it; for these are proper and needful to prevent wandering, to increase fervency, and to glorify God with the outward man, Psal. v 3 and lv. 17 and lxix. 3.

Q. If some, as they allege, cannot pray in such proper words as others, may they omit prayer?

A. No: For God looks chiefly to the heart, and its desires; and he accepts them when sincere, though the words be not so proper or exact. Hence the Psalmist encouraged himself in his distress, Psal xxxviii 9 "Lord, all my desire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee."

Q. To whom are we to offer up our desires in prayer?

A. To God only, Psal. l 15. and lxii. 8. Mat. vi. 10 and vi. 9.

Q. May we pray to any of the Three Persons of the Godhead?

A. Yes; for in scripture we find prayer directed, sometimes to the Father, John xvi. 23 Eph. iii. 14. sometimes to the Son, Mat viii 2 Acts vii. 59. 1 Cor i. 2 sometimes to the Holy Ghost, 2 Cor xiii. 14. Yet so as, when any one of the three is named, the other two are understood as included, they being all three but one and the same God.

Q. Why must we pray to God only?

A. Because so we are commanded, and it is God only that searches our hearts, that knows our cases, and can help us in straits, Mat iv. 10. Psalm xxxiv. 15, 17. 2 Kings vi. 26, 27. and hence he stiles himself, The God hearing prayers, Psalm lxv. 2.

Q. May we not pray to saints or angels, or to the Virgin Mary?

A. No; for in all the scriptures there is neither command, promise, nor example for it; nay, we are forbidden to do it, for it is idolatry. The saints know not our cases, and they are cursed who trust in man; see Mat. iv. 10. Isaiah xlii. 8. Exod. xx 3. Gal. ii 18. Rev xix. 10. Isaiah lxiii. 16. Jer. xvii. 5.

Q. May we not pray to the saints in heaven, as well as apply to the saints on earth to pray for us?

A. We do not pray to saints here with religious honour, but only ask their charitable assistance while we have access to converse with them here below, which we are warranted to do, 2 Thess. iii. 1 James v. 14 16. But the saints in heaven are "ignorant of us," Isaiah lxiii. 16.

Q. Can we in prayer make known to God that which he knew not before?

A. No; for he understands our thoughts afar off, Psalm cxxxix 2, 4. But yet he thinks fit to enjoin us thus to make known our requests to him, as the means by which we are to receive the good things promised, Phil. iv. 6. Psalm l. 15. Joel ii. 32. Rom. x. 12.

Q. Can prayer merit any thing from God?

A No; for in prayer we come as needy beggars, to ask mercy only by mere favour.

Q. If God hath decreed to give us what we need, what need we pray for it?

A. Because God hath commanded us, and he hath decreed to bestow blessings in the way of prayer.

Q Is not prayer our privilege as well as our duty?

A. Yes; and a great privilege it is for such poor beggars to be admitted in a familiar manner to open our cases to so great a King, in whose presence the angels cover their faces

Q. For what things may we offer up our desires to God?

A. Not for things unlawful, but for things which are agreeable to God's will, 1 John v. 14.

Q. What do you mean by the will of God, which is to be the rule of our prayers?

A. Not his secret will, which is unknown to us, but his revealed will, which is contained in his word

Q What are these things agreeable to God's revealed will, which we are to pray for?

A. They are good things, both spiritual and temporal, that we stand in need of, and which he hath promised to us in his covenant

Q. What are these spiritual things that we should pray for?

A. They are such as an interest in Christ, pardon of sin, supplies of grace, deliverance from sin and wrath, and eternal life

Q May we pray for the good things of this life?

A. Yes, but not principally, or in the first place.

Q. What things are we to seek in the first place?

A. Spiritual things, particularly Jesus Christ and his grace.

Q. Ought not spiritual things and temporal things be asked in a different way?

A. Yes; for the one we are to pray absolutely, and for the other conditionally, and with submission to God's will.

Q What is the condition upon which we are to pray for temporal good things?

A. It is upon condition that God see it fit for his own glory and our good to grant them to us, 2 Sam x. 12. and xv. 25, 26. Mat. viii. 2

Q. Ought we to seek for temporal mercies with the same fervency as for spiritual? A. No.

Q. Should we pray for all sorts of spiritual mercies in the same way?

A. No; for we should pray absolutely for these that are absolutely necessary for us, such as Christ, faith, remission of sin, perseverance, &c But for things which are not absolutely needful to salvation, such as the highest degrees of grace, spiritual gifts and comforts, deliverance from temptations, &c these we should pray for conditionally, and with submission to the will of God.

Q. Why may we pray absolutely for God and his grace?

A Because they are absolutely promised, and we are sure they are for God's glory and our real good, seeing without them we cannot serve God here, nor enjoy him hereafter.

Q. Ought we to pray for all sorts of persons?

A. Yes; as for kings, for magistrates, and ministers, for all saints, for the afflicted, for the unconverted, for our relations and friends, and even our enemies, 1 Tim. ii 1, 2. Eph. vi. 18, 19. Mat. v. 44. Psalm lxxii 19 and lxvi. 2, 3, 4.

Q Are there not some persons excepted, for whom we must not pray?

A. Yes; we may not pray for them that have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, nor for the dead, nor for the damned in hell, 1 John v. 16.

Q. What if we should ask any thing disagreeable to the will of God?

A. In that case, we must not expect to receive it, James iv. 3.

Q Is it enough that the *matter* of our prayer be right, to wit, that they be for things agreeable to God's will?

A. No; for the *manner* of our prayers must be so too.

Q May we go to God without a Mediator?

A. No; for we are guilty and obnoxious to his justice, and so can no more approach to God, than stubble to a consuming fire.

Q. Who is the Mediator between God and man?

A. The man Christ Jesus, and beside him there is none else, 1 Tim. ii. 5.

Q. In whose name must we offer up our desires to God?

A Only in the name of Christ, this one Mediator, John xiv. 13. 14. and xvi. 23

Q. What do you mean by praying in the name of Christ? Is it only to use his name in our prayers?

A. There is more in it; for it imports our pleading the merits of Christ, the purchaser for every thing we want, and depending thereupon as the only ground of our acceptance and audience with God, Eph. iii. 12.

Q Is Christ that angel mentioned, Rev. viii. 3, 4 with the golden censer, that offers up our prayers before the throne of God? A. Yes.

Q What is that incense he is said to mix with the prayers of the saints?

A. It is the merits of his obedience and suffering, or his perfect righteousness.

Q What need is there for mixing this incense with our prayers?

A. To perfume them, and take away the ill savour of the imperfections and defilements which cleave to our best duties

Q May we not in prayer make use of the name of saints or angels as our intercessors with God?

A. No; for this would be highly injurious to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the alone intercessor and advocate with the Father for us, 1 Tim. ii. 5. Heb. vii. 25. 1 John ii. 1.

Q. Besides praying in Christ's name, is there any thing more required in the manner of our prayers, that they be acceptable to God?

A. Yes; they must be offered up with humility, sincerity, faith, fervency, and perseverance, Psal x. 17 Jer. xxix 13. Heb. x. 22. James i. 6 James v 16. Luke xviii 1.

Q When we are bid "pray without ceasing," 1 Thes. v 17. must we do no other work but pray?

A. The meaning is, that we should continue in prayer without wearying, keep up stated times, and embrace all other proper occasions for prayer, and study to keep the heart always in a praying frame

Q Must we omit prayer, when we do not find our hearts in a good frame for it?

A. No; we must go and make our complaint to God who can help us, and not cease praying till we find ourselves in a better frame.

Q If the desired mercy do not soon come, may we then give over?

A. No; we must continue instant in prayer, and not faint Rom. xii. 12. Luke xviii. 1.

Q. Can we of ourselves pray in this acceptable manner to God?

A. No; and therefore we must have the Spirit of God to help our infirmities, Rom viii. 26, 27 and hence he is called the "Spirit of supplication," Zech xii. 10

Q. How doth the Spirit of God help us in prayer?

A. He both raises suitable affections in us for prayer, and directs us to suitable matter and arguments in prayer, because we know not what we should pray for as we ought, Rom. viii. 26.

Q. Is it not thus that the Spirit makes intercession in us?

A. Yes.

Q Are all prayers, offered up to God, accepted and answered?

A. No; for the prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord, Prov. xv 8

Q How cometh it that the prayers of many are not regarded?

A. Because they regard iniquity in their hearts, such as unbelief, pride, covetousness, malice, or unmercifulness to the poor; for each of which God threatens to shut out our prayers, Psal lxvi. 18. James i. 7. Psal cxxxviii. 6. Isa. lvii 17. Mat. v 24. and vi. 15 Prov. xxi 13.

Q. Doth not God sometimes delay long to hear the prayers of his own people?

A. Yes; he doth so, to chasten and humble them for their sins, to try their faith and patience, to quicken them to more fervency in prayer, and make mercies more sweet to them when obtained, Isa. lix 2 Mat xv. 26, 28. Isa. lxiv. 7. 2 Cor xii 8, 9.

Q. How may we know that our prayers are accepted of God, when yet we receive no answer to them?

A. It is a good sign of acceptance, when we are helped still to wait upon God in the way of duty, to get our hearts enlarged in prayer; or when we are inclined to justify God and blame ourselves for the cause of his silence, Isa. viii. 17. Psal. cxxxviii. 3 Lam iii 39, 40, 41.

Q. Doth not God sometimes answer his peoples prayers, though the very things asked be not given?

A. Yes, when he grants them the equivalent, or things more necessary for them; as when he gives spiritual blessings instead of temporal, stronger adherence to Christ instead of assurance, or greater humility and melting of heart for sin, instead of consolation and joy.

Q. What is the second part of prayer mentioned in the answer? A Confession of our sins.

Q Ought not our petitions for pardon and mercy to be attended with humble confession of sin?

A. Yes, if we would have them acceptable and successful, Luke xviii. 13, 14

Q. What sins should we confess unto the Lord?

A. All our sins, both original and actual, of omission and commission, in heart and life, in words and actions; with the several aggravations of them, and their deserving at God's hand.

Q. In what manner ought we to confess our sins to the Lord?

A. We should confess our sins humbly, freely, fully, and in a most penitent manner, with grief for them, hatred of them, and strong resolutions against them, in the strength of Jesus Christ.

Q Must we not forsake our sins, as well as confess them?

A Yes; for it is only those who do so, that shall find mercy, according to Prov xxviii 13.

Q What is the third part of prayer mentioned in the answer?

A Thankful acknowledgement of God's mercies to us

Q. Is thanksgiving to be always joined with our petitions and supplications to God?

A. Yes; for God requires and expects it, and it is most pleasing unto him, Phil. iv 6. Luke xvii. 17. Psal lxix. 31.

Q What are the mercies we ought to acknowledge and give thanks for?

A. All the spiritual and temporal mercies which we presently enjoy; and the eternal mercies which we hope for, and have promised unto us

Q. Which is the greatest mercy that we have to acknowledge?

A Jesus Christ is the mercy of mercies, and the unspeakable gift of God to a perishing world, for which we should offer thanks to God, both now, and through all eternity, Luke i 72. 2 Cor. ix. 15

Q Is not this thankfulness for mercies a special way of glorifying God?

A Yes, for God hath said, "Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me," Psal. l 23.

Q. How should we acknowledge our mercies, so as to glorify God?

A We should acknowledge them thankfully, and with admiration, affectionately and with delight in the Author, humbly and with self abhorrence, obediently and with fruitful lives, fiducially and with encouragement to ask for more, Psal. ciii 1, 2, &c. Psal. cxvi 1, 2, 9, 12. Gen xxxii. 10, 11 Psal. iv. 1, 3 2 Cor. i. 10. Psal. lxvii. 5, 6.

Q. Ought we not to bewail it, that we are so negligent and backward in this duty of thankfulness for mercies received? A. Yes.

QUESTION XCIX.

Q. *What rule hath God given for our direction in Prayer?*

A The whole word of God is of use to direct us in prayer, but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called, "The Lord's Prayer."

Q. Why do men need rules and directions in prayer?

A. Because of ourselves we know not what to pray for as we ought, nor how to pray for it aright when we know it; but are ready to mistake either as to the matter or manner of our prayers.

Q. When do men mistake in the matter of prayer?

A. When they ask things not good in themselves, or not proper for them, so the disciples did mistake, when they would have called for fire against the Samaritans, Luke ix. 54.

Q. When do men mistake in the manner of prayer?

A. When they pray for mercies in a formal way, or for carnal ends, as to make provision for their lusts, Isa. lxiv 7. James iv. 3.

Q What helps hath God furnished us with for prayer?

A. He hath given us both a general and special directory for it.

Q. What is the general directory which God hath given us for prayer?

A The whole word of God, which is of great use to direct us, both as to the matter and manner of prayer.

Q. How is the word of God useful to direct us in the matter of prayer?

A. The word doth furnish us with matter of preface, for confession, for petition, and for thanksgiving, in prayer.

Q What matter doth the word furnish us with for the preface of prayer?

A. It affords us the most noble and lofty descriptions of God, with his titles and attributes, which are proper in our addresses to him, such as these in Exod. xv 11. and xxxiv. 6, 7. Neh ix 6 Job ix 4. and xi 7. and 40. 9. Psal. lx xiii. 18. and lxxxiv. 8, 10. and lxxxix .6, 8 and xc. 2 and cii. 25, 26, 27 and civ. 1, 2, 24 and cxxxix 7, 8, 9, 10. and cxlv. 3, 8, 9, 14, 17. Isa xxviii. 29. and xl. 12, 15, 17, 22, 28. and lv 9 Jer. 17. 10 and xxxi 35. Mal. iii. 6. Dan. ii. 34, 35. 1 Tim. i. 17. Rev iv. 6, 11.

Q. What matter doth God's word furnish us with for the confession of sin?

A. It doth set before us many examples of religious persons humbling themselves before God for their sins, and confessing their original sin and corruption, the blindness of their minds, the stubborness of their wills, the carnality of their affections, their sins of omission and commission, and the manifold aggravations of their sins; as in Ezra ix 6, 13, 15. Neh ix. 32, 33, 34, &c. Job vii. 20 and ix. 3, 20. and xv 14, 15, &c and xl. 4. and xlii 5, 6. Psal xiv. 3. and xix 12. and xxxviii 4, 18. and xl. 12 and li 3, 4, 5, &c and lxxiii. 22 Psal. cxix *ult.* and cxxx. 3, 4, &c. Isa. i 6. and vi. 5 Jer. v 3. and x.. 1 and xvii. 9. and xxxi. 18. Lam. iii 39, 40, &c. Dan. iv. 5, 6, &c Luke xv. 18, 19, 21. Rom vii 14, 15, &c. and viii. 7. Eph. xxi. 2, 3, &c. and iv 18.

Q. What matter doth the word afford us for thanksgiving?

A It doth set before us the examples of God's people, who blessed and praised him for his goodness to them in creation and providence, in allowing them the comforts of life, peace, and tranquillity, success in their callings, sanctified afflictions, recovery from sickness, the accomplishment of promises, and especially for Jesus Christ, and all manner of spiritual blessings in him, Psalm viii. 3, 4. and lxv 9, 10. and cxxxix. 14. and civ. 27, 28. &c. and iii 5 and lxviii. 19 Deut. viii 10 Gen. xxxii. 10 Isa xxxviii 10, 17 Psal. cix. 67 1 Kings viii. 56 Luke i. 68, 69, &c. Eph. i. 3. 2 Cor. ix 15 Isa lxiii. 7. Psalm ciii 1, 2, 3, &c Rev. i. 5, 6. 1 John iv. 10.

Q. What matter doth the word afford for petitions and requests?

A. The scriptures abound with many excellent precepts and precious promises, every one of which we may turn in-

to prayers of requests, begging of God that he would give us grace to obey the precepts, and grace to enable us to plead and wait for the accomplishment of the promises. Besides, we have recorded many examples of saints petitioning for pardon of sin, reconciliation with God, the divine blessing, the evidences of God's love, and peace of conscience; for renovation of heart, saving illumination, holy fear, faith, and increase of all grace; for preservation from sin and error, wisdom to improve time, and prepare for death; as in Psal. li. 1, 2, 3, 7, 9. and cxliii. 2 Hos. xiv. 2. Luke xviii. 13 Jer. xvii. 14. Psalm lxvii. 1, 6. and cvi 4, 5. and xxxv 3. Psalm li. 8, 10, 11, 12 Rom xv. 13. Psalm cxix. 18, 29. 33, 37, 80, 132, 133. Job xxxiv 32. 1 Thess. v. 23, 24. Psalm xxvii. 11. and lxxxvi 11. Luke xvii. 5. Psalm xix. 12, 13. and xxxix 4, 5. and xc. 12. All which may be useful to direct us in prayer.

Q Do we not find the scripture saints making use of arguments with God in prayer for obtaining their requests?

A. Yes, very many, taken from the mercy of God's nature, the glory of his name, his promises, faithfulness, power; and from the merit and righteousness of his Son Jesus Christ, Psalm lxxxvi. 5, 15. and lxxix. 8, 9 Josh. vii. 9 Num. xiv. 17, 18, 19. Psalm cxix 49. and lxxiv. 20. Neh i 5. Mat viii 2 Isa. lxiv 6. Jer. xxiii 6. Dan ix 17, 18, 19. which are recorded for our instruction and imitation.

Q If the word doth shew us the matter of prayer so fully, then what need have we of the Spirit of grace and supplication, which God promiseth to pour out upon his people?

A. It is the Spirit's office to take of the things of Christ and shew them unto us, John xvi. 15. He teaches us all things, and brings all things to our remembrance, John xiv. 16.

Q Doth the scripture give us direction also as to the manner of prayer?

A. Yes; it directs us to draw near to God with sincerity, humility, fervency, constancy, and faith in the merits of Jesus Christ. Heb x 22 Psalm x. 17. James v. 16 and i. 6. John xvi. 23 Luke xviii. 1.

Q. What is the special rule of direction in prayer, mentioned in the answer?

A. That form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples, commonly called the *Lord's prayer*. This we have recorded in Mat. vi 9. to 14. " After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name," &c.

Q Why is that prayer called the Lord's prayer? is it because he used it himself?

A. No; the Lord Jesus could not use it, for he had no sin to seek forgiveness of, as in the fifth petition; but it is called his prayer, because he taught it to his disciples, that they might make use of it.

Q. What was Christ's design in teaching them this prayer?

A He designed to teach his disciples (who were then but private persons) suitably to their weak infant state, when they had little of the Spirit, and little knowledge of the gospel mystery; for he but gradually revealed himself to them: and therefore, in the mean time, he gives them a short, plain, and easy form of the words, that might comprehend the heads or chief things, they had to ask of God, and from which they might draw materials for prayer Likewise, he taught them by it to ask for things relating to God's glory before things relating to themselves, and to prefer spiritual mercies before temporal.

Q Why do you think this prayer was so much calculated for the disciples present state?

A. Because our Lord did not then think fit to direct them to pray in his name, or to make any mention of Christ in their prayers: but afterwards, when he was pleased plainly to reveal himself as the great Priest and sacrifice for lost sinners, he did teach them expressly to pray in his name,— John xv 23, 24.

Q. Was it our Lord's design to tie his disciples to the precise words he gave them, and to use them always when they prayed?

A. No; for he gave them this prayer chiefly as a pattern or directory for their assistance in prayer, so that they were left at freedom either to use these very words, which indeed are sweet and excellent, or to enlarge upon them in other words suitably to their own case, or the case of others joining with them in prayer.

Q. How do you make it appear that they were left at that freedom?

A Because, 1. Christ saith to his disciples, Mat vi 9. " Pray after this manner." 2. Matthew and Luke do very much differ, and alter the words in recording this prayer. 3. We have several prayers of the apostles recorded, as in Acts i 24 and iv. 24 Eph. iii. 24. 1 Thes iii 11 2 Thes. ii 16 Heb. xiii 20 and yet in none of them do they use the express words of this prayer. 4. The Lord gives directions for prayer in other te ts, and prescribes words as expressly as Christ doth in Mat 6 such as we have recorded in Hos xiv. 2. Joel ii 17. and yet none plead that we are stinted to these precise words, though there is the same reason for doing it in the one place, as in the other.

Q. Is not the Lord's prayer still of excellent use unto us?

A. Yes, and we ought to value it highly, and have a special regard to it, as a pattern of divine contrivance, and a most comprehensive summary of the chief things we have to ask of God, which we should diligently study both as to matter and method, and from which we should take the materials of our prayers.

Q Doth Christ's giving us this prayer warrant men to compose forms of prayer for others, so as to restrict them to the use of them, and cause them to read them when they pray?

A By no means: For though forms of prayer may be useful to children and weak persons, who cannot pray without such helps; yet to impose them upon such as need them not, and to oblige men to read them as terms of communion, is unwarrantable.

Q. Wherefore is it unwarrantable?

A. 1st, Because we have no scripture command nor example for it; we are enjoined to read and study the scriptures, but not to read any Prayer book. If the scripture saints had any such book, they could not have said, as in Rom viii. 26 " We know not what to pray for as we ought, without the Spirit's help; for these who read such books for prayer, seem to be at no loss what to pray for — 2dly, We have many prayers of the scripture and primitive saints recorded, which they conceived suitable to their present circumstances and necessities, without any book or set form; nay, these antient saints were so far from reading their prayers from a book, that we are assured the usual posture was to pray with their eyes either shut, or else lift up to heaven. 3dly, The cases, frames, trials, and circumstances of Christians are so various, and alter so frequently, that it is impossible that such composed forms can reach them. 4thly, To restrict men to such forms, would hinder them from the search of the scriptures, and of their own

hearts; seeing they must use the petitions prepared for them, whether they be suitable to their conditions or not.—5thly, This practice is injurious to the office of the Holy Spirit, and the design of Christ's ascension.

Q Is not the using and reading of forms of prayer, of very ancient standing in the church?

A. For as ancient as it is, we are well assured there was no such practice in the church for four hundred years after Christ: Neither came it in, till the spirit of grace had in a great measure left the church; and whenever he is poured out again upon the church, these forms will be laid aside.

Q How is this practice injurious to the Spirit's office, and Christ's ascension?

A In regard it is the office of the Holy Spirit to help his peoples infirmities, when they know not what to pray for as they ought; and Christ ascended up on high, that he might send the Spirit, and give gifts unto men, of prayer as well as of preaching: But, if reading of prayers take place, these gifts are useless, seeing one that can read well may pray as well as those who have the greatest gifts: And hereby a grave is digged for burying the most useful gifts of God to men; which is an injury to Christ and his Spirit, and expressly contrary to the injunction which he gives unto ministers, to stir up the gift of God that is in them, 2 Tim. i. 6.

Q. What parts doth the Lord's prayer consist of?

A. Of three parts; namely, a preface, six petitions, and the conclusion.

QUESTION C.

Q *What doth the Preface of the Lord's Prayer teach us?*

A The preface of the Lord's Prayer (which is, "Our Father which art in heaven,") teacheth us to draw near to God with all holy reverence and confidence, as children to a Father able and ready to help us; and that we should pray with and for others.

Q Why doth Christ teach us to begin prayer with a solemn preface?

A. To let us know that we must not rush into God's presence without consideration, but must study to have an awful sense of the majesty of that God whom we are to address

Q. What is the preface given to the Lord's prayer?

A. It is in these words, "Our Father which art in heaven:"

Q. What views doth Christ give us of the object of worship in this preface?

A. We have a twofold view of God in it: 1. In the near relation he stands to his people in these words, "Our Father." 2. In his glorified majesty, and dwelling place, in these words "which art in heaven"

Q. How is the word *Father* to be understood here?

A. Sometimes *Father* is understood *personally* for the first person of the blessed Trinity, and to whom prayer is directed; as in Eph. iii. 14 Sometimes *Father* is understood *essentially* for the Godhead, including all the three persons, as in 1 Chron. xxix. 10. 2 Cor. vi 18. And in this last sense we take it in the Lord's prayer.

Q. In what respect is God called our Father?

A. 1. God is called our Father in respect of creation, as in Isa lxiv. 8. Mal. ii. 10. 2. In respect of our adoption into the family of God through Jesus Christ, Rom. viii. 14, 15. Gal iv. 5, 6.

Q. When Christ directs us in prayer to call God "Our Father," what doth he teach us hereby?

A. He teacheth us hereby to draw near to God, 1 With holy reverence and fear of God our Creator 2 With a filial and kindly respect to God as our Benefactor and Provider. 3 With humble confidence and expectation of getting what we want from a loving Father 4. With willingness and desire, as children who delight to speak to their kind father.

Q. Is it not unspeakable love and goodness in God to allow such sinful worms to call him "Our Father?"

A. Yes; and the apostle John is astonished at it, 1 John iii. 1.

Q. May unregenerate men call God their Father?

A Not in a peculiar manner, or in a gospel sense; hence Christ would not allow the Pharisees to call God their Father, John viii 42, 44.

Q Who are these then that may warrantably do it?

A Those who receive the spirit of adoption into their hearts may cry, "Abba, Father," Rom. viii. 15.

Q. What is the spirit of adoption?

A. It is the Spirit of God that produces the nature and disposition of children in the souls of God's people; which appears in their filial love to God, their fear of offending him, their dependence upon him, their obedience and desire of conformity to him.

Q How shall these cry, *Abba, Father*, who see not the evidences of the spirit of adoption in them?

A. If they receive the Lord Jesus by faith, they may call God their Father; for it is by faith in him that sinners become the children of God, John i. 12 Gal. iii. 26

Q What shall they say, who doubt if they have got true faith?

A. If they be weary of their sins, and earnestly desirous of reconciliation with God through Christ, they may go to God with the prodigal, and say to him, "Father, I have sinned," &c Luke xv. 18

Q. Wherein doth God resemble a father or earthly parent to his people?

A. In regard he pities them, provides bread for them, clothes them, loves to hear them speak, is ready to hear their cries, gives them good instructions, and a good example, chastises them with yearning bowels, provides portions and inheritances for them, Prov. iii 13. 1 Pet. ii 2. Isa. lxi. 10. Prov xv. 8 Psal xxxiv. 16 Mat. v. 48. Jer. xxx. 11. Psal xxxi 19. Luke xii. 32 1 Pet. i. 4.

Q Wherein doth God excel all earthly fathers?

A. In regard he is a Father infinitely rich, wise, and loving, immortal and everlasting: He gives his children whatever is best for them, and in good time; he never gives them what is hurtful to them: He makes all his children heirs, yea, heirs of a kingdom, even the youngest of them.

Q Why is God in this preface said to be in heaven? Is he nowhere else?

A The meaning is not that God's presence is included in the heavens; for the heaven of heavens cannot contain him, who fills heaven and earth, and is every where present, 1 Kings viii. 27. Jer. xxiii. 24. But he is said to be in heaven, because there is his throne and court, where he manifests himself most gloriously, Psal. xi. 4. and ciii. 19 Isa lxvi. 1.

Q. What doth Christ teach us by addressing God as our Father in heaven?

A. 1. That though we be allowed to speak freely to God, yet we should know our distance, and have exalted thoughts and awful apprehensions of the divine Majesty and glory.—2. That God beholds all things, and is able and ready to

help us in every case. 3. That we should be heavenly-minded and abstracted from the world in duty: That we should have our eyes on heaven, as our country and home, and especially on Jesus Christ our intercessor there, for acceptance and audience in every duty.

Q. What doth the word OUR in this preface teach us?

A. That we ought not only to pray alone for ourselves, but that we should also pray in society with others, and for others: and particularly, that family-worship is a duty incumbent on those who have families, Jer. x 25.

QUESTION CI.

Q. *What do we pray for in the First Petition?*

A. In the first petition (which is, "Hallowed be thy name,") we pray, That God would enable us and others to glorify him in all that whereby he maketh himself known, and that he would dispose of all things to his own glory.

Q. What is a petition?

A. It is a request or asking of a thing

Q. How many petitions are in the Lord's prayer?

A. Six.

Q. How are these six petitions divided?

A. The three first relate chiefly to God's glory, and the three last to our good and benefit

Q. What is the first of these petitions?

A. Hallowed be thy name.

Q. Why is this petition put first?

A. To shew that we are to prefer the hallowing of God's name to all other things whatsoever. This is the first and great petition, and will last when the other petitions shall be out of date in heaven; for to all eternity the saints will insist upon the hallowing of God's name.

Q. What is meant here by God's name?

A. God himself the person named; and particularly every thing whereby God makes himself known, such as, his titles, attributes, words, &c.

Q. What is it to hallow the name of God?

A. It is to sanctify, honour or glorify God himself, and to do it in those things by which he makes himself known, Isa. viii. 13. and xxix 23. 1 Pet iii 15.

Q. Why is the word *hallowed* or *sanctified*, made use of, rather than glorified?

A. Because God's glory doth shine most in his holiness, and God's holiness doth beautify all his other attributes, Isa. vi. 3. and xii. 6. Exod. xv 11.

Q. Is there not a vast difference between God's sanctifying of us, and our sanctifying of God?

A. Yes; for God's sanctifying of us, is by infusing holiness into us, which we had not before; but our sanctifying God, is only to manifest and acknowledge that holiness of God, which he eternally had, and will have.

Q. Why is the petition set down in the third person, "hallowed be thy name?"

A. To include all persons and things that are capable of doing it; as, 1. Let us who pray be fit, or make us fit, to hallow thy name. 2. Let all our fellow-creatures be fitted and employed to hallow thy name. 3. Because creatures are insufficient to do it, Lord, let thy name be hallowed by thyself, who only canst do it to purpose

Q. Are we not taught by this petition to acknowledge that we are incapable of ourselves to do any thing for God's glory?

A. Yes; and therefore Christ will have us to ask grace from God to fit us, and put us in the most useful circumstances for the glorifying of his name.

Q. How is it that we by grace may hallow and glorify God's name?

A. By adoring his excellencies; owning our independence on him; trusting and believing in him; reverencing his name, his word, and ordinances; praising him, and calling upon him; confessing and forsaking our sins; magnifying God in his works; justifying him in his judgments; fruitfulness in good works; ascribing the honour of all we do to him; standing up for his glory; espousing the cause of truth and holiness; suffering for them; witnessing against error, sin, and every thing that dishonours him; and commending the way and service of God to others, both by our lips and lives.

Q. Doth Christ also teach us, in this petition, that it should be our joy and endeavour to have the name of God hallowed and glorified by others, as well as by ourselves?

A. Yes

Q. What must we pray for, that others in the world may also glorify his name?

A. That the nations, and those who know not God, may be converted to him; that they may glorify his name, in the same manner that we are endeavouring to do it; and that they may "come and declare his righteousness to a people that shall be born," Psal. xlvii. 2, 3. and xxii. 27, 31.

Q. Should we not join our endeavours with our prayers in order to engage others to glorify God?

A. Yes, according to our stations.

Q. What direction hath Christ given to persons of all stations for that end?

A. That in Mat v. 16. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Q. Seeing we come so far short of our duty in this respect, ought we not to pray that God may glorify his own name?

A. Yes, we have Christ teaching us this by his own example, John xii. 28. "Father, glorify thy name." And we have God's promise that he will do it, Ezek. xxxviii. 23. and xxxvi 23.

Q. How is it that God doth glorify his own name?

A. By pouring out his Spirit on the church, and disposing all things in the world to his own glory.

Q. How doth God dispose of the affairs of the world to his own glory?

A. By over-ruling the occurrences in it, to such events and issues as may best promote and advance the glory of his name: As when he restrains or punishes his enemies, and vindicates his name from the reproaches of the wicked; when he relieves his church from oppression, removes her grievances, establishes pure worship and ordinances, opens a door for reformation, restores her judges as at the first, and her counsellors as at the beginning, Ezek. xxviii 24, 25, 26. and xxxvi 23, 24, 37, 38. and xx. 40, 41. Isa. i. 26. Psal. lxxvi. 9, 10

Q. Doth not Christ teach us in this petition to pray against every thing whereby God's name is dishonoured?

A. Yes.

Q. What are these evils whereby God's name is dishonoured?

A. They are many, such as atheism, idolatry, unbelief, contempt of God and his worship, swearing, Sabbath-breaking, uncleanness, &c.

Q. If any such profane persons say the Lord's prayer, doth not their practice contradict their prayers? A. Yes.

Q. Is it not a cutting affliction to a gracious soul to see or hear God's name dishonoured?

A. Yes, Psal. xlii. 10.

Q. Will not God pour contempt upon those who dishonour his name?

A. Yes, their name and memory shall rot here, and they shall rise to shame and everlasting contempt hereafter, Prov. x. 7. Dan. xii. 5.

Q. What shall be done to those who honour and glorify God's name?

A. They shall lose nothing by it, 1 Sam. ii. 3. "Them that honour me, I will honour."

Q. How shall God honour those who honour him?

A. He will put honour upon their persons, upon their names, their souls, and their bodies. He will honour them at death, by sending angels for them, and after death, by putting robes of immortality, and crowns of righteousness upon them.

QUESTION CII.

Q. *What do we pray for in the Second Petition?*

A. In the second petition, (which is, "Thy kingdom come") we pray, That satan's kingdom may be destroyed, and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it and kept in it, and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

Q. Why doth this petition follow the former?

A. Because we cannot hallow or glorify God's name aright, till his kingdom come into our souls.

Q. What is signified by the kingdom of God here?

A. Three things: 1st, The preaching of the gospel is called his kingdom, Mat. xiii. 47. 2dly, A work of saving grace in mens souls is so called, Luke xvii. 21. 3dly, The state of glory in heaven is also called the kingdom of God, 1 Cor. xv. 50. The two first are called the kingdom of grace in the answer, and the third is called the kingdom of glory.

Q. Why are these called the kingdom of grace?

A. Because it is by the dispensation of the gospel that a work of grace is begun and carried on in the souls of the elect.

Q. Who is King in this kingdom?

A. God; but he governs it by Jesus Christ his viceroy, whom he hath set to reign in it, and hence called King of Zion, Psal. ii. 6.

Q. Why is Christ's gracious work in his people's souls called a kingdom?

A. Because, wherever grace comes, it subdues mutinous lusts, rules in the will and affections, and brings the whole man in subjection to Christ and his righteous sceptre, 2 Cor x. 5.

Q. Whether is it the coming of the kingdom of grace or of glory, that we pray for in the second petition?

A. We pray for the coming of them both, and that because the last is nothing but the perfection of the first, and the glory of God is more fully displayed in it

Q. What is meant by the coming or advancement of the kingdom of grace, which we are here taught to pray for?

A. It includes the spreading and success of the gospel through the world, and removing of the impediments thereof. Also we pray therein, that the churches of Christ every where may have faithful ministers, pure doctrine, ordinances, and discipline, with much of the presence and power of God's Spirit concurring with the same. That the kingdom of God may be set up in our souls, and in the souls of others, and a work of grace may be carried on therein to perfection.

Q. What are those impediments of the coming of this kingdom, that we must pray God to take out of the way?

A. There is in general the kingdom of satan, which includes the dominion and tyranny of sin, of Antichrist, and all the enemies of the church; the overspreading of false religions; the prevailing of error, idolatry, superstition, scandals, divisions, or a corrupt ministry in the church: All these we must pray against.

Q. How doth it appear that Satan hath a kingdom in the world?

A. In regard satan is stiled the *God* and *Prince of this world;* and the wicked are his children and subjects, in and over whom he rules, 2 Cor. iv. 4. John xiv. 30. and viii 44. Eph. ii 2. 2 Tim. ii. 26.

Q. Is satan's kingdom very large?

A. Yes, it is much further spread than the kingdom of Christ.

Q. How comes satan to have such a large kingdom?

A. By our first parents revolting from their rightful sovereign.

Q Why doth God permit satan to rule over the world in such a manner?

A. God permits it as a righteous act of vengeance against man, for revolting from the sweet government of his Lord and Maker; and also to glorify his name, by recovering the elect from satan's dominion

Q. Has satan any right to govern the wicked?

A. No; he is an usurper, though they are become his willing slaves.

Q Ought we not to pray that satan's kingdom may be destroyed?

A. Yes; for while it stands it hinders the coming of Christ's kingdom; and the precious souls he rules over, are under a cruel government.

Q What is the meaning of the word *satan*?

A. It signifies an adversary; and well he may be called so, for he is the adversary that goes about as a roaring lion, seeking to devour precious souls, 1 Pet. v 8

Q What is meant by our praying to destroy satan's kingdom?

A. We mean that Christ may bruise the old serpent's head, and deliver poor souls from his tyranny; that Jews, Turks, Heathens, and wicked men, may be brought to the knowledge and obedience of Christ.

Q. How may we know if we be delivered from the kingdom of satan, and brought into the kingdom of Christ?

A. We may know it by our hearkening to the gospel call, by our closing with Christ in all his offices, by our surrendering our hearts to be his throne, our loving his laws, and fighting against his enemies.

Q Ought these to pray, "Thy kingdom come," in whose souls the kingdom of grace is come already?

A. Yes; for, it being in a weak condition, they must still pray that it may come with more power into them; that sin may be more weakened, and grace more strengthened and increased; and that they persevere in grace to the end.

Q. Would not the remarkable coming of the kingdom of grace produce blessed effects in the world?

A Yes; for then godliness would be in esteem, truth would prevail against error, iniquity would stop its mouth, Jerusalem would be a praise, her walls would be repaired, her grievances redressed, and her branches healed; then

should her ministers be clothed with righteousness, and her saints shout for joy; then should sinners fly together as a cloud, like doves to their windows; then should the lion ly down with the lamb, the weak should be as David, and David as the angel of God.

Q. What do we pray for in this petition, with respect to the kingdom of glory?

A. That it may be hastened.

Q. What is meant by the kingdom of glory?

A. The glorious state of the church triumphant in heaven, when they shall be free from all evil, enjoy all good, and reign with Christ for ever.

Q Why is the heavenly state called the kingdom of God?

A. Because in that state God reigns over his people gloriously, there not being any mutinous lust or rebellious thought to be found among them. And they themselves shall be made kings, and shall sit with Christ on his throne, and reign with him for ever, Rev. iii 21 and xxii. 5

Q. Who are those that are entitled to that kingdom of glory?

A. Those who receive Christ as their king now, who strive to subdue their lusts, who live as pilgrims here, who keep up a correspondence with that kingdom, and study to be made meet for it

Q Is there not a time fixed for the coming of this kingdom? How then should we pray to hasten it?

A Though the time be fixed, yet God makes it our duty to be longing and breathing out our desires for the coming of it, according to Christ's promise, Cant. viii 14. Rev. xxii. 20.

Q. How is this longing disposition of the saints expressed?

A It is called a "looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God." 2 Pet. iii. 12.

Q. Why are saints of this longing disposition?

A. Because the new nature inclines them to desire perfect freedom from sin, and full communion with God.

QUESTION CIII.

Q. *What do we pray for in the Third Petition?*

A. In the Third Petition (which is, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven") we pray. That God by his grace would make us able and willing to know, obey, and submit to his will in all things, as the angels do in heaven.

Q Why doth this petition follow upon the former?

A. To teach us, that the doing of God's will is the way to promote the coming of his kingdom

Q What is meant by the will of God here?

A. Both the will of God's precept and the will of his providence, Mat vii. 21. 1 Pet. iii. 17.

Q. What is it that we pray for when we ask that the will of God's precept may be done?

A. We pray, That we and others may, by God's word and Spirit, be enlightened to know his will revealed to us, and may, by his grace, be inclined and enabled to obey it

Q. Doth not this suppose that we are naturally blind and ignorant of God's will?

A. Yes; and so the scripture tells us, Eph iv. 18. and v. 8.

Q. Are we not by nature also unwilling to know the will of God?

A. Yes, Job xxi 14. "They say unto God, depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways," Rom. viii. 7.

Q. What must we do, in order to know the will of God?

A. We must search the scriptures where it is revealed to us, and pray for the teaching of the Spirit of God, who only can effectually remove our blindness and enmity, and give us the saving knowledge of God's will, John v. 39. Psal. cxix. 18, 33, 36.

Q. Is it enough for a man to know God's will in a literal manner?

A No; for we must likewise be inclined and strengthened to obey it Therefore saith our Lord, John xiii. 17. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

Q. Will not knowledge, without doing, make a man's case the worse?

A. Yes, it will make hell the hotter, according to Luke xii. 47.

Q. Are we not naturally prone to rebel against God's will, and to do the will of the flesh and of the devil?

A. Yes, Rom. viii. 7. 1 Peter iv 3. Eph. ii. 3 John viii. 44.

Q. Who are these that are inclined to do the will of God?

A. These who have God's law written in their hearts, which God promiseth to do to all these whom he renews by his Spirit, Jer. xxxii. 33.

Q What is it to write his law in their hearts?

A. It is to make them intimately acquaint with it, to give them a heart love and inward conformity to it, and a ready disposition to obey it

Q. Is it not the Spirit of God that must work in us, both to will and to do what he requires in his law?

A. Yes, Phil. ii. 13. Ezek xxxvi. 27.

Q What is it we ask in this petition, when we pray that the will of God's providence may be done?

A That God may give us and others grace to submit to afflicting dispensations, when it is the will of God to send them, Acts xxi. 24.

Q. What is that holy submission to the will of God which Christians ought to have, when they meet with affliction?

A. It is a gracious disposition of soul, whereby a Christian is inclined to acknowledge God's wise hand in all he meets with, and to be content to be wholly at God's disposals, without murmuring against him, 1 Sam iii 18. 2 Sam. xv 26

Q Wherefore may we not murmur under affliction?

A Because God is righteous in all his ways, and doth punish us less than our iniquities deserve; and, if he take away any of our comforts, he but takes what is his own,— Psalm cxlv. 17. Ezra ix. 13. 1 Chron. xxix 14.

Q. When is it that a Christian is in greatest hazard of murmuring?

A. When he meets with poverty, reproach, the loss of near relations, or with sharp bodily pain.

Q. What should quiet us in such cases?

A. Serious consideration, that we have procured all this to ourselves, that he is a holy God that hath done it, and that he sees it needful for us.

Q. What are we taught by these words in the petition, "On earth?"

A. That our concern for the glory of God and good of souls should be very extensive; for we should desire that all the inhabitants of the earth may be engaged to obey the will of our heavenly Father.

Q. What is meant by these words, "As it is in heaven?"

A. These words shew what manner of obedience we should aim at and pray for; that it should be like that of the angels and glorified saints in heaven.

Q. Where do we read of the angels doing the will of God?

A. In Psalm ciii 21. "Ye angels that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word."

Q. Where do we read of the glorified saints doing the will of God?

A. In Rev. xxii. 3. "There his servants shall serve him."

Q. What may we infer from such texts?

A. That it is no disparagement, but our highest honour, to serve God on earth; seeing in heaven both angels and saints do serve him.

Q. Is there not a great difference between their obedience and ours?

A. Yes; for they do the will of God in a perfect manner, but we do it imperfectly.

Q. How then can we imitate these heavenly inhabitants?

A In doing the will of God according to our state and ability, as they do according to theirs.

Q. How is it that angels and saints do the will of God in heaven?

A. They do it presently, sincerely, humbly, cheerfully, entirely, diligently, fervently, constantly, and unweariedly; and in these we should study, through grace, to imitate them, humbly bewailing short-comings, and earnestly praying to God in Christ's name for more strength

Q. May not all such upright souls firmly hope the time is hastening when they shall obey God like angels?

A. Yes, according to Luke xx. 36.

Q. Are not the most part on earth unmindful of those excellent patterns of obedience?

A. Yes; and particularly they who make the practice of the world the rule of their doings; and they who delay performing God's will; also, they who do it only by fits, and they who do it negligently.

Q Is it not a great part of the service of angels and saints in heaven to sing songs of praise to God? A. Yes.

Q. What do they praise him for?

A. They praise him for his works of creation and providence, and especially for his work of redemption by Jesus Christ: hence they are said to sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb, Rev xv 3.

Q. Wherefore are their songs in heaven so stiled?

A. They are called the song of Moses, because it was Moses that gave us the account of God's wonderful work of creation, and also his wonderful works of providence in preserving the church, and punishing her enemies, in the deluge of Egypt and the Red Sea, upon which occasion we have Moses's triumphant song recorded, Exod. xv. Again, their songs may well be called the "song of the Lamb," seeing Christ the Lamb of God is the subject-matter of their songs, in regard of his amazing free love in undertaking, carrying on, and finishing that glorious work of our redemption.—And in these works of creation, providence, and redemption, saints and angels will find abundant matter of praise to all eternity.

Q. *What do we pray for in the Fourth Petition?*

A. In the Fourth Petition (which is, "Give us this day our daily bread,") we pray, That of God's free gift, we may receive a competent portion of the good things of this life, and enjoy his blessing with them.

Q. What is meant by bread here?

A. Food proper for our bodies, a part being taken for the whole; as in John xiii. 8. and other places.

Q Are we not to pray for other things to our bodies besides food?

A. Yes; and bread is sometimes taken in a large sense for all things needful for upholding the body in this life, as in Gen. ii. 19. and so it includes habitations, health, sleep, clothes, medicines, and all other necessaries of life, which we are likewise to pray for. As also, for averting of those evils which would destroy our bodies, or the means of supporting them; such as bad seasons, famine, war, violence, burnings, plagues, &c.

Q. Why doth Christ mention bread only in this prayer?

A. To teach us, that we have forfeited the good things of this life, and deserve to be deprived of them all; that the least crumb of bread is God's free gift, which we can nowise merit at his hand: and likewise teach us, not to ask delicacies or dainties, but only necessaries, and to be content with a sober maintenance, 1 Tim. vi. 8.

Q. Is not the bread we ask for the Lord's? why then do we call it "Our bread," as if we had a right to it?

A. It is called *ours*, not that we deserve it from God, for he oweth no man any thing; but because God is pleased, of his free gift to man, to appoint it for preservation: and likewise to teach us, to see what title we have to the bread we eat, that it be our own bread, and not another man's.

Q Who are they that cannot call the bread they eat their own bread?

A. Such as eat the bread of idleness, mentioned in Prov. xxxi. 27. that is, bread they do not work for, but live at the cost of others: likewise those who eat the bread of violence or deceit, mentioned in Prov. iv. 17. and xx. 17. that is, bread got by rapine and injustice; these cannot be said to eat their own bread.

Q. What is required of us, that the bread we eat may be called ours?

A. 1. We must see that we have a civil right to it, as having acquired it by honest and lawful means, 2 Thess. iii. 12. 2 We must see also to have a covenant-right to our bread, by being interested in Christ —Christ, who is the heir of all things, through whose purchase earthly things are given to believers in a covenant way, Rom. viii. 32. 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23.

Q. Can unbelievers say before God, as well as believers, "Our bread?"

A. No; for whatever civil right they have to what they possess, they have nothing by covenant-right: whatever they have by God's providence, or with his leave; they have nothing by God's promise, or with his love; it is only believers who are rightful heirs and possessors of the world.—So that unbelievers, who abound in wealth, have cause to be deeply humbled before God, and to say, Alas, we are but usurpers of God's good things, we have no good right to them before him, Psalm xxxvii. 9, 11. Mat v. 5. 1 Tim iv. 8.

Q. What is meant by *daily* bread in this petition?

A. Such a portion of outward things as is necessary and sufficient for our subsistence from one day to another.

Q. Why doth Christ direct us to pray for *daily*, and not *yearly* bread?

A. To teach us these things: Not to look for many days, or great things in the world, but to live every day as it were our last; hence it is added, in the petition, give us *this day*, Prov. xxvii. 1. 2. To live in a daily and constant dependence upon God, without anxious cares about futurity, Mat. vi. 34. Phil. iv. 6. 3. To exercise ourselves daily in prayer,

acknowledging God for every mercy, and seeking his blessing thereupon, Psalm lv. 17. 1 Thess. v. 17.

Q. May we ask for riches or great things to ourselves?

A. No; for God forbids us, telling us that they who will be rich fall into many temptations and snares, Jer xlv. 1 Tim. vi. 9.

Q. What if God should think fit to bestow riches upon us?

A Then we should receive them out of God's hand with thankfulness, begging for grace to use them for his glory, and to preserve us from the snares and temptations which usually attend them, Gen xxxii. 10.

Q. What are these temptations?

A When riches increase, men are tempted to set their hearts upon them, to trust in them, to be proud, to forget God, and to oppress others, Psalm lxii. 10. 1 Tim. vi. 17. Deut. viii. 13, 14 James ii. 6.

Q Is not poverty attended also with temptations?

A. Yes

Q. What are these temptations?

A. The poor are tempted to discontentment with their lot, and to use unlawful shifts to better it, Prov. xxx. 9.

Q. What condition then is freest from temptations, and to be most desired?

A. A middle condition, with a competent portion of the good things of this life: Upon which account Agur made it his prayer to God, Prov. xxx 8. "Give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me"

Q What is to be understood by a competent portion?

A. Such a portion as our needs and circumstances do require, and which God sees to be fittest for us.

Q Is God the best judge of what we need?

A. Yes; for our heavenly Father, who knows all our needs, is infinitely good and wise, Mat. vi. 32

Q. Seeing our heavenly Father knows our need of temporal things, what need we ask them of him?

A. Because he desires to hear his peoples voice, and he would have them to acknowledge that all things come from him.

Q Have we nothing to do but to pray for our daily bread?

A. God hath appointed us also to labour for it. Gen. iii. 19. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground"

Q Is not God offended with those who pretend to pray for bread, and will not work for it?

A. Yes, 2 Thess iii 10

Q If men must labour for their bread, why must they pray to God for it?

A Because it is God that must give us wisdom and strength to labour, that must make our labours successful, and make temporal things effectual to nourish and sustain us, Deut. viii 18 Psalm cxxvii. 2. Lev xxvi 26 Deut. viii. 3.

Q. Ought the rich, who are well provided, to pray for their daily bread?

A. Yes, they ought to pray that what is given may be blessed to them, continued with them, and that they may receive it as out of the Lord's hand.

Q Why must we seek the blessing of God with outward good things?

A Because without it they would be cursed and hurtful unto us, Hag i 6 Mal ii. 2.

Q. Is not a little, with the blessing of God, better than the riches of the wicked?

A. Yes, Psalm xxxvii 16.

Q. What must we do, that our portion in outward things may be blessed and comfortable to us?

A. We must secure an interest in Christ the purchaser, guard against distracting cares, trust in the providence of our heavenly Father, be content with his allowance, and thankful for it, deal justly with all men, and use the gifts of God for his glory.

Q. Doth this petition forbid all sorts of care, or laying up for afterwards?

A No; for some care, in the way of prudent foresight, is needful to provide for children and families, and nowise inconsistent with trusting to God for daily bread, 2 Cor. xii. 14. 1 Tim v. 8. We see Joseph laid up for the approaching famine, and Solomon commends him that gathereth in summer. Nay, Christ himself desired the remaining fragments to be gathered up, and he had a purse-bearer, to have something before-hand for their needs, Gen xli 48. Prov. vi. 6, 7, 8, &c. John vi. 12. and xiii. 29. Prov. xxxi 16.

Q What are these cares which are inconsistent with this petition?

A. Those which arise from affection to earthly things, which draw on men to use unlawful methods to get them, or are attended with disquieting or distrustful thoughts.

QUESTION CV.

Q. *What do we pray for in the Fifth Petition?*

A In the fifth petition (which is, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,") we pray, That God, for Christ's sake, would freely pardon all our sins; which we are the rather encouraged to ask, because by his grace we are enabled from the heart to forgive others.

Q How is it that we find in the Lord's prayer but one petition for temporal things, and so many for spiritual?

A. To teach us to be far more careful about the precious immortal soul, than about the poor dying body.

Q. Why is this petition annexed, by the copulative, *and*, to the former petition?

A To teach us, that worldly enjoyments can give no comfort without pardon of sin; and, therefore, when we ask for the one, we should with the same breath pray for the other: For let a man have never so much of the world, he is a miserable creature if he want pardon.

Q What is meant by our *debts* here?

A. Our sins against God.

Q How can sin be called a *debt*, seeing obedience is properly the debt we owe unto God?

A. Sin is also called a *debt*, because, when we fail to pay the debt of obedience, we contract a new debt to the justice of God: By sin we become bound to satisfy justice for the wrong done thereto, by suffering eternal punishment; and God, as the Creditor, hath right to insist for this satisfaction when he will

Q Have we not the properties of bad debtors?

A Yes; for we are wholly insolvent, we are turned careless about paying our debt, we are unwilling to confess debt, we shift clearing of accounts, we keep out of our creditor's way, and love not to meet with him.

Q. Doth not the debt of sin expose us to greater misery than any other debt whatsoever?

A. Yes: For other debts but expose mens bodies to misery here, which death puts an end to; but the debt of sin exposeth both our souls and bodies to eternal miseries in hell, the worst of all prisons, out of which there is no hope of liberation.

Q. Is there any man able to pay his own debt?

A. No, not the least farthing of it.

Q. How then shall we be delivered from the burden of our debts?

A. We must pray to God for a free pardon, as we are taught in this petition, "Forgive us our debts."

Q. Will God forgive our debts without satisfaction to his justice?

A. No; but he hath provided a Surety for us, who hath made full satisfaction, even the Lord Jesus Christ, for whose sake we must pray for pardon.

Q. If Christ hath satisfied for the debt, how is the pardon free?

A. It is free to us, because God exacts no satisfaction from us; and for the Surety from whom he exacts it, he gave him to us freely, without our deserving or desire: So that the pardon is still free to us, according to Rom. iii 24. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ."

Q. What means must be used by us for receiving of this free pardon?

A. We must with believing and penitent hearts go to the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, and plead for forgiveness for his sake And at the same time we must be careful, as Christ teacheth us, to be in a disposition to forgive our debtors.

Q. Who are those meant by our *debtors* here?

A. All those who have injured or wronged us in our persons, estates, names, relations, or in any thing else.

Q. What is it to forgive the faults of such debtors?

A. It is to pass them over without any hatred or desire of revenge against them, and to be ready to do them good when it is in our power.

Q. Do those forgive others heartily, who wish them evil, or are secretly glad when evil befals them? A. No

Q. What case are those in, who will not forgive others their trespasses?

A. Christ saith, that neither will God forgive them, Mat. vi. 15.

Q. Do we anywise merit forgiveness from God, by our forgiving others?

A. No; it is only an encouragement to expect forgiveness from God, when we feel this testimony of God's grace in our hearts, inclining us to forgive others?

Q. Are we not able of ourselves to forgive others?

A. No; we must have the grace of God to enable us to do it, Luke xvii. 3 &c.

Q. Doth the particle *as*, in the petition, import an equality in our forgiving others with God's forgiving us?

A. No; for we cannot forgive as freely, perfectly, and finally as God doth: But it is a note of similitude, and of our desire to imitate God in his forgiving of us, and that we do it heartily and sincerely

Q. Is it not highly dangerous to use the Lord's prayer with a malicious heart?

A. Yes; for such use a fearful imprecation against themselves, praying that God may deal with them as they do with others, *which is*, that he may not forgive them at all

Q. How shall we attain to this forgiving temper of spirit?

A. By seeking it from God, and considering our Saviour's precept and example, and the promise of forgiveness annexed to it, Mat. vi 14. And also by minding that we wrong God much more than any man doth wrong us; and if God be willing to forgive us ten thousand talents, we may well forgive our neighbour a few pence, Mat. xviii. 32, 33.

Q. Must we forgive those who do not desire it of us, nor repent of what they have done to us?

A. Yes; for we find Christ and Stephen did so.

Q. Do they not still remain *debtors* to God for their sins, if they repent not, though we have forgiven them?

A. Yes; and therefore those who injure their neighbours, should not be satisfied with a remission from them, but must cry to God for his forgiveness also, saying with David, Psal. li. 4. "Against thee, thee only have I sinned:" As if he had said, The wrong I have done to others is little in comparison of what I have done against thee.

QUESTION CVI.

Q. *What do we pray for in the Sixth Petition?*

A. In the sixth petition (which is "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil") we pray that God would either keep us from being tempted to sin, or support and deliver us when we are tempted.

Q. Why is this petition connected with the former by the copulative *and*?

A. To teach us two things: 1. That pardoned souls are the special objects of Satan's malice. 2 That, when past sins are forgiven, we should be very watchful against sin for the future, Psalm lxxxv 8.

Q. What are these temptations we are liable to?

A. They are of two sorts, some to *try* us, others to *seduce* us.

Q. Whence come these temptations for trial?

A. From God; thus did he tempt Abraham, Gen. xxii. 10.

Q. Why doth God thus tempt his people?

A. For the trial of their faith, and their other graces, 1 Peter i 6, 7.

Q. Seeing God knows perfectly what is in every man, what need is there for his trying of them?

A. God tries his people, not for his sake, but for their own sakes, that they may know themselves the better; and also for the sake of others, who, by seeing their graces, may be quickened to imitate them, or, by observing their weakness, may learn to walk humbly before God.

Q. How is it said, James i. 13. that "God tempteth no man?"

A. The meaning there is, that God doth not tempt any man to seduce or entice him to sin.

Q. Whence then come these temptations for seduction?

A. From the devil, the world, and the flesh

Q. Is not satan called the *tempter*, Mat iv 3 And why?

A. Because he hath a main hand in our temptation to sin, and it is his constant work and business to seduce and entice men to evil.

Q. Is not satan a very subtile tempter?

A. Yes, as appears by his considering the conditions of men, and his choosing the fittest seasons and instruments, and the most suitable baits to prevail with them; and by his transforming himself sometimes into an angel of light And hence the scriptures call him the *old serpent*, and speak of his devices, wiles, and snares, Job i. 8 Rev xii. 9. 2 Cor. ii. 11 Eph. vi. 11. 2 Tim. ii. 26 2 Cor. xi. 24

Q. Is not the tempter very cruel as well as subtile?

A. Yes, and therefore he is called a *roaring lion*, 1 Peter v. 8. for he devours his prey without mercy, when once he is master of it. Although at first he cunningly tempts and

entices men to commit sin, yet he afterwards cruelly accuses them of it, and torments them for it.

Q. Doth not satan prevail the more easily against us, by reason of the strong friends he hath within us?

A. Yes, the lusts of the flesh are ready always, like Delilah, to deliver us up to him, Judges xvi.

Q. What is to be understood by these words "Lead us not into temptation?"

A. In these words we pray, that God may not expose us to temptations, nor deliver us up to the tempter's will; that, when we are exposed, God may not withhold his supporting grace, but may strengthen us to resist the temptation.

Q. Doth God sometimes as a judge desert men, and leave them to satan's power?

A. Yes; and he doth it justly, as being provoked to it by their sins, 1 Sam xvi. 14. Job i. 12. Psal. cix 6. Rom. i. 24. 2 Thess. ii. 11.

Q. Ought we not to pray that God would keep us from being tempted?

A. Yes; because of ourselves we are weak to resist, and prone to yield.

Q. How doth God keep us from being tempted to sin?

A. Either by sanctifying our natures, or by binding up the tempter, or by keeping us from coming into the way of temptations. Sometimes the Lord doth hedge up his people's way with the thorns of affliction, to keep them from straying into dangerous by-paths, Hos. ii. 6.

Q. While we pray to God to keep us from being tempted to sin, should we not at the same time be diligent in watching over ourselves?

A. Yes; our Lord will have watching to go alongst with prayer, Mat. 26, 41. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation"

Q. Did not God sometimes suffer his dear saints to be tempted by Satan?

A. Yes, he sees fit to do so for their good to try their grace, to abate their pride, to excite their prayers, to shew them their need of living by faith on Christ, to make them weary of the land where satan goes his circuit, and long for heaven, where they shall be out of his reach for ever.

Q. Why doth Satan continue his assaults against God's people, seeing he cannot ruin them?

A. Such is his malice, if he cannot keep them out of heaven, he will make their passage to it as uneasy as possible.

Q. What grounds of comfort doth God afford his people under temptation?

A. It is comfortable to them to know that their Redeemer hath satan in his chain, so that he can go no further in tempting than Christ gives him leave; that he hath given them his sweet and faithful promises to support them; and that he himself was willing to be tempted of the devil, that he might be the more capable to sympathize with his people, ready to succour them when tempted, Heb. ii 18.

Q. What are these promises which Christ hath given his people to support them under temptation?

A. He hath promised them his gracious presence with them under their sharpest trials; and that he will not suffer them to be tempted above what they are able, but with the temptation will also make a way to escape, Isaiah xliii. 2. Heb. xiii. 5. 1 Cor. x. 13.

Q. How is it that Christ succours his people when they are tempted?

A. He sends his spirit to fortify grace in them, and brings his promises to their rememberance; he intercedes for them that their faith fail not, and he seasonably takes off the tempter from them.

Q. Can no man preserve himself in the hour of temptation?

A. No; for it is God only that is able to keep us from falling, Jude 24.

Q. Doth not satan sometimes throw in unbelieving and blasphemous thoughts into the minds of God's people?

A. Yes.

Q. Will God charge his people with guilt upon account of those temptations?

A. No, if they hate them, grieve for them, and give no consent unto them.

Q. What is meant by the *evil*, in this petition we pray to be delivered from?

A. We here pray to be delivered from the evil one, the devil; from the evil of evils, sin; from the evil of temptation here, and the evil of punishment in hell hereafter.

Q. Is there nothing else required of us, but to pray to be delivered from evil?

A. We must also watch, and carefully avoid all occasions of sin, such as idleness, evil company, and the like; for those who do not so, their prayers are but mocking of the Lord.

QUESTION CVII.

Q. *What doth the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer teach us?*

A. The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer (which is, "For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen") teacheth us to take our encouragement in prayer from God only, and in our prayers to praise him, ascribing kingdom, power, and glory to him; and, in testimony of our desire and assurance to be heard, we say, *Amen.*

Q. What are we taught by the particle *for*, prefixed to the conclusion of this prayer?

A. We are taught thereby to inforce our petitions with arguments; as we find was the practice of saints in scripture, Num xiv. 13, &c. Josh. vii. 9. 2 Chron. xiv. 11. and xx 6, &c.

Q. Why must we use arguments with God in prayer?

A. Not that we can thereby incline God to grant us any thing that he is averse to; but we ought to do it in order to strengthen our faith, and to excite our fervency in pleading with God.

Q. May we take our arguments or encouragement in prayer from any worthiness or good thing in ourselves?

A. No.

Q From whence then must we bring them?

A. Only from the infinite perfections of God, and merits of his Son.

Q What are the arguments or grounds of encouragement mentioned in the conclusion of the Lord's prayer?

A. They are the kingdom, the power, and the glory of God, which last for ever.

Q What is the design and meaning of this conclusion?

A. To shew us the reasons why we should pray to God, and the grounds we have to hope that he will hear us; and likewise to teach us, that the main end we ought to propose in our prayers, is, that the kingdom, power, and glory of God may be declared and advanced more and more.

Q What is meant by the *kingdom* of God here?

A. God's universal sovereignty, dominion, and authority

which he hath over the world, and all things in heaven and earth.

Q. Hath God the disposal of all the kingdoms and governments in the world?

A. Yes, he disposeth of human kingdoms and states, and he hath absolute right to do in the kingdom of nature, of providence, of grace, and of glory, as seemeth good to him.

Q. What encouragement may we draw from God's kingdom in prayer?

A That seeing he is our king and governor, who hath right to dispose of all things, we have reason to expect he will be ready to give us what good things we need; for a king wisheth well to his subjects. Hence the people of God do often plead with him upon this relation, Psalm v. ii. and xx 9. and lxxiv 12.

Q. What is meant by the *power* of God here?

A. His infinite might and ability to do whatsoever he will.

Q What encouragement may we take from God's power in prayer?

A. That, seeing he is almighty, he is sufficiently able to give us all the good things we ask: and this argument is often made use of in prayer, 1 Chron. xxix. 12 1 Chron. xx. 6. Mat viii. 2 Mark xiv 36. Eph. iii 20

Q. But how doth it appear that God is willing to give, as well as able?

A. Because he assumes the character of a gracious king to his subjects, and of a loving father to all his children.

Q. What is meant by the *glory* of God here?

A. The honour, dignity, and praise which belong unto God upon account of his infinite excellencies.

Q. What is the argument we draw from the *glory* of God in our prayers?

A. That the granting of these our petitions will greatly redound to the glory of his holy name; and that this is the great end we aim at in all we ask, Psalm lxxix. 9. and lxxxvi. 11, 12. and cxv. 1, 2. Jer xiv 21 John xiv 13.

Q What encouragement may we take from these words, *for ever*?

A. It doth strengthen our faith to think, that God's sovereignty and perfections are everlasting; that he shall never want power to help us, as earthly kings may.

Q. Doth Christ by this conclusion teach us in prayer to extol and magnify the Lord, and to join praises to him always with our prayers?

A. Yes; for a thankful and praising disposition is highly pleasing to God, Psalm lxix. 30, 31. and engageth him to grant our desires, Psalm lxvii. 5, 6

Q What is meant by the word *Amen*?

A. It is a Hebrew word, which signifies truth or certainty, and it is as much as to say, Lord, *so it is;* or, *so let it be:* and thereby we express our fervent desires to be heard and our humble confidence of obtaining what we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, who, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, is the one supreme God, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

THE END.

THE BALM OF GILEAD

FOR HEALING

A DISEASED LAND;

WITH

THE GLORY OF THE MINISTRATION OF THE SPIRIT,

AND

A Scripture Prophecy

Of the Increase of Christ's Kingdom, and the Destruction of Antichrist,

OPENED AND APPLIED IN TWELVE SERMONS, UPON SEVERAL TEXTS.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

FIVE SERMONS,

PREACHED UPON SACRAMENTAL OCCASIONS.

BY

THE REVEREND JOHN WILLISON, LATE MINISTER
OF DUNDEE.

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1816.

THE
BALM OF GILEAD.

PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH these Sermons were preached in Scotland, and have some reference to the case of that church and land under her present divisions and backslidings; yet they are composed in such a strain as to be useful and applicable to any church under the like distempers, which, alas! is the case of the most part. What remedies can be so effectual to cure them of these evils as those proposed in the following Discourses, to wit; the excellent Balm of Gilead, and the glorious ministration of the Spirit? If it were the gracious will of God to dispose all the bishops and ministers of Britain and Ireland, to make it their business to open up and recommend these noble remedies to their people, it would contribute greatly to heal their maladies, and increase the kingdom of Christ in these lands. I cannot help thinking but those who are consecrated to spiritual offices would be more suitably and profitably employed in this work than in attending courts, and pursuing secular designs.

Seeing now the arm of the Lord is beginning to awake, and many are excited to run to and fro for increasing gospel-knowledge, and labour to propagate the doctrine of salvation through the imputed righteousness of the slain Lamb of God: And, seeing the Lord is pleased, in sundry parts of the world, to give countenance to these endeavours by the out-pouring of his Spirit, for awakening many souls to an inquiry and search after true happiness through the blessed Jesus—It doth highly concern all gospel-ministers and preachers to concur in helping forward the Lord's work, by proclaiming the saving doctrine and offers of free grace to the world, and to exert themselves for removing out of the way all letts and hinderances of the kingdom of Christ, that so his dominion may spread from sea to sea, through all nations of the earth.

In the following Sermons I have made some inquiry into the times and seasons of the increase of Christ's kingdom; and because this is greatly connected with the destruction of Antichrist, I have mentioned some conjectures and calculations about the time of his fall; though I think none should be too bold or peremptory in fixing the precise time, but all ought to wait patiently until God's set time shall come. All may now perceive Antichrist visibly risen and discovered. Nay, we have seen him arrived at his pomp and height about 1500 years after Christ. Since that time the Lord hath begun to waste and consume him, by the revival of religion and learning in the world. As his rise was gradual, so shall his consumption be. He hath now been labouring under a deadly consumption above these 200 years past. The wound given him is deep and mortal; so whatever pains be taken sometimes to heal it, all shall be in vain: For, as Christ must increase, so Antichrist must decrease, and be quite ruined at length, as is shewed in the following Discourses. May all the lovers of Christ pray fervently, and look out for that blessed and joyful time.

Dundee, Jan. 20, 1742.

THE
BALM OF GILEAD
FOR HEALING
A DISEASED LAND.

SERMON I.

JER. viii. 20, 21, 22.

The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt, I am black: Astonishment hath taken hold of me. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

IN the preceding part of this chapter we have represented a great destruction that God was about to bring upon a sinful people, and the consternation the whole land should be in upon the alarm thereof. The sins of Judah were come to a great height, whereby God was provoked to let loose the Chaldeans against them. The prophet was himself an eye witness of the oppression and desolation of his country and the church of God by the Chaldean army; and he foresaw still greater judgments and calamities coming upon them, whereby both he and the serious people of the land were greatly affected, and put to lament their case before the Lord. Among other things, they lament the disappointment of their expectation of healing and deliverance from distress, ver. 15. "We looked for peace, but no good came, and for a time of health, and behold trouble." They sometimes had hopeful and promising seasons, when they expected relief; but, after all their waiting, they were disappointed; these likely times of healing were lost. Hence they are put to say, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Summer and harvest are proper seasons of action, opportunities for armies to take the field, to subdue enemies, and bring about deliverance for an oppressed people: The winter that follows is not a fit season for action. It is sad when likely seasons for saving a people from temporal enemies and grievances are lost; but it is yet sadder for them to lose hopeful and promising seasons for

saving of their souls. The loss of such harvest or summer days for our souls is the greatest ground of lamentation. The prophet being deeply sensible of his people's loss and calamitous condition, he is grievously distressed for them, verse 21. "For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt, I am black," &c. *The daughter of my people* is a common Hebraism used in scripture, and it signifies the body of the people of Judah, which was God's visible church upon earth; their hurt and distress did affect the holy man in the most tender manner, and drew forth his sympathy with them. Upon this account, saith he, "I am black," I have lost my wonted colour, my face is turned blackish, or I go in black, as mourners do. I am astonished and troubled the more that I see no appearance of relief for them in their distress, their case seems to be hopeless and incurable. Upon which he puts the question, verse 22, "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then," &c. Is there no balm for the distressed church, no physician for a diseased land? It is generally thought the question doth not import any despair or denial of help, but rather the contrary, as if he had said, Is there no balm? Is there not a Physician? Yes, there is. The incurableness of their disease is not owing to the want of balm, or of a Physician in the land, but to themselves and their unbelief. There was a sufficient remedy in God, and in the Messiah, for all their grievances, had they accepted and applied the same. Hence he adds that pertinent question, "Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" *q. d.* What is the cause, then, or to whom is it to be imputed, that the church or people of Judah do still lie in a dying case? surely not to the balm, nor to the physician, but to their own folly and obstinacy.

Quest. What is here meant by the balm of Gilead?

Ans. The land of Gilead, on the other side Jordan, was a part of the country of Israel, where that plant grew, which afforded a most precious balm for healing, when it was pierced; which was a rare and valuable commodity that other countries did traffick for with the land of Israel, Jer. xlvi. 11. Ezek. xxvii 17. And we see in Genesis xxxvii. 25. the Ishmaelites that bought Joseph carried balm from Gilead into Egypt Naturalists say, this balm was a juice or oil that run from a certain low shrub, when its bark was cut, that grew especially about Jericho, in the land of Gilead, and was of great value as having a sovereign virtue to cleanse foul sores, heal deep wounds, help the eye sight, cure the stings of serpents, yea, it was a sort of *catholicon*, that cured almost all diseases. This balm we may look upon as a fit type to represent Christ's blood, which is an excellent balm and *catholicon* for all diseases of the soul: For God's dispensations to the Israelites were generally designed as types and signs of spiritual things under the New Testament times, according to 1 Cor x 11. "All these things happened unto them for ensamples," Orig τυποι, *for types*. And, among the rest, this balm of Gilead was typical and instructive to the virtue of the Messiah's blood; for seeing God vouchsafed this balm to Israel only, and made other nations beholden to them for it, it teacheth us that the balm for healing souls is only in the church of God, and Christ is the true antitype of this balm; for in Judah's land only was Christ known, there they had his blood daily typified to them in the sacrifices, and its virtue set forth.

Again, the Physician of Gilead is next mentioned, because physicians use to abound where there is plenty of good medicines. The Balm and Physicians in Gilead are figuratively brought in here to point out the plenty of good means of health that were still in Israel, for recovering them from their languishing consumption, if they had made a right use of them. As they had God himself, and the Messiah and his Spirit, which he had promised to them, to look to for relief; so they had plenty of under means and physicians appointed them. They had God's law, the temple, the ordinances, the altar, and sacrifices. They had also the princes, the priests, and prophets, whose business it was to redress grievances, reform the nation, and apply to heaven for help. So that if the health of the church and nation was not restored, it was not for want of balm, or a physician; nay, God had plentifully provided excellent means and remedies for their cure: And if their disease be deadly, or their wound incurable, it must be owing to themselves, and to their desperate wilfulness or incorrigibleness in sin, and to their refusing to submit to the Physician's directions and method of cure.

The words being thus opened up, give ground for the following heads of doctrine:—

I. The case of those is very lamentable, who lose their harvest and summer days of grace.

II. Every gracious spirit is a public spirit, and will lay to heart the calamitous case of the church or country whereof he is a member.

III. However desperate the diseases of those within the church may seem to be, yet if they die of them, it will be owing to themselves, seeing they have such an able Physician, and excellent balm to look to for healing.

It is the last of these doctrines I mainly intend to handle and insist upon; wherefore I shall the more briefly touch the two first, as introductory to it.

I. *Doct.* The case of those is very lamentable who lose their harvest and summer days of grace; or their most hopeful and likely seasons of salvation.

I shall discourse this point in the following method:

I Mention some of these likely seasons, which should be carefully improved.

II Who may be said to have lost their summer days.

III. Enquire into the causes of men's losing these hopeful seasons.

IV Shew the great evil and danger of losing them; if the time allow.

V. Make application

I As to the *first*, I shall instance some of the summer days or hopeful seasons which we should carefully improve for saving of our souls, and not suffer them to be lost. Such as,

1. The summer days of youth. O that is a hopeful season, when the heart is most tender and tractable, and easiest melted into tears for sin, and kindled into a flame of love to Christ who died for our sins God loves the first ripe fruits, young tears and prayers, young faith and love, and hence he makes the time of youth the usual season of converting and espousing sinners to himself. O young folks, suffer not these summer days to pass away in vain; but begin in this season to be religious, and to remember God and eternity, Eccl. xii 1

2 It is a promising season, when persons enjoy lively means and ordinances, whereby Christ crucified is evidently set forth before their eyes, as the only remedy for their perishing souls, and they earnestly called and pressed to come and close with him as such. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." O let not this summer day of grace go over without closing with Christ in the offers of the gospel.

3. It is a likely season, when there is a noise and shaking among the dry bones, by the motions and strivings of the Spirit in and with the word, as when the Spirit brings the word close home to the soul's case, finding and singling it out, as Nathan did David, saying, "Thou art the man;" thou art the child of wrath, the enemy of God, the unregenerate sinner, against whom the sword of justice and curses of the law are levelled. Or when the Spirit so fastens the arrows of conviction on the conscience, as to bring the man to a restless thoughtfulness about the guilt of his sins, and his eternal state, and to cry, "What shall I do to be saved?" And to make him dissatisfied with all his earthly comforts, and say, "All these avail me nothing," while I go Christless O this is a harvest-day of salvation, every minute of it is precious, and should be carefully improved for the soul.

4. The time of satan's restraint is a season not to be lost. Sometimes the devil is so bound up, that he cannot disturb the church by bloody persecutions, or by errors and schisms, as at other times; that is a fair summer day of grace, which should be well improved Though we cannot say that satan at this time is altogether bound up; nay, he is wofully let loose in respect of error and division: but, blessed be God, he is restrained with respect to persecution; so that, my brethren, he cannot presently drive your teachers into corners, nor put you to seek your spiritual bread with the peril of your lives, because of the sword, in the wilderness, as sometimes hath been the case in our land O then, do not sin away this calm summer-day, but, with earnest attention and care, hearken to the sweet voice of the *turtle*, which is still to be heard through all corners of the land

5 The time when God is visiting a land with wakening and alarming dispensations of providence, is a season to be carefully improved for saving of the soul. When God doth premonish us that either a storm is coming on the church and land in general, or that death approaches us in particular, we should take warning, like Noah, while the evils are at a distance, "be moved with fear, and provide an ark for the saving of our souls," before the flood of wrath come upon us. Nay, my friends, you have God to bless, that the *ark* is already prepared to your hand, and a window opened in the side of it for your entrance. May you be so wise as to take warning in time, get faith's wings, and flee into the ark Christ, before the flood arise, and before death come. You have had a long harvest-day of grace in the land, and now have shrewd tokens of night approaching: You may look for the night of death, or the winter of desolation, strokes, persecution, and darkness. Wherefore, as Christ saith, "Work, while it is day: yet a little while is the light with you, walk while you have the light, lest darkness come upon you The night cometh (saith he) when no man can work." Surely it draws towards even tide, and the night of death: Yea, a fearful night both of spiritual and temporal judgments seems to be drawing on; and should not the remaining light or day be well employed? There are several signs of an approaching night.

1 When the force and heat of the sun do abate, it draws towards night; so when the gospel sun, or preaching of the word, hath little heat or effect upon sinners cold hearts, it betokens night coming on 2. When the shadows of the evening are stretched out and grow long, it is a sign of approaching night. And, O how long are the shadows stretched out beyond the substance! How much doth the profession of religion exceed the power of it at this day? 3. When the labourers go home from their work, it is a sign the night comes on. Ah! how many of our choice and faithful labourers do we see going home, without others to fill their room? 4 When the evening wolves and beasts of prey creep out of their holes, it is a token of night. And surely there have been evening wolves seen among us, who have intruded upon the vineyard, spoiled the vines, and miserably scattered the flock of Christ. 5. Growing darkness is a forerunner of the night Ah! how much doth darkness prevail among us at this time, yea, so much, that several of the sharpest-sighted are reeling and mistaking their way, not being able to discern between sin and duty in divers cases. Alas! many are wandering and losing their way. Surely then it is our wisdom and duty to improve the light that remains, in seeking converting grace to ourselves, and an assured interest in precious Christ, before the darkness of the night overtake us: and also to pray for pity to the land, that "at evening it may be light."

In the *last place*, Notwithstanding of these dismal tokens, it makes the season somewhat promising, that we hear of Christ's goings as a conqueror in other parts of the world, and many bowing down at his feet. Now if the King of Zion, be rising up to make his circuit through his churches, to display his glorious power and grace among them; may it not raise our hopes, and encourage us to look out for his marching towards us, to make good that word, Zech xiv. 7. "It shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light;" that is, when it was not expected And, oh! what a pleasant surprize would this appearance be to all the lovers of Zion!

II. The *second head* is to enquire who may be said to have lost their summer-days, or their likely seasons of grace. Though we cannot be peremptory about any, while life remains, yet of some there may be sad grounds of fear, that the text is too applicable to them, "Their harvest is past, their summer is ended, and they are not saved;" such as, 1. Those who have had the Spirit long striving with them, and they have resisted all his motions and operations, so that he is quite withdrawn from them The case of such is very hopeless, according to Ezek xxiv. 13 2 Those who persist in sinful courses, and harden their necks against all challenges and reproofs for the same, we see what is said of them, Prov. xxix 1 3 Those who come the length to sin presumptuously; that is, venture upon sin against light, in hopes of repentance and pardon; their case is dismal, according to Num. xv. 30 4 Those who provoke God, by their bentness on sin, to cease to be a reprover to them, to strike both conscience and ministers dumb, that they may challenge them no more, Ezek iii. 27. Hos. iv 17. 5 Those who deliberately relapse into sin, after rods, convictions, resolutions, and vows, sa i. 5. 6. Those who give themselves up to commit sin with greediness, and glory in it, Eph. iv 19. Phil iii. 19 7. Those who despise all gospel-offers, and mock the messengers who bring them, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. Alas! such have reason to fear "their harvest is past," &c Their case is very hopeless, though none can say it is past the reach of sovereign grace.

III. The *third head* is, to enquire into the causes of mens losing their hopeful seasons. 1. It proceeds from their unbelief and doubting of the certainty of gospel-truths: This keeps many hovering so long between heaven and hell, death and life, Christ and the world, that their summer and harvest-days are gone before they come to a resolution Did men believe the certainty of wrath to come, and that they are born heirs of that wrath, they would think no motion

swift enough in fleeing to Christ, and closing with him, in order to escape it.

2. Many trifle away their summer-days and seasons of action, because they look on death and eternity at many years distance, and that they will have time enough, before these expire, to mind salvation-work. By this delusion, satan cheats many out of their most hopeful seasons. Did men look on death as within a step of them, and having no more but a single thread to cut, so that within a few days they shall either be singing with the saints in heaven, or roaring with the damned in hell, they would not let their summer-days pass so idly.

3. Promising summer-days are lost through indulging of sloth. Many, before they will be at some pains now in prayer and secret duties, will venture upon endless pains in hell hereafter. Oh! prodigious folly! What pains was Christ at to save you, and will you be at none to save yourselves? Hath not God an eternity of rest and pleasure to recompence your small toil and pains in improving your summer-days?

4. Love of sensual delights and carnal company proves a snare to many. They are hereby drawn into idleness, games, pastimes, tippling, foolish talking, and jesting, and other sinful pleasures; whereby their summer-days are trifled away and mis-spent. Even those diversions which are judged the most innocent, ought to be used with fear and caution, lest they steal away our heart and thoughts from our chief concerns; which, if they do, they are not innocent but hurtful. O they are sad diversions that would divert us from Christ and heaven. It is unbecoming a Christian that looks for eternal delights in another world, and pleasures of a higher nature, to have his heart set upon the pitiful delights of this earth, which fly away as a dream, and leave nothing behind them, unless it be a sting in the conscience for spending days of grace so unprofitably. One hour's enjoyment of Christ's presence and favour hath far more pleasure in it, than many years of sensual delights.

But for shortening this discourse, I must pass several things I had in view, and proceed to

THE APPLICATION.

Infer. 1. Doth God in his mercy afford men hopeful seasons for saving their souls; summer-days of youth; harvest-days of gospel-grace? O how lamentable must it be to see men wasting away these seasons by delays, putting off conversion-work, and closing with Christ, from day to day, till both their summer and harvest are past. When conscience or God's Spirit press them, they answer, with Felix, "Go thy way for this time, and when I have a convenient season, I will hear thee;" meaning nothing but to put off the present conviction. Oh, sirs! the work is so weighty and necessary, you cannot make too much haste to expede it; it is work for your immortal souls, and work for eternity. How careful would a man be to improve a day, if his natural life depended upon it? If a condemned man had an hour allowed him to beg his life from his prince, would he think he might delay till some minutes of it were past? No: he would apply at the very first, and use the most moving words and arguments he could devise to obtain it, and leave nothing unessayed during that hour. But, Oh, is there not much more at stake here? When the salvation of the precious soul through all eternity depends upon the improvement of the present summer-day of grace, it is your wisdom to take the morning rather than the evening of it. The morning is fittest for beginning a journey; you would call him a foolish traveller that would set out only when the sun is setting.

Infer. 2. How much are they to be blamed, who waste away their precious seasons of grace, in pursuing foolish lusts and pleasures, who take God's time and their soul's seasons too, to do the devil's work in. Oh, Sirs! doth God create pleasant summer and harvest-days for you to serve the devil, his grand enemy? Wretched ingratitude! Or, do you think that God should wait till the devil, the world, and the flesh, have done with you, and then be content to take their leavings! Be ashamed of so requiting the Lord, and dealing so with your Maker, O foolish people and unwise!

Infer. 3. Surely, gospel slighters, and neglectors of the seasons of grace, must have an uncomfortable death bed, seeing the mournful ditty of my text belongs to them, "Our harvest is past, our summer is ended, and we are not saved." Oh! how cutting must the review of wasted summer-days be to you when death calls upon you! It will be so far from yielding you any comfort at that time, to call to mind your carnal company and converse, your jests and sports, your games and pastimes, your tippling and idle talking, that the very remembrance of these will increase your sorrow.

Infer. 4. We may hence justly conclude gospel-slighters to be men beside themselves, and without the free use of their reason, seeing they act a part below the very brutes and insects. These observe the proper seasons in providing for winter; but ah! you neglect your's in providing for eternity. "The stork in the heavens knows her appointed times; the turtle, the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming," Jer. viii 7. "The ant provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest, and all to lay up for winter," Prov. vi. 8. But ah! you let your soul's summer and harvest days pass over without minding the winter of death, or providing for them when dislodged of the body. It must surely be the height of madness to trifle away the season which is given you for saving your souls through all eternity. If sin had not wofully bemisted your eyes, you would have been ready to have looked upon him as a monster or madman, that had but a few days to win or lose his soul for ever, and yet would be playing these away at cards and dice, or trifling them away in jests and diversions, tippling and idleness, and never once minding the saving of his soul! And yet how many of all ranks may I apply to, and say, "Thou art the man!"

Infer. 5. If gospel-seasons be the summer and harvest for our souls, it must be our unquestionable duty and interest to improve them with the greatest care, by complying with the Spirit's motions, and the gospel-offers, by closing with Christ, and "giving all diligence to make our calling and election sure;" for, if the proper season for these be lost, the work cannot be done at all. You are all careful to observe the seasons for your secular profits. The husbandman his season for plowing, sowing, and reaping; the merchant his time for attending fairs and markets; the mariner his time when the wind is fair for sailing. And ought not you much more to be observant of your summer and harvest seasons of grace? Remember and believe it, O trifler, the time is at hand, when you will be put to cry, "O for one of those summer-days again! O for one of those sabbaths or communion-seasons, wherein I had the offers of a crucified Christ! O how would I prize it; but alas! a thousand worlds, had I them to give, cannot recal one of them to me." It was a vain wish of that poor woman when dying, O call

time again, call time again. No, no, a summer-day or a harvest-day cannot be recalled; therefore be wise to spend them with fear and care, while you enjoy them.

May the Lord bless gospel-seasons to us. Amen.

OF A PUBLIC SPIRIT.

SERMON II.

On Jer. viii. 21.—*For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt, &c.*

THE doctrine which now falls to be handled, is,

Doct. II.—That every gracious spirit is a public spirit, and will lay to heart the calamitous case of the church or country of which he is a member.

So did Jeremiah here, and in several other parts of his writings, as in Jer. ix. 1. Jer. xiii. 17. and in his book of Lamentations: Such public-spirited persons also were Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Paul, and other scripture-saints.

The method of handling this doctrine may be,

I. To enquire into the nature and evidences of a truly public spirit.

II. To shew the reasonableness and necessity of a public spirit.

III. Make the application.

I. As to the *first*, to wit, the nature of this public spirit which is in gracious persons, especially as it is evidenced by their holy zeal, and concern for the church under distress; it doth imply several things:

1. A sincere love to Christ, and concern for his glory, which prompts us to prefer the things of Christ to our own things. If we love not Christ the head, we cannot have a true love to his body the church, nor a concern for its welfare. It is this love that makes gracious souls "prefer Jerusalem above their chief joy," Psalm cxxxvii. 6.

2. There is in it, a sympathy and fellow-feeling with the church in distress, as being members of the same body We see every living member of the body feels the injuries which are done to it, or to any of its fellow-members, and is ready to act for their relief: So the eyes and hands are ready to help the leg or foot when hurt, as feeling the smart of it.—In like manner, the members of Christ's body-mystical have a fellow feeling together, and are ready to act for the relief of each other in distress.

3 It imports not only a deep concern and sorrow for the church in trouble, but also a disposition to express and evidence this concern, by using all the means in our power to help and relieve her; such as *fasting, mourning,* and *weeping,* for all the sins, whether of ourselves or others, which draw down wrath and calamities upon the church; and wrestling with God, by earnest prayer, for her relief, looking to Christ and his blood for pardoning and removing those sins which have raised the storm against her. Thus did Nehemiah, Daniel, Ezra, David, Jeremiah, and others.

II The *2d head,* is to shew the reasonableness and necessity of this public spirit, and zealous concern for the church in distress. Now this will appear from several grounds and considerations; such as,

1. The near relation to, and interest which Christ hath in his church. The church is his building, his household, his peculiar treasure, his jewels, and dear purchase; yea, she is Christ's body, of which he is the Head. Now, if you have any love to Christ himself, you cannot be unconcerned for the church, which is so nearly related to him, when she is in trouble. If you love the Head, you cannot but love the body also Again, as Christ's relation to the church is near, so his love to her is proportionable; he compares his love to that of a tender mother's to her sucking child, which she cannot forget: and therefore, "he engraves Zion upon the palms of his hands, and hath her walls continually before him," Isaiah xlix. 15, 16. In that expression, he alludes to the practice of the Jews, in shewing their concern for Jerusalem in ruins, during the Babylonish captivity: They engraved the effigies of Jerusalem upon their rings, to keep her in perpetual remembrance: In like manner, saith the Lord, I have the church engraven upon the palms of my hands, so that I can never open my hand to bestow a blessing upon any, but the church's case presents to my eye.—Now, if God so loves the church, and is concerned for her welfare, it becomes us also to be concerned and affected for her.

2. This affectionate concern is reasonable and necessary, because it is your interest. Every one of you is nearly connected with that of the church, as being members of the same mystical body, who must suffer one with another; so that in seeking the public good of the church, you consult your own private interest also; for your own prosperity is bound up in her welfare. You are like passengers in a ship, that have your persons and all your effects along with you there; so that, if the ship be prosperous, you are well, but if she sink, you lose all. Your precious souls, in particular, must suffer when the church doth suffer: They cannot but be reduced to a melancholy situation, when the church is distressed with spiritual judgments; such as the plague of dry breasts, and the withdrawing of the Spirit of God from ordinances. If the mother be sickly, the sucking child must languish.

3. To be public-spirited makes a man a public blessing, and an instrument of much good to others, which is a man's greatest honour. This would make you resemble your heavenly Father, who doth good to all, by making his sun to rise and his rain to fall upon them. And also like your Saviour, who was a public blessing, while on earth, for he still "went about doing good," Acts x. 38. And like Abraham, who was a "blessing to the nations," Gen. xii 2. Job was a man of a noble public spirit, upon which account he was had in the greatest love and esteem, respect and reverence, by all ranks; when the ear heard him, or the eye saw him, they blessed him; why? because (saith he) "I delivered the poor that cried; I was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame," &c. Job xxix. 11, 12, &c.

4 Because God's glory suffers when the church suffers, "for Zion is the seat of his glory," Psalm lxxvi. 1, 2 It is the church that doth display and shew it forth. God's revenue of honour and praise in the world would come to little, if God had not a church therein to pay him his rent; hence he calls his church "the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified," Isaiah lx 21. The rest of the world embezzle their talents, but God's church and people improve theirs for God's glory Now when these are suppressed and sunk, they are disabled for shewing forth his glory. Nay, then the enemy is ready to insult them,

and to reproach both them and their God. Hence king Hezekiah called the time of Jerusalem's distress, "a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy," Isa xxxvii 3.

5. Because God is highly pleased with a public spirit, and with those who interpose for his church in trouble; he represents himself in scripture as seeking carefully for those, to put marks of honour and respect upon them, Jer v 1. Ezek xxii. 30. Also we see what singular honour God put upon Moses and Phineas upon that account, Exod xxxii 11, 14. Numb xxv 10, 11. Psal cvi 23, 30, 31 Also he promises prosperity to all such, and familiarity with himself, Psal cxxii. 6. Isa xlv. 11

6. Because, on the other hand, God is much displeased with those who are unconcerned about his church, when in distress; yea, he denounces a "woe against them who are at ease in Zion, and are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph," Amos vi 1, 6. And we see what wrath was threatened against Esther, if she should be easy or silent when the church was in danger, Esth iv. 14. "For if thou altogether hold thy peace at this time then shall enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed"

THE APPLICATION.

Infer. 1 If God be well pleased with those who are sensibly affected with the church's case when in distress, how flaming must his wrath be against those who are the instruments of her distress, and, instead of sympathizing with her in it, do rejoice in her trouble: O that such would know, that they are not only the enemies of the church, but they are the enemies of God, and the very butt of his anger every day, Psalm vii 11. How dreadful is their case, who have the poisoned arrows of God's wrath levelled against them!

Infer. 2. If it be the character of gracious souls to be concerned for the church, what a bad sign must it be, of those who mind their own things, and not the things of Jesus Christ? of whom the apostle speaks, Phil ii. 21. And, alas! how many are there amongst us, who have their minds and affections wholly set upon the earth! They are warm, keen, and anxious about the concerns of their bodies and families, but cold and indifferent about the things of Christ and his church: They, like Gallio, care for none of these things, Acts xviii. 17. If their bodies or friends be in distress, they are troubled; but though the church of God be in affliction, it gives them no uneasiness; which is a sad sign they are not living members of Jesus Christ; for if they were, they would have a feeling and sympathy with the body.

3. We may take up a lamentation for the want of a public-spirited and generous concern for the church of God among us, which is this day in great danger and distress, by errors, divisions, and decay of piety: And yet, how few are laying it to heart? Ah! whence doth this indifference proceed? Surely from want of love to Christ, the church's Head, or from excessive love to the world and carnal pleasures. When men "ly upon beds of ivory, chaunt to the sound of the viol, and drink wine in bowls, they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph," Amos vi. 4, 5, 6 Again this indifferency about Christ's matters proceeds from that cursed root of self-love, and self seeking, which is in all men by nature; though, in the mean time, sin and satan have blinded their eyes, that they know not their true interest: They know not what it is rightly to seek themselves, if they seek the good of their bodies with the neglect of their souls, they think to seek themselves best this way: But O if their eyes were opened, they would see that this self-seeking is nothing but self-hating and self-destroying The rich glutton fancied he was seeking himself and his own happiness, when he cloathed himself in purple, and fared deliciously every day; but afterwards, when he lifted up his eyes, he saw his self-seeking was really self-destroying; for by pampering his body a little time, he damned his soul for ever. So that those who serve God best, by seeking his glory and his church's good, before their worldly interest, do really seek themselves most; for they hereby secure the happiness of both soul and body through all eternity.

4. It may be needful here to give some caution against the wrong use of this doctrine, which some may be in hazard to make, by spending their zeal and concern about the public case of the church, to the neglect of their own personal case. O sirs, beware of this extreme, and suspect this zeal not to be of the right sort; for where there is a sincere regard to God's glory, it will shew itself, in the first place, in seeking to have matters right at home, to have your own souls case put in good order, to have a true faith in Christ, the nature renewed, and corruptions subdued, without which you can never glorify God, or do any thing to please him: Likewise, it will shew itself in esteeming and preferring the great and essential truths of the gospel, and desiring to hear of the excellency and usefulness of a crucified Jesus, and of the Holy Spirit's dealing with souls in beginning and carrying on a work of grace. Now when these sweet truths are not so much relished, as to hear reflections and censures upon the management of public affairs, you have ground to be jealous that your deceitful hearts are carrying you to an extreme, and to a zeal for the church, which is not right.—True zeal for God will make you careful to be acquainted with your own hearts, to have matters right in the first place between God and your own souls, to have humility, truth, and sincerity in the inward parts, without which God will not dwell, nor hold communion with you, nor can you claim God's promises of guiding and direction in dark and dividing times; for it is not the proud or self conceited Christian that hath the promise, but the humble and self-denied, Psal. xxv. 9. "The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." Study always then to be meek and humble, and in order thereto, be acquainted with your own deceitful hearts, which will be fair to deceive you, if you be not on your guard. Watch then, and let never your concern for the public draw you off from private duties, nor from secret and heart-work; for some may make very splendid appearance for public things, and yet prove nothing at last but cast aways, for want of personal godliness.—But by telling you this, let none think I encourage any to turn Gallios, with respect to the matters of God, and the interest and welfare of his church, as, alas! the generality are; no, I teach and press the contrary.

5. Let all, therefore, be exhorted to be public-spirited, and suitably concerned for the church in distress O lay to heart her calamity, and shew your concern for her relief, by mourning for sin which brings on wrath, and praying earnestly for deliverance from it, saying, with David, "Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion, build thou the walls of Jerusalem."

Motives to it: 1. From the pattern of our blessed Lord and Head, whose example we should copy after in his sympathy with, and concern for the church in trouble "His soul was grieved for their misery: In all their afflictions he

was afflicted." When they are persecuted he feels himself injured, and this sympathy sets him on work to intercede for them, as he did for Jerusalem under the Babylonish captivity, Zech. i 12. "O Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Judah, against which thou hast had indignation these threescore and ten years" Let all the members then follow the example of their Head

2 Public-spirited persons are the pillars of societies, and bear off wrath and judgments from them Hence we see the flood could not rise to destroy the old world till Noah was shut up in the ark, nor could the fire be rained from heaven upon Sodom, till Lot was housed in Zoar, and both Noah and Lot were public spirited men, and therefore great blessings and pillars to the world. O sirs this public spirited disposition would make you blessings to the church and to the island It would make you live desired, and die lamented Men would reckon your lives worthy of many prayers, and your deaths of many tears Elijah was of this disposition and we see how Elisha bewailed his departure, Kings ii 12 "And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof" meaning that Elijah was the safety and strength of Israel by his prevalency with God, and a better defence to them than chariots and horsemen

3 This disposition is a good evidence both of love to God and of love to the souls of men for it is of the nature of true love to be concerned for the good of those whom we love, to mourn when they suffer and rejoice when they prosper If we love God, we will lament the dishonours which are done to him If we love the souls of men, we will pray for their conversion, and bewail their sins which bring destruction upon them

4 It would be a good means to save you from the guilt of other mens sins and secure you from the wrath which they bring on For they who sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the midst of Jerusalem, have a mark set upon them for their preservation, Ezek ix 4 God looks upon our mourning for the sins of others, as an entering of our dissent against them, and so will not charge them upon us

Quest How shall we attain to this public spirit and zealous concern for the church in distress?

Ans Take the following directions.

1. Beg for the Spirit of God that dwells, breathes, and acts in all the members of Christ's mystical body He surely is the public Spirit that inclines all the members to take the same care one for another, and to seek the good of the whole body Rom viii. 14

2. Let the grace of love abound in your hearts, love to God and to all his people; and see to keep this holy fire always burning. Love makes the wants and sufferings of others to be our own, and prompts us to lay out ourselves for them

3. Love the society of the public-spirited and zealous ones of the land, and particularly those who study to manage their zeal and piety with prudence; for as iron sharpens iron, so the conversation of such may be the means of enlivening you

4 Beware of carnal company, which oft proves a dangerous quench coal to zeal and activity for God. Peter found this by going into the society of the High Priest's servants; for, though he got his hands warmed amongst them, he got his heart miserably cooled to Christ and his people.

5. When you attain to any measure of zeal and public-spiritedness, endeavour to manage it with holy wisdom and caution, so as you may recommend this grace to others, and not stumble them at it through your mismanagement. There is much need for this caution, especially in reeling and dividing times, wherefore take these advices.

1. See that you act from a principle of true love to God, which will engage you to love all who bear his stamp and image

2 See that your ends be pure and sincere, not to gain esteem or applause, or increase a party, but that God may be glorified, and Christ's kingdom advanced in the world.

3 Watch carefully that your zeal do not mix itself with your own passion and bitterness of spirit, which we are always in hazard of The apostle James doth nobly caution us against this evil, James iii 14 to the end. A cause sometimes may be good and just, and yet managed with too much heat and animosity against our godly brethren: Job's friends were good men, and expressed much zeal for God and religion in their speeches, but yet God was displeased with them for mixing their zeal with so much bitterness and rash censures against his upright servant Job Wherefore, if conscience oblige you at any time to oppose them who are godly, see that you do it with much calmness, tenderness, and caution, and take care that your zeal do not degenerate into passion, bitterness, or hatred against any of them. Mind what the centurion said to the chief captain, when going to scourge Paul, Acts xxii 26 "Take heed what thou dost, for this man is a Roman" So say I, take heed what you do to any man, that is a member of Christ.

Object Are we not called to contend with earnestness when matters of faith are at the stake? according to Jude, verse 2 *Ans* 1. All points of truth are not of equal weight and importance, and therefore not to be contended for with equal zeal and concern. 2 Zeal and meekness are very consistent, and not opposite, so that there may be zealous and earnest contending for truth without wrath and passion. 3 Be persuaded, that the wrath of man never worketh the righteousness of God, yea, wrath and passion is the worst thing that can be brought into a religious controversy, for as a bad cause is never made better, so a good cause is always made worse by it. The glory of God doth not need such rotten pillars to support it as our wrath and passion, or our bitter and angry words Alas! it is the rash using of the tongue that greatly influences our differences, namely, by personal reflections, rigid censures, uncharitable constructions, evil surmises, aggravating the mistakes of others, &c. This the wise man observed of old, Prov. xv. 1, 18 Surely the tongue is an unruly member, and full of deadly poison May God, of his infinite mercy, give us grace to govern it aright, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

THE DISEASES OF SOULS.

SERMON III.

On Jer. viii 22.—*Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?*

THE words being before explained, and the doctrines raised, I proceed to

Doct. III. viz. However desperate the diseases of those within the church may seem to be, yet if they die of them, it will be owing to themselves, seeing they have an able physician, and excellent balm to look to for healing.

This being the doctrine which I chiefly intended to insist upon, I propose to do it at some length in the following method:

I. I will enquire into those dangerous diseases for which there is balm in Gilead, and a physician there.

II. Take notice of some of those dangerous symptoms which make our diseases appear desperate and incurable, for which there is yet balm in Gilead.

III. Speak of the physician there, who hath the balm, and applies it for curing the diseased.

IV. Enquire into the nature of the balm, and means which the physician makes use of for healing.

V. Touch at the physician's method of applying the balm, and performing the cure.

VI. Make application of the whole.

I. The *first head*, is to enquire into the dangerous diseases of those within the church for which the balm is provided And for the better understanding hereof, I shall premise some things.

1. When I speak of the church, I mean the church visible, which includes hypocrites as well as true believers.

2. Though the strength and power of the soul's diseases be broken in believers, by renewing grace, yet there is no disease in the unrenewed, but believers are in part liable to it, and have the relics of it to groan under, while they are here below.

3. I am not to speak of the diseases of the body natural, which is the province of physicians; nor of the body politic, or civil society, which is the business of politicians and statesmen: though in the mean time the abounding of these at this day is so visible to all, that we have round to bewail and mourn over them before the Lord. Ah! the diseases of our body, both civil and ecclesiastic, are so great and lamentable, that we may justly apply that word to ourselves, which we have in Isaiah i. 5, 6. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint; from the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds, bruises, and putrifying sores." Such a case, indeed, is mournful, yet, blessed be God, it is not desperate: There is balm in Gilead for the state as well as the church, and we should plead with the great physician in Israel to pity both, and heal their respective diseases Thanks be to God that he is both able and willing, and that he gives us such promises to plead with him, as these following, in Isaiah i. 25, 26. "And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away thy sin: And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning; afterwards thou shalt be called the city of righteousness," &c. And that in Isaiah xlix. 22, 23. "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people; and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried on their shoulders; and kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers," &c. And that promise in Isaiah lx. 17, 18. "I will make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness; violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise." Now it is surely the duty of all the members of both church and state, to plead these promises with God, and to wait his time for accomplishing them to us. O what is there so hard, but the out pouring of his Spirit can do?

4. The diseases which I propose to speak of in this place, are the sins of spiritual plagues and distempers of mens' souls, which are very dangerous and deadly. These we ought all to know, with their symptoms and effects, that we may seek after the balm in Gilead, which is mercifully provided of God for our healing. God would have every man to know the plague of his own heart, 1 Kings viii. 38. This every man should know and be acquainted with in the first place, in order to healing; though yet we are not wholly to confine our thoughts and care about those diseases which are private and personal, but shew our concern also about those which are public and national; of which more afterwards.

5. These soul distempers are called in scripture, diseases, wounds, and sickness, Psalm xxxviii 5 and ciii 3 and cxlvii. 3. Ezek xxxiv. 4 Matth ix. 12. because they produce effects in the soul like to those which diseases produce in the body; such as, 1. As diseases waste the beauty of the body, and produce uncomeliness and deformity in it, Psalm xxxix. 11. As they make the eyes sink and turn dull, the skin shrink up and gather blackness, the flesh melt away, and bones stick out, and the most beautiful person to look pale and ghastly, so, our sins and spiritual distempers destroy the comeliness of the soul, deprive it of its primitive beauty, the image of God, and bring upon it a most ghastly deformity, and make it resemble both brutes and devils, the one in sensuality and lust, the other in pride and malice. 2. As diseases weaken the body, and make it unfit for spiritual work and exercises, as prayer, hearing, meditating, &c. so that duty becomes a burden to it. 3. As the diseases deprive men of their appetite for food, and of their digestion; so sin takes away the soul's appetite and digestion, that it hath no hunger for the bread of life, for communion with God, and the influences of his Spirit; and though the man attends ordinances, he doth not digest what he hears, nor is nourished by it 4. Diseases occasion pain in the body that it cannot rest; so sin brings anguish and torture into the soul. Hence David complains of his bones being vexed, and his soul being sore vexed, Psalm vi 2, 3. These things being premised, I shall mention some of those dangerous diseases of the soul, for which we need the balm in Gilead.

1. *Atheism.* Infidelity, or misbelief of divine truths revealed to us, is a deadly disease, for it hinders the success of the gospel, and the saving of souls. What is it that keeps many halting so long between two opinions, and hovering betwixt Christ and the devil, but their not believing firmly the Bible to be God's word, and the gospel tidings to be certain truth; namely, that God sent Jesus Christ, his eternal Son, into the world, to assume our nature, and die for sin in our stead; and their not giving firm credit to the being of a God, the immortality of the soul, and the life to come. Though many will not openly question any of these truths, yet the wavering thoughts they have about them, hinder them from falling in with the gospel-method of salvation which God hath established. Ah! this is a deadly disease!

Also, there is much practical Atheism among us; many profess to own God, and yet live as if they believed there was no God that made the world, and no providence that governs it: they pay God no homage nor respect; they put the creature, or self, in God's room; they ascribe their mercies to fortune, or to their own wisdom or industry, rather than to God. A woful disease! God's children indeed are cured of prevailing Atheism, yet the dregs of the disease do remain; and sometimes atheistical thoughts come to a great height in them, as in Asaph, though afterwards he was heartily grieved and ashamed for entertaining them, and calls himself both a fool and a beast for it, Psalm lxxiii. 21, 22. And no wonder he did so, for Atheism and infidelity, though it abound in the church, yet there is no such disease in hell, no such madness there, for the devils believe and tremble, James ii. 19. But though the disease be grievous, yet Christ hath balm for it, and to him we must go both to help our unbelief, and increase our faith.

II. *Ignorance of God* and of gospel truths is a mortal disease, and destroys many, even of those who profess to know him, according to Hos. iv. 6. There are multitudes living in the midst of gospel light, who yet continue in gross darkness. They are ignorant of the infinite justice and holy nature of God; and of the misery of man in his fallen estate, of the evil of sin, and the ransom necessary for it. They are ignorant of Jesus Christ and his mediatory offices, and of the nature and necessity of Christ's righteousness, and of faith which applies it to us. They know nothing of the Spirit's office in our redemption, nor of his work in regeneration; yea, they do not so much as know if there be a Holy Ghost. Alas that this disease of ignorance should still prevail, notwithstanding all the means of knowledge we enjoy. I grant believers are spiritually illuminated, and get the strength of this disease broken at their first conversion, yet still much blindness doth remain with them; and frequently clouds of darkness do so overshadow them, that they have but faint views of divine mysteries. This is a sad disease, but yet there is balm in Gilead, and eye-salve in Israel for it, Rev. iii. 17, 18. Jer. xxiv 7.

III. *Hardness of heart* is a running disease to multitudes. Oh! it is this that makes them sit under the ministry of the word, and hear the most terrible threatenings and curses denounced against their sins, and yet be no more moved than the seats they sit on, or the dead that lie under their feet; so hard is the stone in the heart, that the hammer of the word in the hand of man makes no impression upon it; promises draw not, and threatenings drive not; mercies do not allure, and judgments do not alarm; this is a prevailing plague among the generality of gospel-hearers. And though believers, at conversion, have the heart of stone taken away, and a heart of flesh given, yet they are much plagued with recurring hardness, that oft makes them complain of being little affected either with ordinances or providences; and though the fire burn round about them, that they lay it not to heart. This is an evil disease, yet there is balm in Israel, and help in the promises for it, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Psal. i. 6.

IV. *Earthly-mindedness* is a woful disease; it clogs the mind, and unfits the soul for spiritual work. The thoughts of the world shut out the thoughts of God and eternity; they tempt many poor souls, like Martha, to be carefully troubled about many things, even things which will not avail them at a dying hour, while the one thing necessary is quite neglected and forgot. Ah! what numbers are there dying of this disease? When other plagues kill their thousands, this slays its ten thousands. O what havoc doth it daily make among professed Christians? Pharaoh's words concerning the Israelites may well be applied to many of them, Exod. xiv. 3. "They are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in." So hot are they in pursuing the world, so busied in providing for their families, in paying their debts, in making bargains, purchases, and in courting the favour of men, that they can find no time in their lives, nor room in their hearts for precious Christ, and the concerns of their souls. O sinners! this disease of *earthly-mindedness* doth quite defeat the design of the gospel, and marr your profiting by sabbaths and sermons; it turns the house of God into a place of merchandize, by your thoughtfulness in it about worldly gain and profit. What a fearful distemper is this, that turns a man's head and heart where his feet should be! that makes him bestow his soul and all its noble faculties upon a little white and yellow clay! and so all his days dig for dross and dung with mattocks of gold! Nothing can cure this disease but the balm of Gilead. The prevailing power of it is indeed broken in believers at conversion, the world is then put down from the throne and chief place in the soul; yet afterwards it doth rally its broken forces, and struggles hard to recover the throne again; and this proves very troublesome even to the best. It distracts their thoughts, molests them in holy duties, and steals away their affections from Christ and heaven. This is a sore plague, yet there is balm in Israel and help in God's word and promise for it; Cant. iv. 8. Jer. xxxii. 4. Col. iii. 1, 2.

V. *Aversion to spiritual duties* is a sore disease, when the heart becomes backward to pay God a visit in secret, and the man unwilling to go to his closet to converse with his Maker. Ah! this is the case with many, who would rather toil their bodies a whole day, than spend a quarter of an hour upon their knees with God in secret. Their animal spirits are vigorous and lively in pursuing their worldly business, or even their diversions; but they are low and faint in soul-work and spiritual exercises. We see many, they do not weary to spend whole days, yea, and nights too, in drinking, dancing, gaming, and serving their lusts; but they grudge to give God so much as one day, or any part even of his own day. They say of Sabbaths and sermons, "What a weariness hath it? When will the Sabbath be gone?" This is a prevailing disease, and how strong are the dregs of it even in believers! For though, at conversion, their hearts are reconciled to God and his ways, yet, at times, they feel much of a recurring backwardness for spiritual work, so that when they would do good, evil is present with them. But yet there is balm for this disease, in the physician of Israel, and his gracious promises, Psal. cx. 3. Isa. xl. 31. Ezek. xxxvi. 27.

VI. *Indwelling corruption*, prevailing and venting itself various ways, is a sad disease. Sometimes it rises like a flood, swells high, and carries all before it, like the current of a tide that cannot be withstood. So it is with those in whom the strength of corruption was never subdued by converting grace. And though the tide be turned with renewed persons, yet upon some occasions we find them making great complaints of the prevalency of indwelling sin, through the power of temptation, as Paul, Rom vii. and David, Psal. lxv. "Iniquities prevail against me;" and Isa. lxiv. 6. "Our iniquities like the wind have taken us away." This is a most humbling disease; yet the physician of Israel

hath provided balm for it in his word, Psal. lxv. 3. Mic. vii. 19 Rom vii. 24, 25

VII *Hypocrisy and formality in God's service* is a woful disease. When men draw near to God with their lips only, and give him no more but bodily service, which is no better than that of a statue on a tomb, with eyes and hands lift up, only it wants a voice And how unpleasant is a voice to God without the heart and affections? He heavily complains of it, Isa. xxix 13. Among the unrenewed, hypocrisy is a deadly and reigning disease. And though the converted be delivered from its reigning power, yet they are sadly distressed with its remains, and oft put to complain that they give God more of the body, than of the heart in duty; and that their prayers are little better than lip labour But the physician of Israel hath promised balm for this disease, Jer. xxxi. 33 Prov. iv 18 2 Cor. iv. 16.

VIII *Inconstancy and wandering of heart in duty* is a prevailing disease. Alas! for the unfixedness of the heart, that goeth out in many vain excursions towards the world and its trifles, and even in time of the most solemn approaches unto God! Hereby our religious performances are wofully marred, and God provoked to loath and abhor them. There is a voluntary and habitual wandering of heart, that is the reigning plague of the unregenerate: and there is an unvoluntary wandering, that is the disease of God's people, which they bemoan and lament before the Lord. But there is balm in Gilead for it in all shapes; Jer xxxii. 29. Ezek. xi. 19.

IX *Backslidings from the Lord*, or a *spiritual consumption*, is the common disease of God's people They are liable to backslide from the power and life of godliness, and to lose their former spirituality and liveliness in serving God in their closets, families, and public assemblies; so that sometimes, their religious duties are like to wither and dwindle away into a dead form, and "the things that remain are ready to die," as it was with the church of Sardis, Rev. iii. 2. This decay comes upon them when known sin or sloth are indulged by them Then it is that spiritual exercises become a weariness, and aversion grows to heart work and secret duties, such as prayer, reading the Bible, meditation, and communing with their own hearts: Then the graces do languish, the faith of divine revelation becomes weak, the truths which God reveals concerning his glorious perfections, the excellencies of Christ, and concerning sin and duty, heaven and hell, make but small impression on the mind. The repentance is restrained, and the soul is little affected with God and its evil; then love turns cool to Christ and his image, it doth not constrain to duty, nor to hate and mortify sin as before; then hope becomes faint and languid, and hath not such desirous expectations of the eternal world, and things unseen, as to fortify the soul against the allurements of the devil, the world, and the flesh. This spiritual consumption is a mournful disease, and calls us speedily to apply to the physician of Israel for the balm he hath promised for it, Deut xxx. 6. Hos. xiv 4, 5, 6. Psal. lxix. 32. John xiv. 19. Gal. ii 20.

X *Discouragement and down casting of soul* is one of God's people's diseases that requires this balm They are often cast down by outward afflictions, and especially by the prevalency of sin and satan's temptations, by the hidings of God's face, the shutting out of their prayers, the darkening of their evidences, the revival of former guilt, and the renewing of mount Sinai's thunderings against them. Under these trials, they are apt to think that God holds them for his enemies, and writes bitter things against them, and hence are put to cry with the Psalmist, "Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? And will he be favourable no more?" This is a disease which sadly enfeebles their hearts and weakens their hands; yet the great Physician of the church hath provided balm for it, Psal. xlii 5, &c. Isa xli 10, 17, 18. and liv. 7, &c. Isa lvii. 16. &c Jer. xxxi. 25. Heb. xiii. 5, 6.

XI. *Ingratitude to God for mercies* is a common disease. Alas! we turn unthankful both for common and special mercies, and for the unspeakable gift of Jesus Christ to Adam's fallen race: What bad requitals do we make to God for his goodness? There are many who make use of God's mercies as darts to shoot at heaven, and weapons to fight against God himself. The more he gives them of health and money, they turn the more profane and debauched; so that instead of serving God with his benefits, they make a sacrifice of them to the devil, Hos. ii. 8. I fear such will be found guilty of this evil, who bestow their time and money upon games and pastimes, balls and assemblies, plays and comedies, and such vanities that prove nurseries of sin, and serve greatly to debauch the minds and morals of men and women. O let us not ungratefully requite the Lord our gracious benefactor Ah! how much of this disease doth remain even with the best? Even Hezekiah rendered not again, according to the benefit done unto him, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25 Great need have we all of the balm of Gilead to cure us of this plague

XII. *Trusting to our own righteousness* is a disease which all are liable to. The unbeliever goes about to build an imaginary tower of his own righteousness, and will not submit to the righteousness of Christ the glorious Surety, who hath brought in an everlasting and law-biding righteousness for sinners to fly to Nay, believers who have actually fled to it, do still groan under the remains of this woful disease within them. They have still a hankering after some dependence upon their duties and performances, although they cannot but own that their best duties need the blood of Christ, as well as their worst sins, and if they be not washen from the sins that cleave to them, they would damn them. O! then, what need have we all of the balm in Gilead, and the Physician there, for these deadly diseases which cleave to us?

Time would fail me to mention and insist upon many other grievous diseases which abound among us; such as pride, self conceit, and lifting up of ourselves, because of some attainments, above others; discontentment with our lot and condition in the world; impatience under crosses, sinful self-love, intemperance, covetousness, envy, rash anger, malice, revenge, and many other deadly plagues. However light some may make of these distempers, yet there is none of them but what will prove deadly, if the balm of Gilead, and Physician there, be not applied to for cure. But, blessed be the God of Israel, that this balm is an universal medicine, a catholicon for all manner of soul-diseases, if sinners would but seek to it, and submit to the application of it in the Physician's own way. May we all be brought to see and feel our diseases in time, that we may hasten to the great Physician of the church, while his balm and power are present to heal us May God of his infinite mercy determine us to it, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

SERMON IV.

On JER. viii 22.—*Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there,* &c.

IN the preceding sermon, I mentioned many soul-diseases, which are more secret and invisible, prevailing among us: In this, I shall speak of some other diseases of a more public nature, which affect not only the particular members, but, in some respects, threaten the whole body of the church, and the several congregations thereof; and upon which account, our poor diseased church and land do greatly need the balm of Gilead, and physician there, at this day.

I *Heresy and error* is a disease which spreads like a gangrene, and doth very much threaten our church and land at this day: when doctrines are vented, and books dispersed in favour of Deism, Socinianism, Arianism, Arminianism, and other errors: When principles are espoused and spread, which tend to weaken divine revelation; to advance corrupt reason and self-love as the spring and standard of religion; to exalt our moral performances more than imputed righteousness; to reproach the operations of the holy Spirit upon souls, with enthusiasm; and ascribe our good actions more to the power of corrupt nature, than to efficacious free grace. Now, when such errors as these, besides many Popish tenets and superstitions, are propagated among us, there is ground to say, we have a sick and diseased land, that needs balm.

II *Schism, and division* among the ministers and members of the church, is a grievous malady that we at present labour under. Surely it is a most unnatural distemper that causes the sheep of Christ to bite and devour one another, and the members of Christ to separate as aliens; yea, not only break up Christian communion, but break out in uncharitable reflections, bitterness, wrath, clamour, and evil-speaking, one against another. A strange distemper! that puts those who will delightfully worship God together through a whole eternity, in such a case, that they cannot keep fellowship together here! A distemper, that makes men renounce communion with those they once delighted in, and with whom the glorious Head doth still hold communion; that takes many off from the vitals and essentials of religion, and employs their time in public controversies about party opinions, the grounds of separation, the characters of preachers, and things which rather tend to beget alienation of affections, and angry quarrels, than to promote saving knowledge, faith, love, and godly edifying. Oh! how wrath-like a judgment is that spirit of strife and division which God hath poured out upon this land for our former misimprovement of the gospel, and contempt of glorious Christ! Ah, what a flood-gate doth it open to many evils and calamities! That is a true word of the apostle James iii. 16. "Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work" What a plague must that be that produces every evil work? What a sad disease is it, that turns Christian converse into vain janglings, that hinders social prayers, that mars the success of the gospel, weakens the interest of religion, propagates all kind of evil, and exposes the church to the scorn and derision of her enemies! How applicable is that word to us, Lam. ii. 13. "Thy breach is great like the sea, who can heal thee?" Surely none but he that hath the balm of Gilead.

III *Giddiness and unsettledness in religion* is a disease that sadly prevails among us. Many are now "reeling to and fro like drunken men, as the prophet speaks, Isa. xxiv 20. They do not, like sober men, keep the high way in a straight course; but, like drunkards, stagger and reel from one side of the way to another. Alas, the most part are reeling either to one extreme or another, and very few are going on in a straight and steady course. Many are reeling towards defection from our reformation principles and attainments, which our worthy ancestors valiantly contended and suffered for; particularly in encouraging and drawing on the yoke of patronage upon the church without necessity. Yea, pleading for it as lawful and harmless, though our reformers declared it to be contrary to the word of God, and the practice of the apostolical and primitive church Likewise, in compliance with that yoke, many are voluntarily falling in with courses for wreathing it upon the church's neck, and departing from several parts of our established government and discipline to which they stand solemnly engaged, such as our approved rules and practice with respect to the moderation of calls, the election and ordination of pastors; and, in consequence thereof, obtruding ministers into congregations against their will, whereby the church is spoiled of her right of calling her own pastors, the flock of Christ is scattered, the edification of souls hindered, the great ends of a gospel-ministry defeated, and the work of the gospel greatly obstructed. Many also are swerving from our old covenant-engagements, and openly denying the lawfulness of national covenanting, and the binding obligation thereof upon posterity; and forming to themselves schemes of government which would open a door to anarchy and licentiousness. Again, many are reeling towards Erastianism, and injurious infringements upon the church's intrinsic power, and upon Christ's immediate headship and supremacy over her: falling in with acts and practices which tend to take the keys of church power and government out of the hands of Christ and church officers of his appointment, and put them into the hands of the magistrate Also, many are reeling from the ancient use of creeds and confessions of faith, towards a boundless toleration of all sorts of errors and heresies, asserting that neither the church nor the magistrate have any power to restrain them. Many are reeling towards the exalting of *self*, even putting it in the room of God, saying it is in the power of a man's free will and natural abilities to repent and convert himself, and that there is a necessary connexion between a man's moral seriousness and his obtaining of saving grace. Yea, many are warping towards popery and old superstitions, pleading for a middle state, for prayers for the dead, and for the Eucharist's being a proper sacrifice for sin: for the necessity of a priest's absolution in order to the forgiveness of sin, and of bowing to the altar, and at the name of Jesus, of observing uninstituted festivals, of using the cross in baptism, kneeling at the sacrament, the organ in praise, and other inventions of men in God's worship. Nay, many are reeling from the very fundamentals of Christianity, and the doctrine of the glorious Trinity, Christ's deity and satisfaction, the necessity of supernatural revelation, and of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and the operations of the holy Spirit; and, instead of these precious doctrines, offering the sufficiency of reason, or nature's light, to conduct men in the way to happiness. And these Socinian and Deistical tenets are not a little encouraged by the preachers of a rational or natural religion; I mean those dry moral

preachers, who are more earnest in recommending a sort of Pagan morality to the world, than in shewing the excellency and usefulness of Christ for perishing sinners, and the nature and necessity of the work of his Spirit in applying his purchase, and of gospel-holiness to make them meet for heaven: who prefer a good saying, or moral precept, in some ancient philosopher, to the counsels of Jesus Christ, or the dictates of his apostles; vainly opposing the dim candle of man's reason to the sun shine of gospel light displayed in the holy scriptures. All which do shew how sadly the distemper of giddiness and unsettledness in religion prevails in our land, and how greatly we need the balm of Gilead to cure us of it. If it should be asked, what is it that makes the land reel so? We have the answer in the forecited text, Isa. xxiv 20 "Because the transgression thereof is heavy upon it;" both the transgressions of the former and present age. Alas, there are many old sins little minded by us! old perjuries and treacherous dealings with God; old defection and backsliding, old persecutions and bloodshed. We have ground to fear, that these old transgressions, together with those of a latter date, ly so heavy upon the land, that it is made to reel and stagger with the weight of them. O when shall we be disburdened of that load?

IV. *Barrenness* and *unfruitfulness* with respect to conversion-work, and the bringing forth of children to God, is a grievous malady which the church's womb seems to be smitten with at this day. Ah! how little is the doctrine of regeneration and the new birth known and experienced among us! How rare is conversion-work now, in respect of former times! Our ears have heard, and our fathers have told us, what days of the Son of man have been seen in our land, when the Captain of our salvation took to himself his great power, and mounted his white horse of a triumphant gospel, and rode through our cities and congregations, with his crown on his head, his bow in his hand, and his sword girt on his thigh, going forth conquering and to conquer. When the arm of the Lord did thus awake and put on strength, how glorious were the effects! the preacher's tongue was loosed, the hearers hearts were melted; the word of the Lord did run, and the gospel had free course. The enemies of the power of godliness were filled with confusion and astonishment, and made to acknowledge that God was among his people of a truth. Mockers and curious persons were catched by the word, and hundreds have been wrought upon by one sermon, and made to date their conversion from it. The angel came down and troubled the waters, and multitudes of diseased souls stept in at once, and the power of the Lord was present to heal them. Such pleasant seasons have been of late in some parts of New-England, and in others of the plantations: may the Lord continue them there, and cause them to spread through all our colonies in America. May he send them also to Britain and Ireland, and to the poor land where he hath had his dwelling in times past, that so "the wilderness and solitary place may be glad for them, and the desart may rejoice and blosom as the rose; the glory of Lebanon may be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon." Then should our land sing as in the days of old.

Quest. Oh, what may be the reason of the unfruitfulness of a preached gospel in the land where Christ hath had his glorious marchings in times past?

Ans. Surely we must justify the Lord, and leave our complaints upon ourselves. A holy God is provoked to withdraw his Spirit from the assemblies of professed Christians, because of their formality and hypocrisy, their divisions and contentions, their satisfying themselves with bare ordinances without the God of ordinances, without communion-occasions without communion with God. The Holy Spirit and his gracious workings are so far from being sought after, that they are scarce credited or believed; nay, by many they are reproached with the odious names of Enthusiasm, whimsical notions, and melancholy imaginations. And may not God, in his righteous judgment, make ordinances a miscarrying womb and dry breasts to them?

Again, God, by our sins and backslidings, is provoked to call off the stage a godly and faithful set of ministers and Christians, who stood in the gap, and wrestled for God's presence and Spirit to ordinances, without sending others to fill their room; nay, instead of that, to suffer the church to be plagued with a set of earthly-minded preachers and students, who give sad discoveries of their carnal motives and ends in pursuing after the priest's office, that it is more to win stipends than to win souls, to get bread to themselves, than to get glory to God. Which surely is a fearful judgment and token of wrath against a poor sinful land.

Likewise, God is provoked to leave ministers, and deny them success, because of their defection from the uprightness, piety, and zeal of our godly ancestors, from their humility and self-denial, from their single aims at God's glory and the salvation of souls, from their dependence upon God, in the exercise of faith and prayer, for his presence and blessing upon their labours, and from their travelling in birth till Christ was formed in their people's souls. And, finally, No doubt, many ministers are unsuccessful, by reason of the grudges and prejudices which they beget in their people's breasts against themselves, for swerving from reformation-principles, and concurring in violent settlements and intrusions upon parishes, whereby people are tempted to abhor the offerings of the Lord; and ignorance, error, profanation of the Lord's day, immoralities and disorders, are greatly encouraged. From whence it is too evident, that ministers are to be blamed as well as people for the present barrenness under the means of grace. Oh! that both they and we were helped to see the cause, and to cry for the balm of Gilead to cure us of it.

Head II. I proceed to the *second head*, in the method I laid down, to wit, to take notice of some of those dangerous symptoms which make our diseases seem incurable and desperate; for which there is yet balm in Gilead, and a physician there.

I. It is a dangerous symptom, when the body is universally distressed, and when there is a complication of diseases on it, and some of these of contrary natures. Then the patient's case is very hopless, and the cure much despaired of, because what is good for one disease is bad for another. Thus, alas! it is with the body of Christ in our land. The church is sick not in one part, but over all, as it was in the prophet's time, Isa i. 5, 6. "There is no soundness in it, nothing but wounds and diseases" of divers sorts. In some parts of the house a dangerous fire is kindled, in other parts deadly diseases, as tympanies, fevers, dropsies, and lethargies, do prevail. One part is blown up with pride, another is in a fever of strife; another part is drowned in sensuality, and another deadened with a lethargy and spirit of slumber. And these diseases are of so contrary natures, that what is physic for the one, is death for the other. We may say with the Psalmist, Psal. lxvi. 12. "We go through fire and through water:" two contrary elements, what expels

the one, cherisheth the other. Now, when our case is so desperate, is there any remedy for us? Yes, the balm of Gilead is a medicine that suits the most complex and dangerous case: see what David says of it, Psal. xxxiv. 19. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." This he also found to his own sweet experience, Psal. xlii. 7, 8. "Deep calleth unto deep, at the noise of thy water-spouts; all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me; yet the Lord will command his loving kindness in the day-time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life." David was like a shipwrecked man, almost swallowed up with the sea-billows from beneath, and at the same time near drowned with spouts of rain from above. Not only the powers of hell and earth were against him, but heaven seemed angry with him too But praises be to our glorious Physician, who hath balm to answer the greatest varieties and contrarities of our distempers. David blesseth him for it, Psal. ciii 2, 3. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, who healeth all thy diseases."

II. It is a deadly symptom, when the body is in a violent hot fever, attended with great inflammations This is very much our case; our distemper is hot and violent, and our wounds much inflamed with the old serpent's poison, and the rage and passions of men; yet the balm of Gilead can cure the most deadly wounds and inflammations; it can take out of them, not only the venom of the serpent's sting, and the heat of man's rage, but also the inflammation of God's wrath, which is worse than either.

III. When diseases are of long continuance, and rooted in the body, the cure is hard, Deut. xxviii. 59. Such are our maladies, which make us ready to say, there is no hope. Yet the balm of Gilead can cure the oldest and most rooted distemper. It can heal those who have been distressed for many years, as soon as those who have been ill but a few days. The Physician of Israel can as easily raise up his people when their bones are dry, as when just new dead, Ezek. xxxvii.

IV. When all about the diseased look on their case as desperate, we lose hope. This is our case; all who view the church, look on her as sinking; and even those of the most faith are putting the question, "Can these dry bones live?" And we are apt to say of ourselves, with the poor captives, Ezek. xxxvii. 11. "Behold our bones are dried, our hope is lost, and we are cut off for our part." Yet even when all give up the case as desperate, the balm and physician in Gilead can effectuate a cure. We have an astonishing promise to the church in such a case, Jer. xxx. 17. "For I will restore health unto thee, I will heal thee of thy wounds, saith the Lord, because they called thee an outcast, saying, this is Zion, whom no man seeketh after." Her case was hopeless, and therefore neglected by all, but even in that case the balm of Gilead can "bring health and cure," Jer. xxxiii. 6.

V. A disease is the more dangerous, when its threatening symptoms are not observed, so as to provide timely remedies. Ah! this is very much our case, we observe not our dangerous symptoms, though "the fire be kindled round about us, we lay it not to heart:" the impending clouds of wrath and judgments do not alarm us, so as to make us search and try our ways, and "turn again unto the Lord." The present calamities we groan under, as scarcity and decay of trade, war and bloodshed, losses and disappointments, the grievances of church and state, do not make us see the Lord's hand in them, nor hear his voice by them, so as to humble ourselves under his mighty hand, and turn to him with mourning and supplication, as he calls us: But we will still go on in our old courses without relenting. Our case is not unlike that of God's professing people of old, Isaiah lvii. 17. "For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him, I hid me, and was wroth." And yet after all these tokens of God's anger, it is added, "He went on frowardly in the way of his heart." Now, can there be any remedy for him in such a case? Yes, the Lord saith there is even balm in Gilead for such a desperate condition, and, which is most surprizing, that the Physician himself will come and apply it, as he adds in verse 18. "I have seen his ways, and will heal him." In these hopeless circumstances I will step in myself, with the balm in my hand, which will heal him of his frowardness and perverseness, when nothing else can. Now, who could have expected such a word in such a desperate like case, and that there could be balm for such a froward distemper of heart! One might have thought God would have added, "I have seen his ways, and will damn him." But instead of that he says, "I have seen his ways, and will heal him." Oh! the condescending goodness and mercy of God to the chief of sinners.

VI. A disease is judged desperate and incurable, when the patient loses his senses, or turns lethargic, that he cannot be awakened. Ah! we are become lethargic under our maladies, we have lost our spiritual senses in a great measure. Our hearing is gone, we hear not the voice of rods, nor the voice of mercies, the voice of conscience, nor the voice of God's word, nor do we set about the duties they loudly call us to. Our sight is departed from us, we see not the Lord's hand in his dispensations; when mercies come, we receive them like brutes, without seeing the hand that gives them, or rendering thanks to the giver. When afflictions come, and the Lord's hand is most visible in them, yet we see it not, like those, Isaiah xxvi. 11. we see not the Achan, the sin which is clearly pointed at by the rod. Why? because a spirit of slumber and of deep sleep, hath fallen down upon ministers and professors, which have closed their eyes, according to Isaiah xxix. 10.——Our feeling is almost gone, we feel not the weight of sin, nor the stings and upbraidings of conscience for it, we groan not under the burden. We smell not the sweet savour of Christ's name, nor the precious ointments of his graces and comforts which draw souls unto him, Cant. i. 3, 4.—We taste not the sweetness that is in his promises, and in the fruits of the blessed apple-tree. Alas! sabbaths and fast-days, sermons and sacraments, do not relish with us as in times past. Now, these deadly symptoms of our diseased church and land, when we view them, make our maladies seem incurable, and our case desperate; yet when we look to the balm of Gilead, we see a remedy for them. We find the same symptoms in the case of Jerusalem, which made her wounds and bruises seem incurable; yet, saith the Lord, Jer. xxx. 17. "I will restore health unto thee, and will heal thee of thy wounds." And Jer. xxxiii. 6. "Behold I will bring health and cure, and reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth." May the Lord take compassion upon our helpless and hopeless condition, and accomplish these his gracious promises to our diseased land, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

WHO IS THE PHYSICIAN?

SERMON V.

On Jerem. viii. 22 —*Is there no balm*, &c.

HEAD III.

I PROPOSED, in the *third* place, to speak of the physician who hath this balm for us. God himself is our physician. He is *Jehovah that healeth us*, Exod. xv 26 Our cure is the work of the whole Trinity, but especially of Jesus Christ, God incarnate, who came to the world with a commission to heal souls. This commission he opened and read at the beginning of his ministry, Luke iv. 18. and still after owned it to be his business to heal souls, Mat. ix 12, 13. In this office of healer, he was held forth and typified of old by the *brazen serpent* that healed the stung Israelites, John iii 14. and by the *sun of righteousness* that riseth to us with healing under the wings, Mal. iv 2. and by the *tree of life* whose leaves were for the healing of the nations, Rev. xxii. 2.

The Lord Jesus Christ being God-man, is nobly qualified to be our soul-physician; for, 1. He hath infinite knowledge and skill for taking up all diseases, with their causes, and the proper remedies for them, so that he can never mistake the case of the afflicted, nor make wrong applications for their cure. 2. He hath sovereign authority and almighty power, whereby he can command diseases to come and go at his pleasure. 3 He hath infinite pity and readiness to help the distressed: as he hath in him the compassion of a God, so he hath also the bowels of a man, which endows him with a peculiar tenderness of heart towards us, as being touched with the feeling of our infirmities; and hence he is inclined many times to come to the sick without being sent for, to the poor who have nothing to give him, and to be found of them who never sought him. On this account Christ is represented by the good Samaritan that came to the wounded man that fell among thieves, and was lying by the way-side, in a helpless case; the distressed man sent not for him, but he came of himself, he pitied him and took him up, and poured wine and oil into his wounds. 4. He hath wonderful patience towards the distressed, he doth not leave them for their unthankful carriage, and the abuses he gets from them, but bears with them all, and resolutely goes on with his designed applications, till the cure be perfected. He knows if he should cast them off, none else could take them in hand, and death would infallibly be the issue.

That the Lord Jesus might convince us the more of his compassion and readiness to heal diseased souls, he readily cured men's bodies when he was on earth, and put none away that came to him His design in this was to encourage us to come to him with our soul-maladies, and to afford us a strong prop to our faith, and an argument to plead with him, and say, " Lord, thou didst shew compassion to diseased bodies that must rot in the earth, and wilt thou not be moved with pity to precious souls that will live for ever? Did the diseases of bodies draw out thy bowels, and shall not the wounds of souls affect thee much more? Was it not thy main errand to heal souls, O reject not those which are laid down at thy feet."

The Fourth Head. I proposed, in the *4th* place, to enquire into the nature of the balm, and means of healing, which the Physician makes use of.

In the *first* place, the blood of Christ may justly be called the *balm of Gilead*, that heals souls, for it is the meritorious cause of our health and cure, and purchases all under-means of healing to us. This is evident from Isa. liii. 5. " He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." Our glorious Physician saw that no less than his blood and stripes, his suffering and dying in our room, could satisfy justice, and obtain pardon to take away the guilt and punishment of sin, and procure the graces of the Spirit to remove the power and pollution of sin, and therefore he willingly sheds all his blood for curing us of the diseases of sin This blood then is our healing balm. Though the scripture speaks of other means of healing, which our Physician makes use of, yet we are to understand that all these are used in subserviency to Christ's blood, which is the blessed meritorious mean of our cure, the only balm that procures all the other means of healing to us; some of which I shall mention; as,

I. The Spirit of God, with his saving operations in souls, is the great mean of healing, which our bleeding Saviour procured for us. He sends the Spirit to intimate the pardon of sin to the wounded conscience, and thereby cures the soul of its fears of wrath. And for curing the power and pollution of sin, he sends the Spirit to heal and change the nature, to subdue sin, infuse grace, and incline the soul to holiness. And, to render the cure universal through all the faculties of the soul, he enlightens the understanding, renews the will, softens the heart, sanctifies the memory, makes the conscience tender and lively, and sets the affections upon right objects. Now, all these operations of the Spirit are the purchase of Christ's blood, as is clear from Gal. iii. 13, 14. " Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." May the Lord fulfil that promise to us, for healing our sick souls and our sick land.

II. The word and ordinances of Christ are another mean he makes use of for healing our spiritual diseases. These are the leaves of the tree of life, which are for healing of the nations. As the word is a mean in the hand of Christ, and his Spirit for breaking and wounding the hard heart, and therefore called a hammer and a sharp sword; so it is also a mean of healing the wounded soul, by bringing healing promises to it, and prescribing remedies against sin, according to Psal. cvii 20. " He sent his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destruction." The sacraments also are means of healing, as they seal the pardon of our sins, and bring cordials to our fainting hearts.

III. Afflictions are means of healing, made use of by our Physician. He sends crosses and losses to make us feel how bitter sin is, to cause us to search our wounds, to mourn over them, and resolve against sin for the future. Sanctified rods are the purchase of Christ's blood to his patients; they are his physic to purge away their sins, Isa xxvii. 9. " By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away their sin. So that believers, instead of murmuring, ought to bless God for their afflictions, seeing they are Christ's physic which he hath purchased for them at a dear rate.

IV. Stupendous providences are sometimes made use of by Christ as balm for his church's diseases, when he doth terrible things which they looked not for, as in Isa. lxiv. 3. Thus he healed the fears of Israel, by opening a way for them in the red sea. He healed their murmurings in the

wilderness, by giving them waters out of the rock. So the Lord, by stupendous dispensations and revolutions, hath often brought relief and healing to his distressed church in our land, as in the years 1560, 1638, 1688, 1714, and at other times. O let us still remember the years of the right hand of the most High.

V. Faithful ministers are appointed as balm and means of healing to diseased souls. The great physician sends them to dispense sound and wholesome doctrines for that end, 1 Tim vi. 3. Tit ii. 1. They are his apothecaries to weigh out, mix, qualify and prepare the medicines according to his prescriptions: This the apostle points at by a minister's "rightly dividing the word of truth," 2 Tim. ii 15. and Christ himself means it by the "steward's giving his household their portion of meat in due season," Luke xii. 42. It is happy for a diseased church, when God gives them understanding of the times (like the men of Issachar) to know what Israel ought to do in difficult cases. And it is as unhappy for her, when they are left to mistake the proper means, and sometimes to inflame her wounds, instead of healing them. It is the Lord that must give ministers understanding in all things, 2 Tim ii. 7. May they be helped always to depend upon him for it.

VI. Reforming magistrates have been made use of as balm for the church's distempers, when the Lord stirs them up to restore her liberties, redress her grievances, and to use their authority to curb error and vice, idolatry and superstition, to call synods, to consult about reformation, and excite ministers to their duty. Such balm were David, Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Hezekiah, Josiah, and Nehemiah, to the church of God in their times. And so also were Ahasuerus, Cyrus, Darius, Artaxerxes, and other heathen magistrates, by the Lord's turning their hearts to favour his church in their dominions. And when the Lord's time of fulfilling his promises to her doth come, he can still make strangers to build up her walls, and their kings to minister to her: And kings to prove her nursing fathers, and queens her nursing mothers, according to Isa. lx. 10. and Isa xlix. 23.

VII. Godly praying persons in every station are as balm to a diseased land, and the poorest of them may help to heal it by their prayers; even as a little child may bring physic, and present it to its sick mother. O that all the children of Zion were thus employed at present, when there is such need for it. The Lord encourages them to it, by promising that the prayer of faith shall save the sick James v. 15. and contribute to heal the whole land, 2 Chron. vii 17. "If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." Wherefore, as long as God is pleased to preserve a praying remnant in the land, however deadly our diseases be, there is hope in Israel concerning it; seeing there is still good balm in the land. May poor Scotland never be without it!

The Fifth Head. I proposed, in the next place, to enquire into the physician's method of applying the balm, and performing the cure of the diseased.

I. Our blessed Physician first makes sinners sick before he makes us whole; that is, he makes sinners sensible of their disease, by convincing them of sin and misery, and humbling them under the view of it, that so they may prize Christ and his healing balm; such are said to be sick, Mat. ix. 12. Now this preparatory sickness hath several things in it; as,

1. A discovery of the dangerous nature of our disease, sin, that is the root of all the other plagues and miseries which we complain of; that it draws down the wrath and curse of God upon us, and puts us in a state of damnation.

2. A solicitous care and thoughtfulness about our disease, as being of a deadly nature; which makes us restless and inquisitive about it, like the Jailor, to say, "What shall we do to be saved?" What shall we do to be healed? To get our sins pardoned, and our natures changed? Is there any balm or physician for us?

3. There is in it a dissatisfaction with all earthly comforts and enjoyments, as helpless things to us under our disease. The sick man can take no pleasure in eating and drinking, sleeping, or any worldly thing, while his disease continues; bring gold, silver, honours, pleasures, or friends to him, he answers, like Haman, "All these things avail me nothing," while I want Christ's healing balm to my soul, which is every hour in hazard of the second death.

4. The sick man groans under the burden of his disease, he hath grief and sorrow of heart for sin, like the Psalmist, Psal. xxxviii 6, 18. "I go mourning all the day long, I will be sorry for my sin." Why? it is a disease of my own bringing on, I have given the wounds to myself, and made my soul loathsome to God. O what a fool and beast have I been!

5. The sick man is brought to despair of all healing and cure in his own doings or contrivances: All his former refuges and confidences are dashed in pieces, and he joins with penitent Israel, Hos. xiv. 3. "Ashur shall not save us, we will not ride upon horses, neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, ye are our gods:" We will not any more make balm of our prayers, of our tears, or resolutions, we must seek it from another quarter.

6. The sick man sees his absolute need of a physician, and of one that is skilful, and hath balm of infinite virtue, even of Christ, who is able to save to the uttermost, and can cure the deepest and deadliest wounds. It is he, and he only (saith he) who hath an infinite fulness of merit and spirit that can suit my desperate malady. None but the eternal Son of God can be my physician: "O that I knew where to find him!"

7. The diseased man is brought to a willingness to submit to the physician's method and prescriptions, and to say with Paul, Acts ix. 6. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Let him cut me, lance me, blood me, purge me. Let him put me to what pain he pleaseth, let him lay me never so low, I'll submit. Let him prescribe a potion never so bitter, I'll drink it. Let Christ do with me what he will, if he cure my disease, all is well. I will not haggle with him for a right eye, or a right hand, or any darling sin, or any thing dear to me in the world; no, every thing shall be parted with at his command. Thus the sinner, by the great Physician's power and skill, is made sick and sensible, humble and willing, in order to prepare him for the healing balm.

II. Another step which the Physician takes to cure the diseased man: He by his Spirit works faith in his soul; that is, he powerfully persuades and enables him to embrace Christ as his Saviour, and apply the balm of his blood and merits unto his wounds, for removing guilt, pardoning sin, and reconciling God to his soul. Now, when this is done, the danger of death is over, John v. 24. "He that believeth shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death to life." Faith is a healing grace, for it is the instrument which applies the healing balm of Christ's blood to the diseased soul. Every touch of faith's hand brings healing, nay-

every one of its looks are healing, Isa xlv. 22. "Look unto me, and be saved." Thus a look of a stung Israelite brought healing to his wound. So Peter's look to Christ healed him of apostacy. Hence Christ said to several diseased persons, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." So here, when once faith applies Christ's blood, the guilt of sin is cured, its reigning power subdued, and the strength of the disease is broken, it will not prove mortal.

Quest. How shall I know whether I have got this healing faith, faith which hath made me whole?

Ans. See whether it hath the evidence of a healing faith? 1. Hath thy faith brought thee to a peremptory resolution to ly at the Physician's door, and look to him alone for healing, saying, If I die, it shall be at Christ's door, for there is no other name given under heaven, nor among men, whereby I can be healed 2. Hath thy faith made thee fall heartily in with the gospel-method of healing, and to approve it as a beautiful contrivance, and say, "God's covenant of grace is well ordered in all things, and suitable to all my maladies; Christ the Mediator of it is a noble Physician, and complete Saviour, and therefore I chuse him in all his offices, and accept of all his prescriptions for my diseased soul: I accept of his blood to wash me, his righteousness to cover me, his Spirit to sanctify me, his word to direct me, and his laws to govern me." 3. See whether thy faith hath determined thee to open frankly to thy Physician, and entertain him in the best rooms of thy soul. When Christ knocked by his Spirit, did thy faith make thee willing to yield and surrender all thy powers and faculties to him? Didst thou bring the keys of all the rooms of thy soul to Christ, and particularly of thy will, saying, "Lord, come, chuse where thou wilt lodge, where thou wilt lie, and what thou wilt have, for all I have is devoted to thee, and at thy command." Now, O man, if thou has got such a faith as this, then thy faith hath made thee whole, the healing balm is applied, the cure begun, and shall assuredly be perfected at length.

III. Another step of the soul's cure is by the renewing and sanctifying work of the Spirit As soon as the Physician gives faith to apply the balm, he takes the soul into his hospital, places him among his patients, whose disease is broken, and who are on the way of recovery. He takes every believing soul under his special care, he kindly visits and attends them, and carries on their cure by his Spirit's renewing and sanctifying work: And this he doth by degrees, for the wounds which sin hath given our natures are so deep, that they take long time to heal; nay, it will take all our days before the cure be finished. But though the cure be slow, it is sure.

Quest By what steps or degrees doth the Physician carry on the cure in believers?

Ans. 1 By his Spirit in regeneration; he cures the *mind* of its blindness, the *heart* of its hardness, the *nature* of its perverseness, the *will* of its backwardness, the *memory* of its slipperiness, the *conscience* of its benumbedness, and the *affections* of their disorder; all this according to his gracious promise, Ezek. xx vi. 26, 27. "I will take away the stony heart, and give you an heart of flesh; and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes." It is by his Spirit within us that the cure is carried on.

2 He heals his people by intimating peace and comfort to their disquieted souls, and assuring them that God's anger is turned away from them As the grant of pardon cures the guilt of sin, so the Spirit's intimation of it pacifies the troubled conscience, and brings healing to the bones which were broken by sin The believer's sore still *runs in the night* until this doth come. Now when the Physician is pleased to quiet his people's minds, comfort their drooping spirits, and deliver them from the apprehensions of God's wrath, he doth remarkably advance his healing work in them, according to Psal. xxx 2, 3, &c. Psal. vi. 2. Hos. xiv. 4.

3. He carries on the cure of his people, by sanctifying their natures, infusing grace and holiness into all the faculties of their souls, and adding new measures and degrees thereof from time to time. Increase of grace, and progress in sanctification, is a continual healing of the disease of sin, according to Mal. iv. 2. "The Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings, and ye shall grow up as calves in the stall." Healing and growing are there joined together. The more we grow in sanctification, the more our cure doth advance. This growth indeed is often insensible in believers, yea, sometimes they will be seized with new distempers, and be getting new wounds, so that the work will seem to go back; yet, notwithstanding, the virtue of Gilead's balm will infallibly prevail in order to the perfecting of the soul's cure.

4. He carries on his healing work by cherishing weak grace in his people, and blessing the means of grace, for strengthening and increasing it; and so he makes good his gracious promise and character, Mat. xii. 20 "A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoaking flax shall he not quench." We have an instance of this in the case of Thomas: How tenderly did he blow on his smoking flax, and cherish his weak faith! John xx. 17. "Then saith he to Thomas, reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands: and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless but believing."

5. He advances the cure by weakening indwelling sin and corruption, and removing those distempers which hinder the growth of grace; he looses their bonds, and frees them from their fetters and straitnings in duty, and sets them at liberty to "walk before the Lord in the land of the living," and even to "sing in the ways of the Lord," Psal. cxxxviii. 5.

6. He causes his "north and south wind," with their healing influences, to "blow upon their gardens and spices," and so puts life in their graces, and draws them forth to exercise in performing of duty. Thus he quickens faith to embrace and rest on a crucified Jesus, and kindles love to entertain him; and he sharpens the soul's appetite after its food.

7. He carries on the cure in his people, by giving them new discoveries of Christ, and of his fulness and suitableness to their needs, to draw out their faith and love to him. This was one great design in sending the Spirit into the world, John xvi. 14. "He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shew it unto you." Now, how doth he glorify Christ, but by shewing them his fulness and excellency, and making them willing to part with all things for Christ and his righteousness, and content to borrow all they want out of Christ's fulness, and to make Christ their All, in justification, and in sanctification, and in glorification. The more the soul makes use of Christ, and lives near him, it is still so much the nearer to perfect health.

8. The Spirit carries on the cure in his people by causing them to breathe after a full conformity to Christ and his image, that their sanctification may be completed, and they freed of all complaints of indwelling-sin and imperfect services. Hence they are made to cry with David, Psal. cxix. 5. "O that my ways were directed to keep thy statues!"

And with Paul, Rom. vii. 25. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The stronger the soul's breathings are of this kind, the nearer it is to perfect health and cure.

IV. The last and finishing step of the diseased soul's cure is at death; it is only then that the soul is made perfectly whole. Then it is that our great Physician, by his Spirit, pulls up all the roots and seeds of the disease, and makes the soul perfect in holiness, and meet for entering into heaven, where only a state of perfect health is enjoyed. It is in heaven only that sin and misery, diseases and complaints, can find no place, and all pain, sorrow and crying, shall pass away. There, all Christ's recovered patient's shall have perfect and uninterrupted health through all the ages of eternity. May we then have grace to be always looking out and longing for that happy state and healthful place, where the inhabitants shall never say they are sick, being all forgiven and healed of their sin and iniquity! May our blessed Physician fit us for that place, by beginning, carrying on, and completing our cure from the disease of sin, by all those ways and means of healing which he hath appointed, that to his name may be ascribed glory in the highest, through endless ages. Amen.

SERMON VI.

On JEREM. viii. 22.—*Is there no balm,* &c.

I NOW proceed to the last thing proposed in the method I laid down, viz.

THE APPLICATION.

I. This doctrine serves to inform us of the amazing riches of divine love in providing a Physician for our diseased souls, and such a Physician as Jesus Christ the eternal Son of God! One that hath infinitely more knowledge and skill than all the angels in heaven: One that hath infinite compassions wrapt up in human bowels: One that hath both a tender heart and a tender hand, Psalm cxlvii 3. One that suffered his side to be opened, and his heart to be pierced, that his blood might become balm for our wounds. Behold an astonishing cure! a matchless Physician! Other physicians are prodigal of their patients blood, but sparing of their own; but our glorious physician saves his patient's blood, and pours out his own: And of it he makes an incomparable balm for our wounds.

Again, we may see what cause we have to bless God for his distinguishing goodness to Adam's diseased family in general, and to our diseased land in particular. The angels that sinned had no physician sent to them, but we have a matchless one sent to us the sons of men. There are many opulent nations in the world who never heard the news of this Physician, and his healing balm! but they are proclaimed in all corners in Scotland! These have the gold and riches of the Indies, but want the balm of Gilead, which is of infinite more value than all they have.

II. We may improve this doctrine in an use of lamentation for the sick and distressed case of our land, and multitudes of souls therein dying of their wounds, notwithstanding the gospel-offers of the glorious Physician, and his excellent balm, which they have in plenty. Need I to say any thing to instruct our distressed and mournful condition? Surely, if the abounding of infidelity and immorality, excess and extravagance, error and schism, divisions and breaches, jealousies and animosities, complaints and grievances; if divided minds and disjointed hearts; if reelings and staggerings, if altar against altar, if doctrine against doctrine, if worship against worship, if post by post, and threshold by threshold,—be symptoms of a diseased land and church that needs the balm of Gilead; then may we conclude our case is bad, and our need great. Ah, now it is a sickly time with the land, and multitudes are so distressed, every corner is like an hospital or infirmary, and few of them are cured. How many are languishing and dying around us, of one disease or another, either of the plague of unbelief, the stone of the heart, the giddiness of the head, the gangrene of error, the falling sickness of apostacy, the palsy of unsteadiness, the lethargy of security, the tympany of pride, the frenzy of passion, the cancer of envy, the leprosy of vice, the dropsy of drunkenness, the fever of lust, the running ulcer of outbreakings, inward decays, consumption of spiritual strength, or some other spiritual distemper! Ah, our diseases are past reckoning. What numbers about us are seized with feebleness of knees, and weakness of hands, so that they can neither bow down the one nor lift up the other in prayer to their Maker, and yet never are sensible of their misery, nor enquire for the balm of Gilead, or the Physician there.

We may take up a lamentation over the sick and dying among us, as the prophet did over the Jews, in the verses following my text, Jer. ix. i. "O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughters of my people." Oh! what slaughter doth the plague of sin make in houses and families both in city and country! There is reason for a greater cry among us, than that in Egypt, when their first born were slain: Of which it is said, Exod. xii. 30. "And there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead." But ah! Our case is worse, for we have many houses where there is not one alive, but all dead spiritually, and ready to die eternally. This alas! is the case of this poor land, notwithstanding the sovereign balm that abounds in it.

Quest. Whence is it that so few are healed, when the balm and Physician are so near?

Ans. The cause is surely in us: For, 1. Many are not sensible of their diseases, nor feel their wounds: They want a principle of spiritual life, and have no sense of pain; and hence they complain of their inward plagues or ill hearts. The dead have no feeling, no cure, no fear. And therefore many ignorant people say, they have good hearts to God, and do thank God for it. Alas! the most part are dead, see no need of this balm, and will not apply it.

2. Many are in love with their disease, more than with the Physician. They may perhaps speak against sin, and even pray against it, but in their hearts they desire not that God should hear them. God may say to them as in Psalm lii. 3. "Thou lovest evil more than good." And how can such expect to be healed?

3. Many neglect the season of healing, and do not seek after the Physician and his balm in due time. They slight Christ and his gospel-offers, in the days of youth and health, and never begin to enquire for him till it be too late.

4 Many will not trust Christ wholly for healing, but

have a squint eye to other physicians, as to their duties, prayers, tears, &c. But, my friends, either Christ must have the sole honour of your cure, or he will not be your Physician.

5. Many will not submit to Christ's prescription for healing; they will not take the bitter potion of self-searching, or repentance, or contrition, or godly-sorrow; nor swallow the pill of mortification, or self-denial: and therefore they remain unhealed. O that we could lament over them, and bewail their case before the Lord.

III. A 3d use of this doctrine may be of consolation: And surely the news it brings of the incomparable balm of Gilead, and the physician there, may afford comfort to the sick church and land wherein we dwell, however distressed her case be. Though it is our duty to bewail it, yet we are not to mourn as those who have no hope. Her wounds indeed are deep, and her breaches wide, yet her case is not desperate while there is balm in Gilead, and a physician there. Surely the balm hath not lost its virtue, nor the Physician his compassion towards us; nay, we still have pregnant instances of his mercy and pity, amidst the wrath-like dispensations towards Scotland, which are signs that our good Samaritan hath not passed by us on the other side, like the Levite, but keeps in the way where we are, and looks with pity on our wounds, willing to apply his balm to them. Yea, his bowels do still yearn to us, as of old to Ephraim, and make him say, "How shall I give thee up, O Scotland? How shall I deliver thee? My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together."

Object. Seeing it is notorious that the Physician hath given up many famous churches, when their diseases were desperate; what ground have we under such dangerous symptoms to expect he will pity us, and apply his balm for our recovery?

Ans. We have still several grounds of hope; such as,

1. Seeing the Lord hath begun to pour out his vials upon Antichrist, we may conclude he will not cease till they be all poured out; and seeing thereby Antichrist hath been in a deadly consumption these 200 years past he must surely expire at length. And though sometimes he may seem to recover a little, yet the Lord assures us, that he will at length "consume him with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of his coming." 2 Thes ii. 8. By which he means his coming in the brightness of gospel-light, attended with the down-pouring of his Spirit. Now, when we hear of the Lord's causing his gospel sun-shine to arise and spread in any place, with the out-pouring of his blessed Spirit, for convincing and converting of souls, the Lord encourages us to look out for the coming of his kingdom, and the downfal of Antichrist.

2. We have encouragement to hope from that prophecy in Rev. xvii. 16. which foretels that the ten horns or kingdoms which formerly supported Antichrist, shall be instruments of his destruction: it is said, "They shall hate the whore, and make her desolate." Now, the Lord hath made Britain one of those ten kingdoms that hate her, and therefore he will still preserve (as formerly he hath done in the most perilous times) a goodly remnant that shall be the prevailing party there, to accomplish that grand design. And seeing the Lord is raised up out of his holy habitation, and hath already begun the work, he will surely carry it on, finish it at last, however it be interrupted, and things appear unlikely for a time.

3. We may draw hope from the second psalm, and other scripture-texts, in which God the Father promiseth to "give his Son the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession, and that the isles shall see his salvation, and wait for his law," which places do take in Scotland, a nation, (though remote and despised) to which the Lord hath shewed a distinguishing respect, by sending the gospel early to it, advancing reformation to a great pitch in it, pouring out his Spirit remarkably on it, taking it solemnly into covenant with himself, appearing often for the interest of religion, when almost sunk in it, and raising up deliverers for it when oppressed by enemies. Now, these signal proofs of our Redeemer's kindness, gives us ground to hope he will not give up the land that from eternity was given him by his glorious Father, and that in time was so solemnly surrendered to him by our fathers, who are now at their rest.

4. There is a mourning and praying remnant in the land, who are greatly affected with the want of God's Spirit and presence in ordinances, who desire to lament after the Lord, and to sigh and cry for all the abominations found among us. And though the glory of the Lord be gone up from the cherub, yet it seems still to hover and stand over the threshold of the door, and many are pleading and protesting against his departure: And God hath a regard to the prayers and tears of a faithful remnant, Psal. xii. 5. Psal. cii. 13, 14.

5. It is a hopeful token for the land, when there is a stir and noise among the dry bones of the young generation, when these are awakened, and brought under convictions, and persuaded to turn from their old customs and companions, and to look towards Christ and heaven. Blessed be God for what is to be seen of this in some places: O that it were general, and over all! This would be a pledge of God's continuing his abode with us; for he will not forsake the work of his own hands, nor abandon the pledges of his grace. Wherefore, let us earnestly wish and pray to see more of the Spirit's work among the young in our day.

6. Many of God's worthies, who are now in glory, have gone off the stage in the belief and persuasion, that God would yet arise and have mercy on his Zion in this land; that he would signally build her up, and appear in his glory; yea, that there would be more glorious gospel-days seen in Scotland, than they or their fathers had beheld; and we are encouraged to hope that God will not let the words of his dying saints fall to the ground.

7. The accounts we have lately got of the effusions of God's Spirit, and the displays of sovereign grace in the conversion of souls, through the English plantations in America, and other parts of the world, give us ground to hope that God is about to accomplish his promises to his church in the latter days, when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. Now, if the King of Zion hath already begun his circuit, as if he designed to ride in triumph through his churches, can we think he will pass by Scotland, where he hath a waiting and wrestling remnant, looking out, and ready to stop him with their cry, and even to cast forth a flood of tears in his way? Oh! will not ancient kindness then revive, and his heart warm to his covenanted land, where his dwelling hath been, and his goings seen in the times of old! Oh! may not poor Scotland also plead for a visit, according to the multitude of his tender mercies? Indeed, the divisions of Reuben, and our long degeneracy, may occasion great thoughts and searchings of heart about our case: yet the foregoing considerations may encourage

us to wait and pray in hope, however dark and cloudy the day be, especially seeing our blessed Physician hath not taken away his healing balm from us, but doth still preserve it pure in the land.

Quest. Seeing there is balm in the land, and the Physician willing to apply it, why is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? How is it that Scotland's wounds are so long a-healing?

Ans. I. God in his wisdom may order it so, that our wounds may be more laid open, and the corruption thereof better discovered, for our deeper humiliation. So God kept Israel wandering "forty years in the wilderness, to humble them and prove them, and to know what was in their heart:" Deut. viii. 2. The continuance of wounds and grievances is needful for the trial and discovery of many; for thereby such who were under covert are made known, and the corrupt distinguished from the sincere: the falseness and rottenness of many had not been made evident, if wounds had not been so long kept open, and grievances continued.

II. The cure may be postponed to take our hearts wholly off from the creatures, and to convince us of the insufficiency of all other physicians beside the Physician in Israel. We do not naturally come to God, until we see there is help for us nowhere else: while there is any view of relief from creatures, we go first to them; so we find, when "Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah his wound," the first physician they sought to, were the Assyrians, and king Jareb, who could not heal them, Hos. v. 13. Upon which account we see the judgment is not only continued, but increased; for the Lord saith in the following verses, that he "will not tear, but go away" from them; and his design therein is to make them turn to himself as their only Physician, which at length they are brought to, for Hos. vi. 1. They say, "Come, and let us return to the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us, he hath smitten, and he will bind us up." It would be a happy effect, if our disappointments from the creatures would humble us for our sin and folly, and bring us off all things, to look to God himself only for healing.

III. Diseases continue unhealed, when the causes thereof are secret and undiscovered. We see Israel continued in a distressed case, as long as Achan's accursed thing lay hid in his tent. All the humiliation and prayers of Joshua and the elders of Israel, Josh. vii. could not heal them, till the accursed thing was laid open and discovered. And this should put us on to try and search more narrowly, if there be not some secret sin of this land undiscovered, some Achan in the camp, some Jonah hid under deck, which makes the sea to work, and grow more tempestuous; so that, let mariners row as they will, there is no getting into the harbour of peace. Surely some accursed thing is overlooked by us, such as our old covenant breaking, persecution, bloodshed, our contempt of the Lord Jesus, our giving the world his room, &c. May these hid evils be discovered; which continue our storm, and perpetuate our diseases, so that there is no healing for us.

IV. Our wounds are so long a-healing, because we do not submit to the Physician's directions; we will not abstain from things which inflame our wounds, such as the invading of the rights of Christ and his church; nor humble ourselves for old and late sins; we will not put honour upon free grace, nor make use of the balm of our Physician's blood: we decline to set about extraordinary fasting, humiliation, and prayer, and say, what a weariness is it? We do not cry and wrestle for the down-pouring of the Spirit, that only can apply the balm, and heal our land, but look to other medicines. Many, alas! though they complain of their disease, are not willing to part with it, but have a secret liking to it. Were we once brought to see our disease, to value our Physician, to be wholly resigned to his will, and to say with Paul, "Lord, what would thou have us to do?" there would be hope in Israel concerning us.

IV. A *fourth* use of this doctrine may be of examination. And I would exhort every one to try if they have yet come to Christ, and got his healing balm applied to them. For though believers are not perfectly cured in this life, yet when they come to Christ by faith, they share of the healing virtue of his blood, and are put in the way of healing: The force of their disease is broken, and the Spirit takes them under cure. Examine yourselves, then, if the healing work be begun in you. I offer you some marks of it, see if you can apply them to yourselves.

1. Were you ever brought the length to have such a sense of your sores, and such a feeling of your wounds, as to be content to give all the world for the balm of Gilead to them? Such a lively feeling, where it is, is a hopeful token; whereas those who are still easy about sin, never saw it so as to hate it, or make serious enquiry for the Physician, their wound is unhealed.

2. Is your draught abated, I mean, your thirst after sin and the world; are you now out of love with them? this saith, the strength of your disease is broken. But if you be still in love with the world, or any predominant sin, or go in sin without remorse, your disease continues.

3. Have you a better appetite for your food than formerly? do you relish the ordinances and means of communion with God more than before? it is a good sign. But if you have no liking to these, your distemper remains.

4. Have you got a high esteem of your Physician, and a heart-affection to him: it is a good token: for it is natural for people to esteem and love those who have cured their diseases, and saved their lives; so was it with the blind man, John ix. that was cured by Christ: he had a great esteem of him, and all the reproaches cast upon him by his enemies, could by no means alter his thoughts of him.

5. It is a good sign if you make your Physician kindly welcome to your heart and house; if you give him the best entertainment you have, and guard against every thing that would offend him. But those who shut their doors against the Physician, and refuse access to precious Christ, they are still under their disease.

6. Can you abide the light better than before? Are you brought the length to love searching sermons, and those ministers that would search to the bottom of your wounds, in order to a more thorough cure? Are you more desirous than ever to have sin discovered? Then it is a good sign. But if you shun the light, and desire, like sick persons, to have the curtains drawn upon you; or if you love those prophets best who would heal your wounds slightly, and only skin them over to you, saying, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace;" as those in Jer. vi. 14. then your disease remains.

7. Do you now see more and more of the vanity of all other medicines besides the balm of Gilead? If you now see the utter insufficiency of the balm of your convictions, resolutions, prayers, tears, reformations, duties, &c. to heal your wounds, it is a good token; but if you are still trusting to any of these, you remain unhealed.

8. Have you attained to the frame of the thankful leper,

who, when he was healed, turned back, fell down at Christ's feet, glorified God, and gave him thanks? as in Luke xvii. 15, 16. Have you got humble and thankful hearts? Do you desire with the Psalmist to bless the Lord with your souls, and all that is within you to bless his holy name, for healing your wounds and diseases: as in Psal. ciii. 1, 3. then it is a good sign.

9. Are you more able for labour and service than formerly? Do you find more strength and willingness to run on God's errands, fight his battles, and perform commanded duties? It is a sign of recovery: for we see what is foretold concerning the happy effects of this balm of Gilead in gospel times, Isa. xxxiv. 5, 6. "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the lame man shall leap as an hart."

10. Have you a holy jealousy and fear of every thing that might entangle you or draw you into sin? That is surely a good sign. We see what Christ said to the impotent man whom he had healed, John v. 14. "Behold thou art made whole, sin no more." As it is the duty, so it will be the inclination of every healed soul to guard against wounding itself any more. It will be the earnest desire of that soul that it may not go back to the house of Jonathan, and its former distressed condition again. Now, if you can apply one or more of these marks to yourselves, then you may conclude that Christ hath taken you under cure: his balm is applied to you, and the work of healing is begun. May we all feel this in ourselves, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

EXHORTATION TO COME TO CHRIST FOR HEALING.

SERMON VII.

On Jerem. viii. 22.—*Is there no balm in Gilead?* &c.

V. HAVING improved the doctrine in several uses, I proceed to a *5th use*, namely of exhortation And here, in the name of the Lord, I exhort and beseech all poor diseased souls to come to the blessed Physician Jesus Christ, who hath excellent balm for healing all their wounds and diseases, be they never so desperate. O sick souls, why are you so unwilling to come and be healed? If your bodies be sick, and a famous physician near, there is no small stir in riding and travelling to him for help. But though your soul bed eadly sick, and in immediate hazard of eternal death, and the great Healer just at hand; how little motion is there amongst you towards him! How amazing is the stupidity of the world, which is no better than a common hospital! Though every man in it be like the man that fell among thieves, Luke x. 37. robbed, and deadly wounded; yet very few are groaning for this good Samaritan to come and bind up their wounds. How desirable would it be to see diseased sinners come flocking to Christ with their soul-maladies, like the inhabitants of Genezareth with their bodily ailments, when Christ landed among them, Mark vi. 55, 56. there it is said, "They ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was. And whithersoever he entered into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment; and as many as touched him were made whole." Well, did Christ refuse liberty to any of those sick persons to touch him? No, they were all welcome, whatever their sickness was, be it never so deadly or desperate. And this our blessed Jesus caused to be recorded here for your encouragement to come to him with your soul-distresses. O to see such a stir among you about your souls, as was among that people about their bodies! Where else can you go with them, but to Jesus Christ, the only Physician of souls? If you go to the other physicians, it will just befal you as it did that poor woman which had an issue of blood twelve years, Mark v. 26, 27. She went to many physicians, and spent all that she had, and was nothing better, but grew worse, till at last she came to Christ, who cured her for nothing.

In prosecuting this exhortation, I shall address myself to several sorts of diseased souls. 1. The insensible and secure. 2. The sensible and feeling. 3. Those who are in the way of healing and recovery.

1. I begin with the insensible, those who know not their diseases, nor feel their wounds, and therefore see no need of the balm of Gilead, or the Physician there. As there are multitudes killed by ignorance, so great numbers are undone by self-flattery. Many apprehend themselves to be sound and whole, who in the mean time are mortally sick and dying. Solomon saith there is a generation of such self-conceited persons, Prov. xxx. 12. In such a case was the church of Laodicea, Rev. iii. 17. How foolishly did that proud Pharisee flatter himself? Luke xviii. 11, 12. He thought himself perfectly well, sound and whole, when his soul was deadly sick, and ready to drop into hell. In like manner do many deceive themselves. Ah! they never communed with their own hearts, never took their souls aside to enquire if they be yet under the mortal disease wherewith they were born; or if they have gone to the soul-physician for his healing balm. In order to awaken such secure thoughtless souls, consider these few things:

1. While you are insensible of your disease, your case is highly dangerous and miserable. Why? 1. You are unconverted, unsanctified, and dying in your sins, John viii. 24. To die in your sins is infinitely worse than to die in a dungeon among serpents; for these cursed serpents, your sins, will go to the grave with you as your companions, and to the tribunal with you as your accusers, and to hell with you as your tormentors. 2. Your souls, while diseased, are most loathsome to God; for you are not only without the image and Spirit of God, but you are swarming with the vermin of sin and filthy lusts. 3. You are slaves to the devil, drudging night and day at his work, grinding at his mill, and feeding on his husks; he hath you in fetters, but you are insensible of it: Satan deals with you as the Philistines with Samson, puts out your eyes that you may not see your chains. 4. Your whole actions, natural, civil, and religious, are all an abomination to God. Not only your eating and drinking, buying and selling; but also your praying and communicating, are abhorred, as being without faith in Jesus Christ. Besides, the leprosy of sin which overspreads you, defiles all your best performances. 5. Your disease is still the more dangerous, that you are not sensible of it; for while it is so, you are out of the way of healing, according to Mat. ix. 12. The whole see no need of a physician. Awake, therefore, O secure soul, consider thy case, and flee to the great Physician for help; until you see your misery, you will not prize the remedy.

2. Consider, though you be most miserable and distressed by sin, yet you have the balm of Gilead freely offered to

you in the gospel, that can heal and save the most diseased soul, Isa. xlv. 22. "Look unto me," saith Christ, "and be ye saved." And though ye have been stout-hearted against God, yet, saith he, "Hearken unto me, I bring near my righteousness to you." Isa. xlvi. 12, 13. It is a pleasure to him to bring this balm near to you, and to see poor sinners willing to make use of it; for, saith he, Ezek. xviii. 32. "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye." See also Ezek. xxxiii. 2.

3. Consider how long you have slighted this balm already; wherefore, if you neglect it any longer, your day of grace may come to an end, and your healing-time go over; so that, when you would be healed, the balm may be far from you. Wherefore improve your day, like that people in Capernaum, Luke iv. 40 "Now when the sun was setting, all they who had any sick with divers diseases, brought them unto him, and he laid his hand on every one of them, and healed them." Go you, O diseased souls, and do likewise. Many of you have delayed till *the sun is at the setting*, the sun of the gospel, the sun of your life, the sun of your health and strength. Oh, then, make haste before the sun set, to bring your sick souls to Christ to be cured: For "now is the accepted time," 2 Cor. vi. 2. Now is your healing-day. And if you should lose this day of your healing, to-morrow may be the day of your eternal wounding.

Quest. But what shall we do to attain to a sense and feeling of our wounds, in order to healing?

Ans. Take this advice:

1. Be diligent in the use of all outward means: read the scriptures, and get the knowledge of your lost state in Adam, and the way of salvation through a Surety's righteousness. Attend the preaching of the word, which is the usual means of conversion: be not absent from the ordinary occasions of it, lest you miss that sermon that was most suitable to your case, and might have been the means of saving your souls. The devil is at pains to keep you from some sermons, for he may know what ministers are preparing before hand, and when he sees any thing coming that is likely to touch you, he will contrive some temptation to keep you back from hearing it.

2. Study to affect your hearts with what you hear of your mortal disease, the sinful natures you brought into the world, their pollution, rebellion, and enmity against God. Think upon the many acts of rebellion you have broke out against heaven. Think also how near you are, while unhealed, to everlasting burning, yea, every moment on the brink of the fiery furnace, and kept out of it only by the thread of life, which may be broke by any bit of bread you eat, by slipping of a foot, by stumbling of a horse, and by hundreds of distempers, which, like so many lighted candles, are ready to burn the thread, and let your diseased souls drop into the pit for ever.

3 When God shoots the arrow of conviction into the conscience, do not seek to shake it out till it reach the end for which it was sent. Be not like those who go to their callings to work it out, or to their cups to drink it out, or to their beds to sleep it out, or to their games to divert it out. But go rather to your knees, and pray that the wound may be medicinal and saving, that it may be as deep as needful, and the power of the Lord may be present to heal you: Apply to Jesus your Physician, that he may take out the arrow with his own hand, and bring the balm of Gilead to the wound.

4. Apply to the holy Spirit, who is the author of saving convictions, and implore his gracious influences; for the dry bones stir not till he breathe upon them. It is the office of the Holy Ghost to apply Christ's purchase to you, and saving convictions are the first part of that purchase he makes you partake of. Plead then with him, "Lord, come and do thine office, art thou not as willing to apply as Christ was to purchase? Is not the Spirit the applier as freely promised as Christ the Physician? Is not that a free promise, Ezek. xxxvi. "I will put my Spirit within you?" It depends upon no condition in us, only it is said, verse 37. "I will be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." And now, Lord, I am enquiring for it as I can, O do it for me.

II. I come next to address those diseased souls who are sensible and feeling, sick sinners, who are convinced of their distressed case by nature, and their need of the physician; you are the proper objects of his care. Mat. ix. 12, 13. and xviii. 11. Luke xviii. 13, 14 I exhort all such to come and employ Christ the only Physician of Israel, to heal your wounded souls. Delay not; for your disease is mortal; your wound is deep; the sooner you come, the better. Lose not the season when Christ is dealing with you by his Spirit; but when the waters are stirred, see that you presently step in, that you may be made whole.

Quest. How shall we improve the season, so as to be cured of our disease?

Ans. Observe these directions:

1. As you ought to be concerned about your disease, see that your trouble and concern be of the right kind. Be grieved for it, not only because it brings ruin upon yourselves, but mainly because it unfits you for glorifying God, and enjoying communion with him. Be troubled both for the general corruption of your natures, and for the particular plagues of your own hearts; point out those to your Physician which are most grievous to you, whether it be hardness, blindness, unbelief, backsliding, pride, earthly-mindedness, &c. Every man that would have access to God, must "know the plague of his own heart," 1 Kings viii. 38. Christ would have every man to point forth his ailment to him, with the blind man, Luke xviii. 41. "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" Let your answer be ready like his. "Lord, that I may receive my sight," Lord, that my unbelief may be removed, that my hardness may be cured, my backsliding healed, &c. Lay open all your sores, and hide nothing from your Physician.

2. Come to Christ with a firm belief and persuasion of his power and ability to heal you. This is the thing he demands of every sick soul, as of those two blind men that followed him crying for help, Mat ix. 28. "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" Believe ye that I have all fulness in me to answer all your wants, to cure all your diseases, and suit all your cases? O for a strong faith in Christ's power! This doth greatly glorify him.

3. Plead importunately with your Physician for a cure; he allows you to do it, and to fill your mouths with arguments for that end.

1. Plead the sovereign efficacy of his blood, that it is a remedy of infinite virtue, and can heal the most desperate disease; say with the leper; Mat. viii. 2. "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean; as if he had said, Thou mayst do with me as thou wilt, but one thing I am sure of, thou canst heal me: So say you, Lord, I am sure thy blood can cure and cleanse me, though I were as vile with sin as the leper was with his disease, so that if I die in my sins, it will not be for want of virtue in Christ's blood. the balm of Gilead is all-sufficient. As the leper's argument prevailed

with Christ to cure him, so a strong faith, and persuasion of the virtue of Christ's blood, will engage him to heal you.

2. Plead the freeness of his balm to all diseased souls, that the fountain of his blood runs freely to the worst of lepers, that he shuts out none from it, but invites all to come; that those who had the deepest wounds and most dangerous diseases, have come upon the invitation, and been made whole, as Manasseh, the woman of Samaria, Mary Magdalene, the penitent thief, Paul, the Corinthians, &c.—Say, Lord, I come with the rest upon thy call, O do not shut me out.

3. Plead your inability to do any thing for your own healing, as the impotent man did with Christ at the pool of Bethseda, John v. 6, 7 In like manner say, " Lord, I have been many yea. at the side of the pool, near the healing balm, but I am impotent, and unable of myself to move one step towards it, far less to apply it: no man or angel can cure my lameness; Lord, if thou do not pity and help me, I must even die and perish within view of the balm."

4. Plead with Jesus Christ, that he alone is the only qualified person in heaven or earth to be your Physician.—" Lord, thou hast infinite knowledge and skill to discern my disease, with its symptoms and causes, and to prescribe the proper remedies. Thou hast infinite compassions to pity me, and infinite power to relieve me, when I cry for help. Yea, thou hast human bowels and tenderness of heart also to sympathize with me in distress. Nay, thou hast a commission from heaven to heal such diseased souls as mine, which thou didst chearfully accept. And thou hast come a long journey from heaven to earth to visit the sick, and proclaim thy commission to them. Thou hast assumed my nature, and taken a human body, that it might be pierced to send forth a precious balm for my wounds; and hast graciously promised to apply this balm to all who come to thee, Hos. xiv. 1. 4. John vi. 3. Rev. xxii. 17. Yea, thou hast come to those who never sought thee for healing, Isa. lxv. 1. 4. Luke x. 33, 34. And shall not I get healing when I am earnestly seeking it?"

5. Plead the glory of his name, and the credit of his blood: Say, " Lord, both these will suffer, if a poor wounded creature, that relies upon the faith of thy word, and the virtue of thy blood, should be disappointed and perish."—This was Moses' argument with God for pity to the Israelites, Numb. xiv. 15, 16. " The nations will speak, saying, Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land, which he sware unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness." So do you plead, " Lord, what will the devils and atheists say?" Will they not blaspheme thy name, and reproach thy blood, and say, Because thy power and blood were not able to heal these diseased souls, thou lettest them perish?

6. Plead the mercifulness of his nature, with David, Psal. xli. 4. " Lord, be merciful to me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee." Thou art a merciful as well as a skilful Physician. O let not a poor sick soul, that depends on the mercy of thy nature, and merit of thy blood, for healing, go away disappointed.

But poor sensible sinners have many objections against themselves.

Object. I. I know, (saith one) Christ is a great Physician, but I am not worthy that he should come under my roof to heal such a one as me.

Ans. 1. There was never one healed because of his worthiness, for it is only the unworthy that Christ came to heal and save, 1 Tim. i. 15. Rev. iii. 17, 18. Matth. ix. 12, 13. 2. The more sensible a soul is of unworthiness, and humbled for it, the more welcome he is to that Physician, Psal. x. 17. Isa. lxvi. 2. Mat. v. 3. Luke xviii. 14. 3. If you come not to be healed till you be worthy, you will never come, for where can a poor worthless sinner get any worthy or desirable qualification but from Christ only? You must come to Christ for every thing that is valuable. 4. Seeing Christ doth expressly call the most unworthy to come to him for healing, Rev. iii. 17, 18. 1 John iii. 23. this should encourage you to do it. It was his call that encouraged the blind man to come to him, Mark x. 47. " Be of good comfort, rise, he calleth thee." Christ's calls and commands should be obeyed by the unworthy as well as others.

Object. II. But I fear (saith another) I am not within Christ's commission, and how then can I expect healing from him?

Ans. It is high presumption for any man to intrude into God's secret decrees, which no angel dare do: This suggestion then is not from God, but from the devil, to drive sinners into despair, or to keep them away from Christ: For the Spirit of Christ tells us that " secret things belong unto God, and the things which are revealed belong unto us," Deut. xxix. 29. Now, seeing it is revealed to you that Christ was sent to save and heal the lost and sick, the bruised and broken-hearted, the halt and maimed, the wretched and miserable, the poor and blind, and calls such to come to him for healing, Mat. xviii. 11. Luke iv. 18. Luke xiv. 21. Rev. ii. 17, 18. And seeing you cannot but own that some of these characters belong to you; this should encourage you to come to Christ with expectation.

Object. III. But my wounds are very deep, my disease is of a desperate nature.

Ans. All diseases are alike to Christ's blood; it can as easily cure the greatest as the smallest, 1 John i. 7. What disease more deadly than that of the three thousand who imbrued their hands in Christ's blood? Acts ii. and yet they were all healed by it.

Object. IV. But I am sick of many diseases at once.

Ans. The balm of Christ's blood can as soon cure many diseases as one.

Object. V. But my diseases are old and inveterate, and my sores have run many years.

Ans. Christ hath cured many such; the thief on the cross had an old festering disease, and so had Zaccheus, for he had wronged many, yet this mighty Physician cured them both. He cured many old distempers in mens' bodies, to assure us of the virtue of his blood to cure old diseases in our souls. Therefore he cured the woman's issue of blood that had run twelve years. He loosed a woman that Satan had kept bound eighteen years. He cured the impotent man at Bethesda that had an infirmity thirty-eight years. All which is recorded for our encouragement to come to Christ with our old sores.

Object. VI. I have relapsed into the same disease, and can I expect healing?

Ans. Relapses indeed are most dangerous, yet Christ doth undertake to heal those who relapse, Hos. xiv. 2. and he actually healed Peter, though he relapsed into the same sin.

Object. VII. But I fear I have no right to Christ's blood.

Ans. Seeing all the ends of the earth are bid to look to it for healing, and Christ hath appointed his gospel to be preached, and his balm to be offered to every creature, you have a full and sufficient warrant to come and make use of it.

Object. VIII. But I have long slighted the offers of this balm.

Ans. The more heinous thy sin, or deep thy wound be, thou hast the greater need of this sovereign medicine: And go not to make thy wound deeper by a new refusal.

Object. IX. I have essayed to go and apply this balm, but find I have no strength to do it.

Ans. If you have sincere desires to accept and use it, you have some beginnings of faith; and therefore, improve these desires by making frequent essays to receive Christ and apply his blood. Believing is a duty you should be oft essaying and aiming at, even before you find God's Spirit effectually concurring: This you do in other duties; for though you cannot pray or praise, communicate, meditate, or sanctify the sabbath aright without the Spirit, yet forbear you not to aim at these duties, even when you find not the Spirit at work; and neither should you in this case. Though you have no power to believe savingly, yet still be aiming at it, and believe as you can. The Spirit will pity your weakness, when you are making honest attempts to do his will; therefore be aiming to approve the device of redeeming love, to part with your own righteousness, to say Amen to the well-ordered covenant, to take a crucified Christ for your All, and venture your all in his hand. And though you often fail in your attempts, yet still try it again, and at length the Spirit will help you to stretch out faith's hand, and fasten it on Christ and his wounds to your comfort.

Object. X. But I am afraid Christ is not willing to apply his blood to heal me.

Ans. What more evidences of willingness can you ask from Christ? You have both the word and writ of him that is faithful and true, and his oath also, John vi. 37. Ezek. xxxiii. 11. And to all these he adds outward signs and seals which are visible to your bodily eyes in the sacrament, to assure you of his willingness. Also his frankness to heal all the bodies of men that came to him while on earth, is given you as a pledge of his willingness to cure your souls; for you cannot imagine he would be more compassionate to mens bodies than to their souls, seeing it was his great errand to seek and heal souls, and to shed his blood for that end. May we all have faith in that blood, for Christ's sake. Amen.

ADVICES TO THOSE WHO ARE RECOVERING.

SERMON VIII.

On JEREM viii. 22.—*Is there no balm, &c.*

III. IN prosecuting my exhortation from this doctrine, there is a third sort I proposed to address; namely, Those who are already in the way of healing and recovery, through the Physician's applying the balm of his blood to them for removing the guilt of sin, and renewing of their natures, whereby the force of their disease is broken, and they in the way of recovery. To these I offer some advices.

1. Thankfully admire the generous kindness and free love of your Physician, in distinguishing you from the rest of the world. He hath done that for you which he hath not done for thousands, nay, for millions of your fellow-creatures, and even for many in those very families and congregations where you dwell. He hath healed your natures when they were sick unto death; he hath pardoned your sins, when they were sinking under guilt. O bless and praise him with David, Psal. ciii. 1, 2, &c Christ expects a tribute of praise from healed souls, and observes how they pay it, as in the case of the lepers, Luke xvii. 18. "Were there not ten cleansed (saith he) but where are the nine?" There he counted their number, and found nine healed who returned him no thanks. And this he censures as base ingratitude to God.

2. Be earnest with God for thorough and perfect healing, that the disease of sin may be wholly subdued Let the work of sanctification be still carried on; for this is a continued healing of your nature, till at last the cure be completed at death.

3. Pity your relations and neighbours, who are still sick unto death, and do what you can for their cure. Especially pity and pray for your children who are sick of the plague you conveyed to them. Recommend to them the balm of Gilead, and the Physician there. Tell them your experience of the Physician's skill and tenderness, and the virtue of his balm. "O come and see; he hath cured me of a deep wound, an old disease of a hard heart, of dreadful atheism, unbelief, blindness, earthliness, pride, passion," &c.

4. Take proper means to preserve health when restored; such as, 1. Live in a good and wholesome air, that is, in the society of God's people. 2. Keep good hours, and a wholesome diet, that is, stated times every day for the soul's refreshment, by reading, meditation and prayer. 3. Use proper exercises, such as the exercise of faith, prayer, hearing, communicating and Christian converse; for spiritual sloth and idleness greatly prejudice the soul's health.

5. Beware of whatever may occasion a relapse into your disease, such as the temptations and snares which satan will lay in your way to draw you into sin; carefully avoid them, and pray for strength against them. And particularly beware of unnecessary going into infected company, lest you catch the disease from them, for sin is most contagious.

6. Let all those be the objects of your special love, who have got their natures healed, and the image of God restored to them. Love them, though they be poor and low in the world, and even though they differ in several things from you: for if you love them only who are of your way of thinking in all things, that is liker a sectarian, or party-love, than a true Christian love. For it would say, you love saints more for their likeness to you, than for their likeness and relation to Christ. Now, the true motive of Christian love is a manliness and love to Christ more than to you. And surely, all these being members of the same body, and children of the same family, who will spend a whole eternity together in admiring and praising the Lamb, should love one another while sojourning in the wilderness below. Christ gives this as a mark of his disciples, and those who are healed by him.

7. Rejoice and bless God, when you hear of many sick souls flocking to the balm of Gilead and the Physician there, and when there are hopeful signs of their healing and recovery. Look upon these as the most refreshing news that can be brought to your ears.

8. Learn patience under the distress of your bodies, seeing you have got healing to your souls. Do not murmur at it, seeing God sees it needful for your soul's health.

Lastly. Be concerned for the diseased land wherein you live. If you have got healing to yourselves, you ought to have public spirits to be affected with the case of a sick

land and church, especially at a time when it may be said of her, as of Judah, Isaiah i. 5, 6. " The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint; from the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment." So alas, it may be said of our land, the whole body politic and ecclesiastic is sadly diseased; our kings and princes, nobility, gentry, magistrates, ministers, burgesses, commons, and all ranks, are full of wounds and sores.

Quest. How is it we are to shew our concern for the land in such distress?

Ans. Two ways: 1. By earnest prayer for it. 2. By using the means in our power to heal it.

I. Spread out the case of the land in prayer before the great Physician of Israel, and plead that he may look on it with an eye of compassion; yea, humbly expostulate with God about the church's case, like Jeremiah, Jer. xiv. 9. " Hast thou utterly rejected Judah? hath thy soul loathed Zion? Why hast thou smitten us, and there is no healing for us?" Alas, no Physician nor balm on earth can heal us; no ordinance, sermons, nor sacraments, can cure us. All the warnings, reproofs, and judgments in the world cannot heal our wounds. O, if Israel's Physician would come and do it himself! The Lord hath justly smitten us for our sins, and is threatening to smite us more. Now, what can we do in that case but look to him for pity, and plead that the hand which hath smitten us may also heal us; for nothing will heal us till he come with the balm of Gilead, his blood and Spirit, to our wounds. This balm can heal nations and churches, as well as single persons. O then look earnestly to that blood that quencheth the fire of wrath for us, and purchaseth every thing that is good to us; and plead, for the sake of that blood, that God would revive his work in the land, breathe upon the dry bones, and make a stir amongst them; pour out a spirit of conversion and of reformation upon men of all stations, magistrates, ministers, elders, parents, and teachers of youth, as well as the young generation, that they may turn to the Lord and exert themselves for bearing down vice, and pro oting Christian knowledge and piety in the land. Let all cry to God to rebuke the winds of error and division, that truth may triumph, and breaches may be healed; that ministers and people may have one heart and one mind, to "serve the Lord with one consent." And thus would the health of the church and nation be recovered. I might adduce many motives to press you to plead for repentance and healing to the whole land; I shall mention a few.

1. This has been the commendable practice of God's people in all ages, as of Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, &c. as in Exodus xxxii. 11, 12. Psalm li. 18. Isa. lxii. 1. Jer. ix. 1. Dan. ix. 17. And this is what the Lord requires of every one, Psalm cxxii. 6. Joel ii. 17.

2. Prayers put up for a sick church or nation are most agreeable to God, and have a sort of commanding power with him, Isaiah xlv. 2. He puts great honour upon such prayers, and makes them means of producing marvellous effects and deliverances, as in Exod. xvii. 11, 13. and xxxii. 14. And we read of the Lord's seeking out such wrestlers that he may honour them, Ezek. xxii 30. " And I sought for a man among them that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it." These are the men that God delights to honour.

3. The consideration of the hand you have had, by your sins, in bringing on diseases upon the church and land, should excite you to wrestle and plead for healing to her. The laws of common humanity should even oblige you to this duty.

4. They who pray most for Zion in her distressed and wounded case, shall be the largest sharers in her comforts when God brings healing to her. These shall reap most plentifully of her joys when the harvest comes, who now sow most of the seed of tears for her in her trouble.

II. In the 2*d* place, I said every one should use all the means in their power for healing the church and land. God has appointed men in different stations and capacities to be as under-physicians to bring a kind of balm to a diseased land; such as magistrates, ministers, elders, &c. These, by wholesome laws, instructions, and examples, may contribute very much, through the divine blessing, to the healing of our disease. Nay, private Christians, who are in the meanest stations, if they do what is incumbent upon them, may have some share in this blessed work of healing a sick land. As sometimes we have heard of great cures effectuated by mean and obscure persons, when learned physicians had given over the case as desperate; so private Christians may be instrumental in bringing about our cure, when those of greater power and skill look on our case as hopeless. They may be of great use to recommend religion to the world by conforming their practice to its rules, and adorning their profession with shining holiness and Christian virtues, and also by avoiding all dishonesty and injustice, pride and passion, malice and revenge, bitterness and evil-speaking, and every thing that may beget prejudice in the carnal world against Christianity, who are too ready to impute the faults of its professors to the religion itself. Private Christians also may bring their healing prayers and tears, and pour them out before the Lord in behalf of the diseased land. They may act faith on the blood of Christ, our sovereign balm, and plead it with God, " Lord, was not this blood shed for the wounds of the church, as well as of particular believers! Is it not by Christ's stripes the church must be healed, as well as every individual member? Lord, thou hast a tender sympathy with every member in distress, and wilt thou not much more regard the whole body! Lord, she whom thou lovest is sick, and nothing can save her life but the balm of Gilead: This, thou alone hast, and none else can apply it. Make haste unto her, O God of Zion, thou art her help and deliverer: O Lord, make no tarry, let thy power be present to heal her." Thus we see men of all ranks may be useful as under-physicians for healing a sick land.

Object. But, say some, the case of the church and land seems desperate, and her wounds incurable, and what then can be done by us for her?

Ans. However dangerous her case may be, yet it is not quite so desperate as to make us give over all hopes and endeavours. I shewed before what grounds of hope we have yet left us. And though the case were more desperate than it is, we ought still to be in the use of appointed means, and never distrust God in any strait whatsoever. We ought always to look to him who is " wise in heart, and mighty in strength," Job. ix. 4. And remember the Lord's question to Abraham in a desperate case, Gen. xviii. 14. " Is any thing too hard for the Lord!" Unbelief stumbleth at God's power, when it seeth no visible means or instruments for bringing events about, nor considering how easy it is for

God, when he doth not find means, to create them; and, when he pleaseth, even to work without them. It is the property of true faith not to make haste, or prescribe to God as to means or times of working, but to wait his leisure, and depend upon him in the greatest extremities.

It puts honour upon God to trust him when our case seems most hopeless, and even to make the desperateness of our case an argument in prayer to God, and a ground for faith to fasten upon, so as to plead with him the more earnestly and confidently for help, and to say, "Lord, it will be the more for thy honour and glory to undertake the cure of our disease, when matters are come to this extremity, that all besides are giving over our case as hopeless and desperate." The news of the balm of Gilead, and the Physician there, should strengthen our faith, and support our hopes under the most deadly disease, and make us lift up our head, and look out for him. As old Jacob, when he was just a-dying, yet, at the news of his son Joseph being near, he strengthened himself, and sat up on his bed expecting him; so should we, when ready to faint on the bed of our languishing case, endeavour to lift up our hearts at the good news of the balm and Physician of Israel, and say, Is not Jesus Christ the great Physician commissioned by the Father to heal a poor wounded church and land! This is the time of her need and great strait, and a proper season for him to step in for help. Both in scripture and experience we find the time of the church's extremity is God's usual opportunity of working and appearing for her, as in the case of Isaac, when at the point of being sacrificed, and also in the case of the Jews, when ready to be cut off by Haman's bloody plot. When there was but an hair's breadth betwixt them and destruction, God stepped in and saved them. It is in the mount that the Lord will be seen; so the text may be rendered, Gen. xxii. 14.

Quest. Why doth God let the distress of his church and people come to such extremity, before he interpose for them?

Ans. He doth it for glorious and wise ends: 1. To glorify his wisdom in finding out a remedy, when we can see no appearance of it. The Physician's skill is most discovered in mastering a distemper, when it is become most inveterate and hopeless.

2. To shew his pity and compassion to his people, when their condition is most destitute. David depended upon God's pity in such a case, Psalm xxvii. 10. "When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." So when enemies think God hath forgotten his church, and men have cast her off, and they begin to scoff at Zion, and call her an outcast, then God seeth meet to shew his pity, and take her under his care, and heal her wounds, Jer. xxx. 16, 17.

3. To excite the spirit of prayer in his people. It was for that end the Lord suffered his people to be brought to great extremity at the Red Sea, Exod. xiv. 10. "The children of Israel lift up their eyes, and behold the Egyptians marched after them, and they were sore afraid, and cried unto the Lord." When they were in great distress they cried to the Lord, but not before. So Christ slept in the ship, and let the tempest rise to a great height, to bring his disciples to their knees, Mat. viii. 24, 25. "They came and awoke him, saying, Lord save us, we perish." At such a time their prayers are doubled, and most fervent, as in Psalm cxxiii. 3. "Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, for we are exceedingly filled with contempt." And it is to be observed, when such a spirit of fervent prayer is poured out upon the church, it is a sure presage of her adversaries ruin; so we see it was in Zech. xii. 9, 10. "I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem; and I will pour upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications." If this spirit were poured out upon the inhabitants of Scotland, it would be a good presage of the Lord's appearing for her.

4. God puts off to extremity, to draw out his people's faith and dependance wholly upon himself. He cuts off the branches of earthly supports, to make them clasp to the body of the tree, even to him who is the everlasting God; and to bring them to reflect upon what he hath done for them in former extremities, and to act faith upon his power and pity, which he exerted for them in days of old. Thus did Jehoshaphat in his great strait, 2 Chron. xx. 7, 12. "Art thou not our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people? We have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee." God would have the deliverances he hath given us in former straits to draw out our faith upon him in new trials, and hence he says to Israel, when under fears of the Canaanites, Deut. vii. 18. "Thou shalt not be afraid of them, but shall well remember what the Lord thy God did unto Pharaoh and all Egypt."

5. To humble his people, and bring down the pride of their hearts. God brought his people to great extremities in the wilderness, and his great design therein was to humble them, as he tells them, Deut. viii. 2. There is a woful root of pride in men's hearts that must be broken and subdued, before they can be meet for heaven. This root is oft breaking out in discontent, murmuring, quarrelling, bitterness, passion, and backwardness to submit to God's will. Now it costs much labour and pains to bring down such proud hearts to the will of God; they must even be reduced to great extremities, before they be sufficiently humbled, and brought calmly to submit, without any rising of heart against God. Hence it is said, Psalm cvii. 12. "He brought down their heart with labour." And indeed it is a happy presage and forerunner of God's gracious appearing for his people, when the proud swellings of their hearts are quelled, and they are brought to a silent submission under his hand, Psalm lvi. 10. "Be still and know that I am God, I will be exalted among the Heathen," &c.

6. To take his people off from all creature-confidences and lying refuges, which they are prone to look to in straits and difficulties. Great extremities drive men from trusting in the arm of flesh, and cause them to flee to the arm of Jehovah, with whom is everlasting strength. In such cases they are made to cry, as in Psalm lx. 11, "O God give us help from trouble, for vain is the help of man." Then it is we are best qualified to receive help from God, when we are brought to own the insufficiency of creatures to relieve us, and supply our needs. The man that had the lunatic child in sad distress, was in a fair way of getting a cure to him from Christ, when he came to be humbled by his disappointments, to have his eyes turned away from all human help, and was glad to apply to Christ as his last refuge, Matth. xvii. 14, 15, &c. There we see he came and humbly kneeled down before him, saying, "Lord, have mercy upon my son, for he is lunatic, and sore vexed," &c. "And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him." As if he had said, "Lord, the case is desperate and incurable as to human help, and therefore I must

look to thee alone for a cure: I have now none else to go to but thyself." Well then, said our Lord, since that is the case with thee, "Bring him hither to me," verse 17. and he presently cured him. O that every one would bring their desperate diseases, in like manner, straight to Christ, with hearts humbled by disappointments, weaned from creature-confidences, and depending on Christ as their only Physician, and all-sufficient help. Were we once brought to this frame, Christ would in mercy step in and say, "Bring the disease hither to me." It is surely owing to our not coming off from ourselves, and from all creature-help, and to our not bringing our cases to Christ immediately, that our diseases are so long continued.

From all which the wisdom of God doth manifestly appear, in letting his church and people be brought to great extremities, before he interpose for their help and relief. But seeing these extremities are Christ's opportunities for manifesting forth his glory, we ought not to despair in the darkest case, but always "to look to and wait upon him that hideth himself from the house of Jacob." Nay, we should do it, even then when we see every man with his hands on his loins in the utmost anguish and agony, as women in travail, like those in Jer. xxx 6, 7. where we see a most surprising instance of God's mercy to Jacob, even then when his trouble comes to that extremity, that nothing in the world could match it, he pities him, and subjoins that merciful word, "But he shall be saved out of it."

And it should encourage us the more to look to and wait upon God, in this dark day, when we hear of his mercy and goodness in pitying other nations and countries, when in melancholy circumstances, by granting a down-pouring of his Spirit on them for reviving his decayed work, and for convincing and converting multitudes of perishing souls by the preaching of the gospel, making them cry, "What shall we do to be saved?" and giving them no rest till they close with Christ their Surety, and become new creatures. And it is to be remarked that God has been graciously pleased to begin this work in New England, and other parts of America, at a time when they abounded with complaints of darkness and deadness, decay of religion, backsliding, woful errors and divisions, as it is in Scotland at this day. These late surprising and well-attested instances of God's mercy and sovereign grace, do shew us how easy it is for God to bring his balm to a diseased land, when in the most hopeless case; and to qualify and raise up instruments to preach his gospel with such energy and power, as to rouse multitudes of secure souls, and make them "fly to Christ in clouds, and like flocks of doves to their windows." He can take away the "sins of a land in one day, and make a nation to be born at once. He can shew wonders to the dead, and make the dead arise and praise him." So that none should distrust him in the most desperate condition.

Well, then, seeing Christ is a Physician so full of power, and also full of compassion, whence is it that our diseased land is unhealed, and multitudes are daily dying of their wounds? Surely the blame is not to be laid upon Christ, but upon ourselves, and our unwillingness to come to him. Ah! we chuse death, rather than healing from Christ. He may take up that complaint against us, as he did against the Jews in the days of his flesh, "Ye will not come to me that ye might get healing, and live: How oft would I have gathered you to be healed, but ye would not?" And thus he complained of their fathers also, Psalm lxxxi. "My people would not hearken to my voice; Israel would have none of me!" Oh! my dear friends, are you to follow their cursed example, to reject your healer? Or what are you resolving to do? What think ye of Christ the Physician? Do you believe our report of him, or no? The people of other nations are giving ear, and believing our report of him, and flocking to him to be healed, and why do you sit still? Are they yielding and submitting to Christ, as their Saviour and Lord? Are they putting the crown on his head, and doing him honour? Why then should ye be the last to bring back the King to his house? Will ye be the last that will do him honour as a King, or give him employment as a Physician? Have ye not as much need of him, and as many wounds and diseases as others? O come then also, take the gospel balm, and glorify the Physician of Israel. Amen.

THE GLORY OF THE MINISTRATION OF THE GOSPEL.

SERMON IX.

On 2 Cor iii. 8.—*How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?*

In this chapter the apostle runs a comparison between the Old Testament and the New, the law of Moses and the gospel of Christ, and shews the excellency of the latter above the former. He calls the Old Testament dispensation, or law of Moses, the "ministration of death and condemnation;" because it discovered sin, and denounced curses against it; and the law was given with thunder, lightning, and much terror. Yet, at the same time, (he says) this dispensation was in some respects glorious, ver. 7. Why? It was glorious in the minister of it, Moses, who had a shining glory in his face when he brought the tables down from the mount. Glorious, in regard of the glorious manifestation of God at the giving of the law: Glorious, in respect of the gospel discoveries which were made by the types and sacrifices of the Old Testament. But then, the apostle shews, that the gospel dispensation did far excel it in glory, and, on that account, calls it the "ministration of life," because it pointed out the way to life and salvation in a plainer manner: And the "ministration of righteousness," because it discovered a perfect righteousness for sinners to rest upon. Also he calls it in the text the "ministration of the Spirit," because of the great effusion of the Spirit that attended the gospel-dispensation, especially in the first ages. The Holy Spirit did then remarkably "bear testimony to the word of his grace," by his inward operations upon the hearers of it. And this was it that made the ministration of the gospel far more glorious than that of the law; for under the law there was but little of the Spirit let out for the conversion of souls, in respect of what was given under the gospel The outletting of the Spirit in such an abundant manner made the gospel-dispensation far more glorious than that of the legal; which gives ground for the following observation:

Doctrine. The effusion of the Spirit with a preached gospel makes a very glorious dispensation. Which I shall handle in the following method:

I. Premise some things concerning the nature and office of the Holy Spirit.

II. Shew when the gospel may be said to be a ministration of the Spirit to the hearers of it.

III. That there are some remarkable seasons when a preached gospel may be called the ministration of the Spirit in an eminent way.

IV. Enquire in what respects the ministration of the Spirit is a glorious dispensation.

V. Make application.

I. The *first* thing proposed is, to premise some things concerning the nature and office of the holy Spirit. And, 1. The word Spirit, in the Hebrew RUACH, in the Greek PNEUMA, signifies *wind, air,* or *breathing.* It is sometimes used to point forth the nature and essence of God abstractly, as in John iv. 24. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." But most commonly it doth signify, as in the text, the third person of the *holy Trinity.* And sometimes he is called the *Spirit of the Father,* and sometimes the *Spirit of the Son,* which shews their *oneness,* and that he proceeds from both.

2. Our Lord Jesus Christ, by his undertaking in the covenant of redemption, and his sacrifice on the cross, obtained the ministration of the Holy Spirit to an elect world. This great gift and blessing, which is of inestimable value, is our dear Lord's purchase and legacy to his people, which he designed for to supply his bodily absence from them when he went to heaven, John xvi. 7, 8. "If I depart I will send him unto you, and when he is come, he will reprove," &c. The Spirit, being Christ's legacy and donation, should much endear the gift to us. Some would rejoice to possess a relique or any thing that belonged to our Saviour in the days of his flesh. The Papists boast of some bits of the tree whereon he suffered, though Christ left no such things for our use or devotion: But here is a precious relique and legacy, which Christ, in love to his people, left them when going away, even his holy Spirit, as his resident, to abide with them for ever.

3. The church, under the Old Testament, had a certain measure of the Spirit given her upon Christ's account. But the great effusion of the Spirit was reserved to the New Testament times, and given after Christ's ascension, according to his blessed compact with the Father, Acts ii. 33. This promise of the Holy Ghost is called *the promise,* by way of eminency, as including all the rest. And this effusion was frequently foretold as the great privilege of gospel-times, Isaiah xxxv. 6, 7. and xliv. 3. Ezek. xi. 9. and xxxvi 27. Joel ii. 28, 29. So that, let men reproach the Holy Spirit with his influences and operations, as they will, he was prophesied of and expected of old, as the great blessing under the gospel: And men's despising him now as they do, is but a fulfilling of Christ's word, John xiv. 17. "Yet the world cannot receive him, because it neither seeth nor knoweth him:" That is, they have no experience of his work in them. But for us not to own and avow the Spirit of God in his work and operations, is in effect to be ashamed of Christ's precious promise and legacy which he left us, and to be guilty of the basest ingratitude to our dear Redeemer.

4. The great office of the Holy Spirit, in elect souls, is to be the applier of Christ's purchase to them, which he doth by "teaching them and guiding them into all truth," John xiv. 26. and xvi. 13. "By convincing and reproving them of sin," John xvi. 7. "By renewing and sanctifying their souls," Titus iii. 5. 1 Peter i. 2. "By mortifying and subduing sin in them," Rom. viii. 13. "By helping their infirmities in prayer, and interceding for them," Rom. viii. 26. By *comforting* them, and *witnessing* to their adoption, John xiv. 16. Rom. viii. 16. Wherefore, seeing the Holy Ghost is the applier of Christ's purchase, and is promised by Christ to supply his absence to us, he ought to be received and valued as the great blessing of the gospel-church.

5. Christ hath taught us to make the giving of his Holy Spirit the chief petition and principal blessing we should ask of God, Luke xi. 9, 10. and ii 12, 13. There he enjoins us to be importunate for this blessing, to ask, to seek, to knock; and, for our encouragement, he promises, verse 13 that "our heavenly Father shall give the holy Spirit to them that ask him." So the apostle Paul prays for the inward operations of the Spirit to the Ephesians, as the greatest blessing he can seek for them, Eph. iii. 16. For it is he that works faith, love, joy, peace, meekness, and all other graces in us, Gal. v. 22.

II. The *second* thing in the method is, to shew when the gospel may be said to be the ministration of the Spirit to the hearers of it. And it is so when the Holy Spirit doth concur with the preaching of the word, for making saving impressions upon mens hearts and consciences, and gracious changes in their lives and conversations. As, for instance,

1. When he is pleased to make close and particular application of the reproofs and threatenings of the word to the sinner's conscience, saying, as Nathan to David, "Thou art the man," thou art the guilty sinner that is threatened, cursed, and condemned by the law. Thy life is unholy, thy nature is polluted, thy heart is full of plagues; yea, thy soul is black with sin, and hateful in the sight of a holy God! And what wilt thou do to be saved?

2. When the arrows of conviction are so fastened in the conscience, that the man cannot shake them out; he hath got such discoveries of sin's evil and the soul's danger, that his mind cannot be easy: No earthly comfort or enjoyment can satisfy him while he is within the flood-mark of wrath. He becomes anxious and inquisitive after the way of salvation, as those, Acts ii. 37. and xvi. 30. His questions are not, What shall I do for health to a sickly body? or for bread to a pinched family? But what shall I do to be saved from the wrath that is to come?

3. The gospel is the ministration of the Spirit to the hearers, when they are brought to despair of help and deliverance by any course or contrivance of their own; and are driven from all other refuges besides Christ. When they are made to see that no ordinance, no duties nor performances, no frames, no righteousness, nor attainments of their own, can screen from wrath, nor yield any rest to the sole of their foot. When they are convinced they are in a shipwrecked perishing state in the first Adam, and that they have no other plank of salvation to trust to but Jesus Christ, the second Adam. When they see themselves sinking upon the broken bottom of the old covenant, and that there is no way to be saved but to leap from it to the rock of salvation, Christ, and only to trust to and hang by the clefts of that rock.

4. The Spirit concurs, when the flinty rock is turned into a water-pool, as in Psalm cxiv. 8. that is, when the hard heart is softened and melted down into streams of penitential tears for sin, both original and actual; and particularly for wounding and piercing of Christ by sin, and for long slighting him and keeping him at the door of the heart: and when the soul is brought to be deeply humbled for mispent

time, misimproved sabbaths, offers of free grace, days of health, and precious opportunities of salvation.

5. The gospel is the ministration of the Spirit, when thereby light doth shine into the understanding, discovering the excellency of the remedy provided for lost sinners, the ability and fulness of Christ, the sufficiency of his righteousness, and the suitableness of his offices and covenant for all our wants and miseries. And when the soul's desires are excited after Christ, and salvation through him, and made to cry, "O that I knew where to find him! O saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" And when the soul is brought to strong purposes and resolutions to venture to Christ, and cast itself at his feet, saying, "I will go into the King; if I perish, I perish."

6. When convinced sinners are determined to fall in with the gospel-device of salvation through Christ, heartily to approve of it, renounce their own righteousness for a Surety's righteousness, accept of Christ in all his offices, and surrender themselves unto the Lord. And when they are brought to hate sin, as the enemy and murderer of Christ, and to be willing to cut off a right hand, and pluck out a right eye for Christ, and to say with Ephraim, "What have I to do any more with idols?" and with David, "Depart from me, ye evil-doers, I will keep the commandments of my God."

7. The gospel is the ministration of the Spirit, when the hearts of hearers are loosed from the world and carnal things, and brought to some measure of spirituality and fixedness in God's service, and to find more delight and satisfaction therein than in all temporal enjoyments, and to say, "A day in God's courts is better to us than a thousand elsewhere. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house."

8. When they find life and vigour put in all their graces, their faith strengthened, and their love warmed to Christ above all things; the wind blows on their gardens, and the spices flow out. They have sensible liberty and loosing of bonds in their approaches to God; their clogs and straitenings are removed, and they are raised above their ordinary frame in prayer. Their hearts indite good matter, their tongue is like the pen of a ready writer concerning the King; their own hearts melt into tears of love and affection to Christ, and their words reach others about them with a pleasant perfume, and warm their hearts too.

9. When gospel-hearers do find the ordinances blessed means of communion and intercourse with God, so that they get sweet discoveries of the beauty of Christ and holiness, they are enabled to plead and feed upon the promises, they have peace and joy in believing, their doubts are removed, and they approach to the assurance of God's favour, of pardon of sin, and future glory: They breathe after a full conformity to Christ and his image, that holiness may be perfected in them, and the top-stone put upon the work of grace. That they may have no more complaints of indwelling sin, and imperfect services. And, under a sense of God's love in Christ, they endeavour to walk tenderly and circumspectly, to make their light shine before men, and to glorify God upon the earth. Then it is, and in the other cases above-mentioned, that the gospel may be said to be the ministration of the Spirit to the hearers of it. And surely, such a concurrence and effusion of the Spirit, with the preached word, would make it a very glorious dispensation. O to see such remarkable seasons of grace!

III. The *third* head proposed, was, to mention some of those seasons when the preaching of the gospel hath in an eminent way been the ministration of the Spirit. Of which take these instances:

1. In the apostles times, after Christ's ascension, there was a wonderful effusion of the Spirit with the gospel for the first planting of Christianity in the world, according to Christ's promise, Luke xxiv. 49. Acts i. 8. Then the gospel was a glorious ministration of the Spirit, when poor illiterate men were helped to preach with such powerful convincing energy, that their words pierced the consciences, and changed the minds and lives of thousands of their hearers at once. And though their doctrine was levelled against the pride and corruption of mens hearts, and tended to abolish the Pagan idolatry, as well as the Jewish sacrifices and ceremonies; and though it was derided by the learned men of that age, and opposed by the civil powers with the greatest violence; yet, under all these disadvantages, it spread with amazing success, so that in twenty or thirty years time, and before the apostles died, the gospel made its way thro' Judea, Syria, Greece, Asia, Egypt, Europe, and the whole vast Roman empire; so that every province in it had plenty of its professors. It was the holy Spirit that directed the arrows of the word into the consciences of men, with clear and convincing evidences of the truth thereof, and confirmed them so in the belief of it, that no trial nor temptation could shake them. It was the effusion of the Spirit with the gospel that gave the apostles and first preachers such extraordinary resolution, courage and hardiness, to encounter all difficulties, to bear up under the greatest miseries of life, and joyfully to sacrifice their all for Christ, and seal their doctrine with their blood.

2. The gospel was a glorious ministration of the Spirit at our *reformation from Popery* above two hundred years ago, whereby our reformers were assisted and carried through the greatest difficulties and opposition as in the apostles days. It was a small mean that God made the rise of his great work; to wit, Luther's appearing against Texellius for preaching up and selling his indulgences. Yet from this spark, such a fire kindled, that set all Europe in a flame, and enlightened many nations that were covered with the thick darkness of idolatry and superstition, in the knowledge of the truth. Such were the out-pouring and efficacy of the Spirit at that time, that the gospel made a swift progress in a short space by very mean instruments. The preachers employed were none of those who were famed in the world in that age for learning, honour, power, or greatness, but men that had lived in obscurity, and were loaded with reproach by their adversaries; such as Luther, Zuinglius, Melancton, Bucer, Calvin, Knox, Wishart, &c. yet these mean men went forth to confront those powers, which then made the earth to tremble; to wit, the Pope and his conclave (whose power was then most formidable) with the emperor of Germany, and the rest of the kings of Europe, who then gave their power to the beast. These instruments had no outward encouragement at first, none to support them, but all the world seemed to combine against them; yet, in spite of all opposition, the light of reformation brake up more and more; the gospel was preached with such power, that it prevailed against all the powers of the earth, and spread from city to city, so that in a few years many cities, states and countries, became subject to the truth, and that notwithstanding the bloody sword and flames of martyrdom which raged against those who owned it. O what a ministration of the Spirit did at that time attend Mr. George Wishart, when he preached in the town of Dundee, and through Angus,

Lothian, and several places of the west of Scotland! how wonderfully were the spirits of men then raised and affected with the word of God!

3. In the church of Scotland, not only at her reformation from Popery, but also frequently since, there have been solemn times of the out-pouring of the Spirit upon the land, and several places thereof, as in the year 1596, when the General Assembly renewed the national covenant in the little kirk at Edinburgh, and synods and presbyteries did the same after their example. Calderwood tells us how this practice was countenanced by God's Spirit, and attended with a general melting of heart and many tears. About the year 1625, in the west of Scotland, where the persecution, from prelates and their agents, was hottest for non-compliance with Perth articles, &c. God was pleased to countenance and support them with an extraordinary out-letting of his Spirit. This began in the parish of Stewarton, and hence was called by the profane of that time, the Stewarton sickness; but afterwards it spread through that country, and was very remarkable at Irvine under the ministry of Mr. David Dickson, which was accompanied with many convincing proofs of God's power, and many conversions. We have a famous instance of that power, in the solemn communion that was at the kirk of Shots, on the 20th of June 1630, when there was an extraordinary down-pouring of the Spirit attending the work; and especially the sermon on the Monday, 21st of June, by Mr. John Livingston, that made a great and unusual motion among the hearers, (who were there convened in great numbers of divers ranks,) so that near five hundred had a discernible change wrought upon them, and most of them proved lively Christians afterwards. Again, in the year 1638, God gave a general effusion of the Spirit, which rouzed up all ranks from their secure backslidden state, and made them agree to renew the national covenant. Then the spirits of men were greatly raised and wrought upon by the word, the ordinances were lively and longed after, both personal and national reformation were seriously set about. And this for several years was followed with a large harvest of souls brought in to Christ; many thousands flocked to him, like doves to their windows.—Likewise, in the late persecuting times under King Charles II., there were many gracious effusions with the preaching of the gospel in the fields.—Also at and after the late happy Revolution, the gospel was remarkably the ministration of the Spirit in many places of Scotland. Now, surely, when we consider the days of old, and the years of ancient times, we should excite ourselves to thankfulness for mercies past, and set our hope in God for mercies future; and likewise humble ourselves deeply before the Lord for those sins which have long made our heavens as brass, and withheld those blessed showers which were wont to fall upon our land.

4. We have very late and well-attested accounts of glorious effusions of the Spirit in several parts of America, and particularly New England; and some of them I have seen dated within these few months, bearing, "That their land, which was formerly dry and parched, is now like a watered garden; that Christ is riding in triumph by a preached gospel, and the inhabitants, by thousands, are submitting to him; that converts are numerous like the drops of dew from the womb of the morning. Yea, (say some letters) the work is so inexpressibly glorious, that it is impossible, by words, to make one, who is not an eye-witness, have just conceptions thereof." The reverend Messrs. Edward, Whitefield, and Tennent, have been honoured to have been very instrumental, by their labours, under God, to give a beginning to this blessed word, which I hope will continue and spread, to the praise and glory of free grace. And seeing God sent one of these instruments lately to Scotland, may his labours in it be followed with the same blessed effects. These showers of the Spirit, which are falling just now on several places, do encourage many to hope they are forerunners of God's giving a general revival to his work, and of his bringing about the glory of the latter days, which he hath promised to his church, when he will make his gospel everywhere a glorious ministration of the Spirit. Let us all cry for it, and for poor Scotland, that it may not be past by when other places are watered. May the Lord bless his word.—Amen.

IN WHAT RESPECTS THIS MINISTRATION IS GLORIOUS.

SERMON X.

On 2 Cor. iii. 8.—*How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?*

IV. IN the method I laid down for handling this subject, the 4th head was, To shew in what respect the ministration of the Spirit is a glorious dispensation. By "the ministration of the Spirit," we are to understand his gracious influences upon the hearers of the gospel, or his special operations and workings in their souls, together with the word, for their conversion and salvation. Now, these are glorious in several respects:

1. They come from a glorious Author, namely, the Holy Ghost, the third person of the glorious Trinity, eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son, and who, with them, is the only true God, being the same in nature and essence, and equal in power and glory.

2. They cost a glorious price. However the influences and operations of the Spirit be slighted and reproached by men, they are the dear purchase of our glorious Redeemer's blood.

3. They are promised and bestowed to supply the room and absence of a glorious person: even the room of our Emmanuel, while the heavens do receive him, and keep him from his people's view.

4. The ministration of the Spirit is glorious, in regard it is granted to believers as the earnest and pledge of a glorious inheritance, Eph. i. 13, 14. And also for qualifying and making them meet to dwell in the same for ever.

5. In regard it is necessary to display to us the glory and excellency of the person and offices of Christ, and his infinite fulness: and also doth open our eyes to discern all the glorious perfections of God in him.

6. The Spirit's ministration gives a glorious lustre to the souls of believers, and makes them shine with true beauty and splendour. Hence the King's daughter is said to be "all-glorious within, and their beauty to be as the olive-tree," &c.

7. The ministration of the Spirit with a preached gospel makes a glorious dispensation: chiefly upon the account of the glorious and surprising changes which it makes upon the hearts and lives of men at their conversion. How marvel-

lous were these changes upon the first pouring out of the Spirit after our Lord's ascension! Those first fruits of his purchase and promise were indeed very glorious. Then the ministration of the Spirit, like a mighty current, did carry all before it, and conquered thousands at one sermon; yea, it made the most obstinate and inveterate enemies to stoop before the word, though preached by poor despised men. This made the world to wonder, as if some universal enchantment had fallen upon men; and the more they sought to suppress and bear it down, the more it increased and spread. It made the rich chuse poverty, the sensual quit their pleasures, those who dwelt in fine houses, to betake themselves with chearfulness to dens and caves of the earth; yea, and sometimes those who were violent persecutors of Christians one day, become joyful martyrs with them the next. But not only at that time, but many times since, the ministration of the Spirit with the gospel hath produced wonderful changes on its hearers.

As, 1. When thereby the dead in sins and trespasses have been raised from the grave of corruption, and made alive to God: Those who were prophane and vitious have changed the whole course of their lives, and turned as remarkable for good as before they were for ill. The leopard hath changed his spots, and the Ethiopian his colour, and such who were accustomed to do evil, have learned to do well. And all these changes have been occasioned by the foolishness of preaching, and sometimes by one word in a plain gospel-sermon; which could not be brought about by twenty years moral discourses, and the most sublime strains of human eloquence. And sometimes weak gifts have been owned and blest, when the greatest gifts have been unsuccessful.

2. Hereby such particular application of the word hath been made to the conscience, as hath filled the secure soul with terror, and humbled the proud man to the dust, and made him cry, "Wo's me, I am undone, I abhor myself in dust and ashes!" Those who before were puffed up with pride and a conceit of themselves, have been soon laid low under a sense of their guilt, and ill-deservings before God.— Those who have been mounted upon an imaginary throne of their own righteousness, and have been at great pains to prop and support it, have of a sudden come down from it, tumbled it to the ground, and submitted humbly to a borrowed righteousness, saying, Away with all my own filthy rags, give me Christ, who is the "Lord our righteousness:" None but Christ.

3. It is a wonderful change to see mens natures quite altered; to see those who were like ravening wolves become like meek lambs; those who were formerly actuated by hatred and envy, malice and revenge against enemies, brought to love all men, even their greatest enemies, with a love of benevolence, to avoid revenge, to forgive them, to pray for them, and do them good, when in their power. Again, to see covetous men, that were great lovers of the world, and hugged it as their beloved idol, abandon it with disdain, "seek those things which are above," and delight to converse about them; to see them made willing to forsake all the world, as loss and dung, for Christ and things above, is a change above the power of nature, and is an evident proof of the glorious ministration of the Spirit

4. By the Spirit's ministration, those who hated serious godliness, derided it as a fancy, mocked and reproached godly persons, have been made to own there is a reality in religion, and to love and commend that which they hated and cried down, and to honour religious persons as the excellent ones of the earth, and to delight more in their society than ever they did in their old companions in sin.— This surely is the finger of God.

5. Hereby those who have been violent adversaries of the the truth, have become eminent instruments to maintain and promote that which they once destroyed, and more zealous to promote and advance God's glory and kingdom in the world, than ever they were to oppose it. Yea, those who have been very active in persecuting the professors of religion, both with tongue and hand, have so far changed their course, as to join themselves to those whom they persecuted, and voluntarily chose to suffer reproach and affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

6. Hereby those, who formerly were wandering after the riches, honours, preferments and vanities of the world, and placed all their happiness in them, and spent all their cares and thoughts about them,— have been brought to be mainly taken up in wondering at the love of God in sending Christ to the world to satisfy justice for our sins and bear that wrath and curse we should have borne, and have been made to take more pleasure in thinking and speaking of Christ, and in spiritual exercises, than ever they had in all their worldly enjoyments, and willingly to resign all these to God's disposal, saying, If my main portion be secured to me, let God do with these external things as he pleaseth These surely are glorious changes

7. The Spirit's ministration appears the more glorious in this, that sometimes these changes are made on those who had not the benefit of good example or education, but were brought up in families where they neither saw nor heard any thing to the advantage of religion, but on the contrary, much to fear and discourage them from it, such as bitter invectives against it, and cruel mockings and scoffs at those who owned it: And yet, in the face of all discouragement, danger, and persecution, they have been brought to embrace religion, to take up the cross and follow Christ

8 By the Spirit's ministration, many weak and feeble souls have been wonderfully strengthened and encouraged, power hath been given to the faint, and strength increased to them who had no might. The feeble have been made like David, and all their discouragements and complaints removed. They who could perform no duty, bear no burden, encounter no danger, have been wonderfully strengthened both for work and warfare, duty, and difficulty, and fortified against all fears, corruptions, temptations, afflictions and persecutions, and made to say with David, Psal xxvii. 3. "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though thousands rise up against me, I will not be dismayed. And with Paul, Phil iv. 13. "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me." Hereby those who have been opprest with doubtings and waverings about the truths of God, have been confirmed and established, and made to say with Nathaniel, John i. 49. "Rabbi, thou art the King of Israel, thou art the Son of God." And with unbelieving Thomas, John xx. 28. "My Lord, and my God," And like the Israelites in Elijah's time, when the Lord manifested himself by fire, an usual emblem of the Spirit, 1 Kings xviii. 39, they were made to fall on their faces, and cry out, "The Lord he is God, the Lord he is God."

Lastly, The ministration of the Spirit is glorious, in regard of the glorious intercourse and communion with God, which souls thereby attain to in the ordinances. Then

makes good that word to them, Jer. xxxi. 25. "I have satiated every weary soul, and replenished every sorrowful soul." Then he puts more gladness in their hearts, than when corn, wine and oil abound. Then he makes their doubts and unbelief to vanish, and all their clouds and darkness, fears and jealousies, to flee away. Now, they attain to this blessed intercourse, when he gives them such discoveries of a crucified Jesus, and his infinite fulness and suitableness to their case, as fills them with joy and peace in believing, and in laying the stress of their souls, and burden of their guilt upon him. He helps them to embrace and apply the promises of the covenant, and to lay claim to them as their own, and say, "This and that promise is mine:" and plead with David, Psal. cxix. 49. "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope." And the pleading and feeding on a promise doth afford much inward sweetness and satisfaction to the soul. He also affords them such delight in God's work, such strength in performing of duty, that it is their meat and drink to do his will, and they reckon a day in his courts better than a thousand elsewhere So that, though sometimes they have come to duties with deadness and straitenings of spirit, yet they have got such relief, that with Hannah they have been helped to pour out their hearts to God in prayer, and have gone away *with their countenances no more sad.* He gives them such discoveries of God's love to their souls through Christ, as fills them with inward hope and consolation; yea, sometimes such a strong assurance of God's favour, and of the pardon of their sins, and of the glory to be revealed, that their souls are made to overflow with joy. This communion and fellowship with God, by the ministration of the Spirit, God's people in all ages have found, and they declared it to be the greatest reality, when stepping over the threshold of time into eternity, and they have died with the high praises of God in their mouths for it.

APPLICATION.

Infer. 1. See hence what thanks and praise we owe to the Lord Jesus Christ, who purchased the ministration of the Spirit to us by his blood. Hence, days of the Spirit's influences are called *days of the Son of Man,* Luke xvii 22. All our nearness and intercourse with God is by the blood of Jesus, Eph. ii. 13. So that it is with a great sum we obtain this freedom.

Infer. 2. See then from whence it is that gospel-ordinances have their glory, even from the ministration of the Spirit. Without this, ordinances are dead and lifeless, and dead things have no beauty. We must look to the Holy Spirit, then, to put life in ordinances, and make gospel-days glorious. Also, it is to be regretted, that so many look to the language and outward ornaments of sermons, more than to the ministration of the Spirit for their beauty and excellency.

Infer. 3. How dreadful a crime must it be for any to ridicule or mock at the ministration of the Spirit, or to call it all fancy, whim, or enthusiasm! Oh, what is this but to reproach and do despite to the Spirit of grace! How provoking must it be for men to scoff at that which is the glory of ordinances, and the glory of any land? Surely they are real objects of pity, and exposed to great judgments, who are so far left and given up, as to glory in their shame, be ashamed of their glory, and mock at that which is the greatest blessing of heaven! O if they would stand in awe of this sin, and remember that word, Isa. xxviii. 22. "Now therefore, be not mockers, lest your hands be made strong."

II. A second use of this doctrine, may be of exhortation; and here let me exhort all the hearers of the gospel, to pray earnestly to God that he may be pleased to make the gospel the ministration of the Spirit to them, as it hath been to our ancestors in this land in former days, and as it is this day in other countries. Let us cry with the church, Lam. v. 21. "Renew our days as of old:" And with David, lxiii. 3. "Let us see thy power and glory in the sanctuary, as in former times." And with Isaiah, Isa. li. 9. "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord: Awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old." Let us plead with the church, Psal. xliv. 1, 23, 26. "We have heard with our ears, O God; our fathers have told us what works thou didst in their days, in the times of old. Awake, why sleepest thou? Arise for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies sake." So let the people of Scotland say: "Lord, our fathers have told us what glorious gospel-days they had, by the ministration of the Spirit, when the Captain of our salvation took to him his great power, and rode in triumph in the chariot of salvation; his arrows were sharp in the hearts of his enemies, and hundreds dated their conversion from one sermon. Ah! we have sinned away Christ and his Spirit from the land." Or if all ranks would join to pray him back again: and cry, "Arise, O Lord, and have mercy upon Zion; let the time to favour her, yea, the set time be now come." It is commonly observed, when the set time for favouring Zion with the glorious ministration of the Spirit, is at hand, God useth to pour out a spirit of prayer upon his people; for he loves to bring about his glorious designs by means of their prayers, that he may put honour upon them. I might add many motives to frequency and fervency in such prayers.

As, 1. Consider the excellency and usefulness of the ministration of the Spirit It would beautify the church and her assemblies, make her beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners. It would make both ministers and people to shine, our congregations to look with another face, and ordinances to have a new lustre.—It would put life and strength in the members of the church, give life to their bones, vigour to their withered graces, and strengthen them to run on God's errands, and fight his battles. It would enable them to trample on satan, and triumph over sin, wax valiant in battle, and put to flight the armies of the aliens. It would be as wind to the sails, oil to the wheels, and make souls to run the ways of God's commands without fainting or wearying. It would loose bonds, enlarge hearts, and give freedom from satan's temptations, and strong lusts: It would revive drooping souls, turn their water into wine, their sorrow into joy, their fears into holy confidence, their doubts into godly assurance, their complaints into praises, and make them to sing in the ways of the Lord. It would satisfy their souls, and all their faculties, as with marrow and fatness, bring light to the mind, freedom to the will, strength to the memory, peace to the conscience, and life to all graces. Yea, it would make the soul to grow in grace, and ripen apace for heaven. It would make professors of religion grow more sincere in duties, more fervent in prayer, more attentive in hearing, more frequent in meditation, more practical in knowledge, more edifying in converse, more humble for defects, and more thankful for mercies.

2. Consider the melancholy case of the church, for want of the ministration of the Spirit. Her beauty is quite marred,

her gold becomes dim, and her most fine gold is changed. Her womb is barren, her breasts dry, and her ordinances dead and lifeless. Satan reigns and prevails, and precious souls are an easy prey to his teeth. And believers themselves fall under sad languishings and decays. Whereas the Spirit's ministration would soon change the face of affairs, and roll away the reproach of barrenness under gospel-means, wherewith enemies are apt to upbraid us, saying, " Where is your God?" Where is the fruit of your many sermons, fasts and prayers, and solemn communions? This was like a sword in David's bones, Psal. xliii. 10. when they said unto him, " Where is thy God?"

3. Take a view of the largeness of satan's kingdom in the world: How great is the number of his subjects! And will not every loyal subject of Christ be concerned and troubled to see the devil possessing such large territories, when their Redeemer has but a little flock? Oh! can you see your King's country overspread with enemies as thick as grashoppers, when Christ's army are pitched before them like two little flocks of kids, and not be affected and grieved for it? Now the only remedy for it is, to pray for the glorious ministration of the Spirit. This would soon make a mutiny and desertion in satan's camp, diminish his followers, and increase the army and kingdom of our dear Jesus, But, to sum up all:

4. A day of the ministration of the Spirit would bring many rare and rich blessings along with it, such as discoveries of the Redeemer's glory, convictions of the evil and vileness of sin, many crowns of victory, and triumph to Christ, great additions to his friends and followers. Then gospel-light would shine clear, saving knowledge increase, ignorance and error vanish, riches of free grace would be displayed, and satan be bound up. Then ministers and ordinances would be lively, secure sinners would be awakened, dead souls would live, hard hearts would be melted, strong lusts subdued, and many sons and daughters born to God. Such a day would heal divisions, cement breaches, make us all of one heart and mind, and bring down heaven to earth. This would redress our grievances, remove our complaints, and unite Christ's scattered flock. It would make true religion and holy persons to be in esteem, vice to be in disgrace, and iniquity as ashamed to hide its face. Then sabbaths and communions would be days of heaven. Prayer and praise, spiritual converse, talking of Christ and redeeming love, would be our chiefest delight. O then, pray for such a time.

Quest. What shall we do that our prayers may be prevalent for the glorious ministration of the Spirit to the church and land?

Ans Take these directions:

1. Let us lament after a departed God, as the penitent Israelites did, 1 Sam vii 2. " All Israel lamented after the Lord." They were sensible of their loss, confessed they had sinned him away, and wrestled for his return.

2. Search out the Achan in the camp, old or late sins, which may provoke God to withhold his Spirit from us. Mourn bitterly for it; apply to the blood of Jesus for pardon; abhor and put it away

3. Be thankful for the least droppings of the Spirit, entertain them kindly, and plead that they may be the forerunners of a greater shower.

4. Use arguments in prayer for the ministration of the Spirit: Plead the multitude of dry bones, which are scattered up and down the valley of vision. How general is the deadness both among ministers and people! And nothing can revive them but the breath of the Lord. Cry, with the prophet, Ezek. xxxvii. 9. " Come from the four winds, O Breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live." Plead your inability to do any spiritual good thing without the Spirit; Lord, we can neither pray, praise, mourn, believe, repent, meditate, read, hear, or communicate, without the ministration of the Spirit; we can do nothing spiritually; all we do is in a natural, carnal way, which cannot be pleasing to thee. Plead also the promises of the new covenant, which are free and absolute concerning the giving of the Holy Spirit; such as those in Isa. xliv. 3. Ezek. xxxvi. 27. God would have us to turn these his promises into prayers, if we would share in them; for he saith, after making them, that he will be " enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them," Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

Object. But, say some discouraged souls, we have so grieved and vexed the Holy Spirit, when dealing with us, that we fear he will return to us no more.

Ans. 1. Many of God's people have grieved him, and yet he did not leave them finally. 2. Have you a sense of guilt in this matter? Is it the grief and trouble of your heart that you have so grieved the Holy Spirit? Are the breathings of your souls after his return? then surely he is not wholly withdrawn; for if he were, you would be without sense and feeling. 3. Remember that Christ still invites you to come to him for every thing, and for the Spirit among the rest. He hath purchased the Spirit for all that come to him; and those who come to him for the Spirit, he will in no wise cast out. May we all have grace to depend upon his word, and both to live and die by faith upon it, that his name may have the glory for ever. Amen.

A PROPHECY OF THE INCREASE OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

SERMON XI.

On John iii. 30.—*He must increase*——

THESE are the words of John Baptist concerning Jesus Christ, upon the occasion of his disciples complaining of Christ's baptizing, which drew great multitudes to him, whereby they feared their master might come to be darkened or deserted. But the humble man, instead of resenting it, as his disciples did, falls a commending Christ, and abasing himself; yea, he professeth the greatest satisfaction in the advancement of Christ and his interest in the world, and compareth himself to a friend of the Bridegroom, ver. 29. that rejoiceth in the success of the match, which he had been labouring to promote: It being honour enough for the most eminent minister of Christ, to be an instrument to recommend his glorious Master, and to court and make ready a bride for him.

In verse 30. where my text is, 1. John foretels the increase of Christ's kingdom and glory, as a thing highly just and equitable in itself, and most agreeable and satisfying to him, and all other friends of the Bridegroom, " He must increase;" that is, his interest shall grow in the world, his name shall spread, his throne be raised, his crown shall flou-

rish, his dominions be enlarged, and his subjects multiplied. You think he hath gained a great deal already, but that is nothing to what he will gain: And all this in consequence of the decree of God, and the prophecies recorded concerning the Messiah in Psal. ii. and lxxii. &c. so that there is a necessity for it, "He must increase."

2. John foretels the consequent of this increase to himself, "I must decrease;" that is, I must be darkened and disappear. He is not at all displeased to see himself obscured and outshined by the blessed Messiah, whose servant and forerunner he owned he was. No, no, says he, Let him shine forth as the *rising sun,* and let me disappear like the *morning star:* Let his name be raised, and mine depressed, I cheerfully submit to it, I am contented to be any thing, or to be nothing, so that Christ may be All.

Doc. The increase of Christ's kingdom and glory in the world is absolutely certain and necessary. It must infallibly be, for God hath said it, Jer. xxiii. 5. "A king shall reign and prosper in the earth," Psalm lxxii 8. "He shall have dominion from sea to sea," Psalm cxxxii. 18. "Upon himself shall his crown flourish."

In discoursing from this subject, I shall,

I. Enquire what is the increase of Christ's kingdom and glory, which we may warrantably look for?

II. What are the times and seasons of this increase?

III. What are the reasons why Christ must thus increase?

IV. Make application.

I. As to the *first,* What is the increase here meant?

First, Negatively, it is not to be understood,

1 Of any increase of Christ's essential glory as God; for this is impossible, he being infinite, and therefore the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever, without any variableness or shadow of turning.

2. It is not meant that Christ's kingdom shall increase or flourish in outward splendour and greatness, like one of the kingdoms of this world. No, Christ's kingdom being not of this world, its glory is of a spiritual and heavenly nature, and peculiar to itself alone.

3. Neither is it to be thought that the increase of Christ's kingdom is to be constant or alike at all times, or without decay or diminution at any time. No, no, for sometimes it seems to be brought very low, yea, so low was it brought under the Antichristian apostacy, that it was scarce visible.

2dly, Positively, the increase spoke of in the text is to be understood of the flourishing of Christ's mediatory kingdom, and of the spreading of his manifestative glory in the world, which doth consist chiefly in these things:

1. In the increase and spreading of gospel light through the world, so that the dark places of the earth shall be enlightened with the knowledge of Christ; and those places which had but twilight discoveries of him shall attain to brighter views of his excellency and usefulness, and to a clearer insight into the gospel-mysteries, and the way of salvation through Christ and his righteousness imputed to the sons of Adam. Then the Sun of righteousness shall arise with more powerful beams of light and heat upon his churches than before, and at length with such clearness and efficacy as to scatter Antichristian darkness, error, idolatry, superstition, dead forms and ceremonies of man's invention. For how is it else that the man of sin shall be consumed by the Spirit of Christ's mouth, and destroyed by the brightness of his coming, 2 Thess. ii. 8. but by the outpouring of his Spirit with his word preached, and by the bright and convincing appearances of the Redeemer in the glory of gospel-light? Then is it that Christ shall increase, and his kingdom be enlarged, when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," according to the prophecy of Habakkuk, Hab. ii. 14.

2. This increase takes in the Lord's furnishing his church with many "burning and shining lights, able ministers of the New Testament," to be eminent instruments of displaying his glory in the world. When he is signally to increase his kingdom, he will raise up and qualify ministers for the work; who shall be men of large hearts, fluent tongues, and public spirits; shining holiness and piety; undaunted courage and zeal for God; inspired with a burning love to Christ and the souls of men; inclined to prefer the good of Jerusalem to their chiefest joy; and willing to run all hazards by sea and land; to venture all that is dear to them in the world, their reputation, life, and all the comforts of it, for Jesus Christ; and chearfully content to spend and to be spent for the increase of his kingdom and glory, and the gathering of souls to him. And particularly, it is a pledge and forerunner of this happy increase, when the Lord sends down his Spirit upon students and expectants of the ministry; graciously touches their hearts, and works an inward change upon their souls; animates them with sincere principles and ends, and gives them such impressions of the weight of the pastoral office and the charge of souls, that they will not run thereto unsent, nor have an active hand in thrusting themselves into it, or do any thing to beget prejudices, to mar their success; but will wait patiently upon the Lord, till he shall open the door, and clear their call to enter into his vineyard.

3. It imports the increase of the number of Christ's subjects and followers. "As the king's honour is in the multitude of his people," Prov. xiv. 28. so Christ is glorified in the multitude of his subjects. Thus shall Christ's kingdom and glory increase in the latter days, when the kingdoms of the earth shall become the kingdoms of the Lord; then the Jews themselves shall gather to Christ's standard lifted up in the gospel, together with the fulness of the Gentiles; they shall fly to it in clouds, like doves to their windows, according to these promises, Isaiah ii. 2. Micah iv. 1, 2. Isaiah lx. 8. Rev. ii. 15. Rom. xi. 25, 26. Psal. cii 15, 16, 22. Now, what is it that will bring about this glorious increase, but the ministration of the Spirit with the gospel? It is this that opens a great and effectual door, 1 Cor. xvi. 9. a door of utterance in ministers mouths, and a door of entrance in hearers' hearts. Then ministers spirits shall be enlarged, and their tongues loosed in preaching; and hearers appetites will be sharpened, and their hearts melted in hearing. When the Lord comes with his Spirit, and gives testimony to the word of his grace, then the arrows of the word shall pierce the conscience; the wounded shall cry, What shall we do to be saved? And multitudes shall fall under Zion's King, Psal. xiv. 5.

4. Then Christ's kingdom doth increase, when truth triumphs over error, and pure doctrine and worship prevail against superstition and delusion. There are happy seasons when the Lord doth magnify his power in binding up the winds of heresy and false doctrine, and making pure scripture-truths to be relished and preferred to the vain opinions and false reasonings of men. Then he causes Infidelity, Deism, Socinianism, Arianism, Popery, and Arminianism, to be rejected and abhorred: And makes men willing to subject their own reason to divine revelation, and to fall in with the plain truths of the word, and the gospel-scheme of

saving lost sinners by the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and through his death and purchase only. Then he brings men to see their own natural impotency and inability to do any thing for their own recovery and happiness: so that, instead of ascribing their good actions and attainments to the good use of their own natural powers, they are willing to acknowledge God in every thing that is good in them, and to ascribe all to the praise and glory of his free grace, who, for Christ's sake, works in them both to will and to do. O that Christ and his truth may thus increase in the world!

5. This blessed increase of Christ's kingdom, includes the downfal of its enemies, and especially the overthrow of Mahomet and Antichrist, the ruin of Babylon, and the binding up of satan, that grand enemy which excites all the rest. This is foretold, Rev. xx. 2. Now when once that time comes, that satan shall be restrained and bound up from influencing rulers to persecute or oppress the church; from instigating seducers to propagate errors; and from exciting schismatical and seditious persons to sow dissension among the followers of Jesus; then the kingdom of Christ will greatly increase in the world.

6. It imports the increase of true piety and holiness among the subjects of Christ's kingdom; when they shall study an universal conformity to their holy Lord and Master, and, like him, make it their meat and drink to serve God, and do his will: When their minds and affections shall be greatly disengaged from the world, and the strain of their conversations shall be spiritual and heavenly: Their lives shall shine in holiness and good works; and their great study shall be to have their spirits and tempers, their walk and carriage, in all respects such as becomes the gospel of Christ: When they shall be just, righteous, and true, in all their dealings, words, and actions; when they shall be meek and lowly, sober and temperate, patient and peaceable, loving and forgiving, harmless and inoffensive, in all the parts of their conversation: and at the same time shall abhor and depart from all lying and dissembling, injustice and intemperance, pride and ambition, slandering and backbiting, malice and revenge, discord and strife, and whatever else is contrary to true godliness, and the pattern of the holy Jesus: then it is that Christ's kingdom shall greatly increase.

7. There is in it the increase of zeal and public-spiritedness for promoting true religion, and of Christian courage and magnanimity in owning and avowing of Christ and his cause before the world. When Christians shall not be ashamed of a crucified Jesus, or of his truths, ordinances or people, but shall openly profess him, glory in him, and whatever belongs to him; and also bear testimony against every thing that he hates or forbids; and when a spirit of reformation shall be poured upon all ranks and degrees of men; so as every one in their several stations and capacities shall do their utmost to suppress sin, and recommend Christ and his ways to all around them: then it is that Christ's kingdom and glory will increase in the world.

Head II. I proposed next to enquire into the times and seasons of this glorious increase. God hath his set times for Zion's increase and glory, which none can stop, Psal. cii. 13. The apostolic age was the most remarkable set time for it that ever was, when every sermon made new conquests and additions to the church, till every city and corner of the vast Roman empire was stored with Christians. But, besides this, we have promises of a more full and ample increase of Christ's kindom in the latter days, or towards the end of the world; of which Daniel speaks in his prophecy, Dan. ii. 28, 44. and Dan. vii. 27. There he tells us, that in these latter days God will set up a great, large, and flourishing kingdom, which will break all others in pieces, and stand for ever. That he means the flourishing state and glorious increase of Christ's kingdom towards the end of the world, is clear from this, that he makes the latter days he speaks of, to be the days of the kings which should divide the fourth monarchy, or Roman empire, among them. This empire was to be divided into ten kingdoms, called in the Revelation ten horns, and represented in Dan. ii. 41. by the ten toes of the feet of the image. Now, the stone cut out of the mount, which is the kingdom of Christ, is said to smite the image upon its feet, and break them in pieces, verse 35. which signifies Christ's conquering the Roman empire, when divided into ten kings, or kingdoms, called ten horns, Rev. xvii. which division hath happened in the latter days. And these horns, or kings and kingdoms, being joined together in giving their power to the beast, or Roman Antichrist, as their head, do preserve some shadow of the ancient Roman empire or monarchy, seeing Antichrist's power is almost as extensive as the emperor's once was. Hence Antichrist is sometimes called the image of the beast, and is said to exercise the power of the first beast, Rev. xiii. 12, 14. as being set up at Rome in place of the Roman empire in the west, and as bearing the likeness of the then emperor that reigned there. For at the time the said empire lay dead and wounded by the sword, or invasion of the Goths and Vandals, and in effect was not, the Pope got up and mounted the beast, which the emperor had rode upon before him, namely, the Roman state, for that is the body of the beast, and so set up a new image of the old Heathen empire at Rome. The papal power may be well called its image, as being like it in largeness of dominion, in form of government, and in tyranny and idolatry.

When Christ's kingdom was first set up in the apostles' time, the Roman empire was on its iron legs, as represented in Nebuchadnezzar's image, that is, it was in its greatest strength. But in the latter days, which Daniel speaks of, Dan. ii. 28, 44. when Christ's kingdom is wonderfully increased, the empire is in its feet and toes, that is, in ten kingdoms subject to the beast, as they are explained, Rev. xvii. 12, 13, 17, 18. Now, as Daniel tells us, it is upon these that the stone smites, and so it is among them that Christ will make his glorious conquests in the latter days. For it is said, These kings shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, not only their power and armies, but he shall at length overcome their hearts, so that they shall be brought to hate the whore, and make her desolate, Rev. xvii. 14, 16. which time is yet to come.

Then it is that Christ's kingdom will receive a glorious increase, and the kingdoms of this world become his, as in Rev ii. 15. Then the great river Euphrates will be dried up, for preparing the way of the kings of the east, Rev. xvi. 12. Then the blindness of the Jews shall be removed, and the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, Rom. xi. 1, 25, 26. These, and many other famous prophecies about the increase of Christ's kingdom and glory, do remain to be accomplished in the latter days, at least in the extent; such as those that foretel, That every thing in Jerusalem shall be holy: the people shall be all righteous: the sanctuary shall be cleansed, and purity be both in the worship and worshippers in the temple, and no more a Canaanite in the house of the Lord: all nations shall be gathered to see his glory: there shall be no more war, betwixt nations: the Jews shall be gathered out

of all the countries where they are dispersed, and brought to their own land: they shall be no more separate kingdoms, &c. For which see Isa. ii 2, 3, 4. Isa. xxvi. 2. Isa. lii. 1. Isa lx. 5, 10, 12, 13, 21. Ezek. xxvi. 24, 28. Ezek. xxxv. 21. to 28. Dan viii. 14. Zech. xiv. 21. Rev. xi. 1, &c. Now, what a glorious increase must it bring to the Mediator's kingdom and glory, when all these prophecies and promises shall be fulfilled concerning the overthrow of Babylon and Antichrist, the destruction of the Turkish empire, the in-bringing of the Jews, with the fulness of the Gentiles?

In regard the fall and destruction of Antichrist, or the papal power, is the great mercy promised to the church in the latter days, and with which all the other blessings promised are connected; and that the scripture is more particular about the time of its being fulfilled, than any other; it is fit to enquire what is there said about it. And, *first*, let us view the foregoing signs and forerunners of Antichrist's fall, and of Christ's coming to deliver his people from his tyranny, which point out the times as near; such as,

First, Previous thereto, there will be a great defection among all the churches of Christ. Among God's people deadness and formality shall so increase, that all the virgins shall seem to fall asleep. Errors and false doctrines shall greatly abound, the luminaries shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. Many ministers shall suck in corrupt principles about the glorious doctrines of the gospel, particularly that of justification; by which means the earth shall be turned into blood and slaughter. Yea, in these last days, there shall be false teachers, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them. There shall be many infidels, and profane scoffers, who shall make a mock of serious godliness, and the Holy Spirit's operations; and scoff at the gospel-revelation, and the way of saving sinners by Christ and his righteousness imputed to us Also they will deride the promises of his coming to destroy Antichrist, to deliver his people, and to judge the world, saying, "Where is the promise of his coming? for all things continue as they were from the beginning." Of these things the apostle Peter speaks in the 2d and 3d chapters of his 2d epistle. Nay, so general shall the defection and infidelity of the world at that time be, that our Lord himself tells us, that when he cometh, he shall scarce find faith upon the earth, Luke xviii. 8. that is, he will find few that have the firm belief of the gospel truths, and few that have faith concerning Christ's coming. So great have been the reelings of the world, so long the delays of Christ's coming, and so frequent their mistakes who have prefixed times for it, that there will remain but little faith in any about his glorious appearance for his church, when behold he is just at the door. As Atheists, Deists, and adversaries of the truth have been much hardened in their infidelity, by the mistakes of those who have been too particular and peremptory in timing future events: so the godly themselves may be sadly shaken, and tempted to despair of Christ's coming, when he so long passeth their reckoning Therefore, said he, "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" But glory to his name, "He is faithful and true," and will come at the appointed time, and the unbelief of man shall not make the promise of God of none effect.

2. There shall be great troubles in the world, and very great fear and distress in the church, before help arise to her, Dan. xii. 1. Daniel is certified, that when Christ is to stand up for the church, "there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time, and at that time thy people shall be delivered." So in Matth. xxiv. and Luke xxi. Christ saith, that before his coming, there shall be strange signs in the heavens, and in the earth, earthquakes, wars, and rumours of wars, the rushing of nations one against another, and such universal distress, that mens hearts will be failing them for fear; and even then shall deliverance be at hand.

3. Christ will appear when his church's enemies are most confident and secure; and particularly, when the Romish harlot is lifted up with pride by her success in this or that kingdom, and begins to say, "I sit as a queen, and shall see no sorrow." But then it is that her plagues shall come as in one day, Rev. xvii. 7, 8. How confident was the cruel persecutor Dioclesian, of his success against the church, when he erected pillars with that inscription, *Deleta Superstitione Christiana?* Then he thought he had got Christianity extirpated, and the church ruined; when, behold, her glorious deliverance under Constantine the Great was just at hand.

4. Before Antichrist's fall, one of the ten kingdoms which supported the beast shall undergo a marvellous revolution, Rev. xi. 13. "The same hour there was a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell." By which tenth part is to be understood one of the ten kingdoms into which the great city Romish Babylon was divided: this many take to be the kingdom of France; it being the tenth and last of the kingdoms as to the time of its rise, and that which gave Rome the denomination of the beast with ten horns; and also, it being the only one of the ten that was never conquered since its rise. However unlikely this and other prophesied events may appear at the time, yet the Almighty hand of the only wise God can soon bring them about when least expected. Though the church should be wrapt about with the blackest clouds and thickest darkness, for a time, that will be no stop to God's great designs. As a little before the break of day is the darkest time of all the night; so usually it is a dark hour before the day-break of the church's deliverance. Let us not then be shaken in our minds, whatever storm blow, but firmly believe the word of a true and faithful God, That all his promises to his church shall be exactly accomplished: That he will rise in due time and scatter all his enemies; and that the set time to favour Zion will certainly come. May we then be helped to look to heaven, and cry for a steady, fixed, and persevering faith, that we may never be shaken, nor carried away by the prevailing torrent of infidelity, but may still be established upon the firm rock of truth, for Christ's sake! Amen.

OF THE INCREASE OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

SERMON XII.

On JOHN iii. 30.—*He must increase*——

IN the preceding discourse, I was speaking of the times and seasons of the increase of Christ's kingdom and glory; and seeing this increase in the latter days is very much connected with Antichrist's fall, I was enquiring a little into the time of that fall, and mentioning some forerunners of it. But

to get a more certain view of it, it is fit to enquire into the scripture account of the time and length of Antichrist's reign; which, according to Rev. xi. 2, 3. and xii. 6, 14. and xiii. 5. doth amount to 1260 years, as is generally agreed to. Now, if we could hit upon the time when these years began, we should certainly know when his reign would end. But God, for our trial and exercise, hath left us much in the dark when to begin them. Thus also dealt God with his people in ancient times; for though he told them their bondage in Egypt would be 400 years, their captivity in Babylon would be 70 years; and from the commandment to rebuild the temple to the Messiah's death, there would be 70 weeks of years, or 490 years: yet still the precise time when to begin these computations was much questioned among them. So that they never were perfectly certain about the exact times of the church's deliverance, until the glorious events happened; and then every one saw clearly when they should have dated the beginning of these predicted years. Now the same is the case with respect to Antichrist's reign and downfall. Though now we be not certain when to begin the 1260 years, which is the duration of Antichrist's reign; yet, after the event of his fall, the time of its commencement will be so plain, that after ages will be apt to wonder that we fell into such mistakes about it. Some in their calculations have begun Antichrist's reign too early: others again, perhaps, begin it too late. Some of which I shall mention, with the grounds of their opinion.

I. Because Antichrist is called the beast with ten horns, Rev. xiii. 1. and the ten horns or kings receive their power one hour with the beast, and give their power and kingdom to the beast, Rev. xvii. 12, 13, 17. Many therefore did begin Antichrist's reign, as soon as the Roman empire was broken, and divided into ten different kingdoms; to wit, when the tenth or last horn appeared, which was the kingdom of the Franks, now called the French, under Childericus their king, in the year of our Lord 456; to which, if we add 1260 years, the time of Antichrist's reign, the end of it was to have been in the year 1716, and accordingly many did expect it that year: But the event hath shewed that they began Antichrist's reign too soon. And, ndeed, the scripture doth not say that his reign (though contemporary with the ten horns) should begin as soon as the last of them appeared; and in the year 456, Antichrist was scarce discernible in the church. But yet, in the year 1716, Antichrist got a severe blow, when the Lord broke his interest in Britain, by defeating the rebellion there in his favour, and securing the Protestant succession to the crown in the house of Hanover.

II. Others did begin Antichrist's reign twenty years after, viz. in the year 476; because till then some shadow of the old Roman empire remained. For it was not entirely dissolved, nor did the ten horns appear formally in its room, till the deposition of Augustulus, who was the last of the Roman emperors that reigned over both east and west. Now he was deposed in the year 476, after which time the very name of the Roman empire in the west became extinct.—Those of this way of thinking did also strengthen their opinion from that text in 2 Thess ii. 7, 8. "He who now letteth, will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked one be revealed;" that is, Antichrist, who then was working under ground, would not formally appear until the removal of the Roman emperor, whose power in the west did greatly hinder the papal tyranny and grandeur.—Now, according to this opinion, Antichrist's reign should have ended in the year 1736, but the event also hath discovered they began it too soon. For though the bishops of Rome, upon the fall of the empire, made great progress in their projected usurpation, yet Antichrist was not formally revealed so soon as 476. Neither did the scripture say that he would be immediately revealed, and begin his reign upon the removing of the Roman emperor. But though the Lord did not overturn Antichrist in the year 1736, as some expected, yet I hope he hath taken a remarkable step towards it, and for the increase of his own kingdom in or about that year, by raising up eminent instruments for spreading his glorious gospel through the world, such as the Moravian brethren, and Oxford methodists; and particularly by sending forth the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, that very year to preach the everlasting gospel with wonderful success. And now, both he and others whom God hath excited, have, since that time, made a noble progress in this work, both in Europe and America, by preaching in the demonstration of the Spirit, and with power, the doctrine of free grace, of original sin, of regeneration by the holy Spirit, and of justification by Christ's righteousness alone; which doctrines had been sadly buried before. And I verily believe, that it is by the effusion of the Spirit with the gospel, and the bright convincing appearances of Christ, and free grace in the glory of gospel light, that Antichrist will be consumed and destroyed, and Christ's kingdom increased and enlarged.

III Some there are who are very late in beginning Antichrist's reign, not before the bishops of Rome turned grosly idolatrous, and set up for the worship of images, and for excommunicating and deposing the emperors of Constantinople, their civil rulers, because they opposed them in their idolatry This was first attempted by Pope Constantine against the emperor Philippicus, in the year 713; and afterwards practised with great boldness and success by Pope Gregory II. against the emperor Leo, in the year 726.—According to this opinion, Antichrist's reign will not end before the year 1973.

IV. But the most probable time for commencing Antichrist's reign, seems to be when Boniface III got himself declared universal bishop and head of the church, and assumed the title of Pope, which was in the year 606. And in this usurped supremacy, he was then owned and submitted to by the ten horns or kings, who gave their power to him. Then it was the Pope became Christ's declared opposite, by usurping his peculiar offices and titles, and so appeared formally to be Antichrist. Now, if we add to 606, the time of Antichrist's reign, 1260 years, his dominion will not end till the year 1866, which is 124 years hence.—Though none now living will see this, yet we may comfort ourselves, as once a godly man did: "I have had a longing desire," said he, "to see or hear of the fall of Antichrist: but I check myself, I shall go to heaven, and there the news of it shall quickly arrive, for both angels and saints will rejoice at it," Rev. xviii. 20. Why, that will be the happy time of the increase of Christ's kingdom and glory. May God hasten it for Christ's sake.

The *third Head.* I propose next to give some reasons why Christ must increase as above:

1. Because of the decree and promise of God, which cannot fail. He hath promised this not only to the church, Jer. xxiii. 5. but also to Christ himself, Psalm ii. 8. and cx. 1, 2. And surely "he will not alter the thing that is gone out of his lips, he will not lie unto David," Ps. lxxxix. 34, 35.

2. Because it is for the sake of the kingdom of Christ,

and its increase, that God hath made the world, and hath given the administration of the kingdom of providence to Christ himself, in order to secure the accomplishment of all the glorious promises made to him, the reigns of government are put in his own hand, Mat. xxviii, 18. Eph i 22. And, to be sure, the great Mediator will see to his own interest.

3. Because Christ is the darling of heaven, dearly beloved of God for undertaking the redemption of a lost world, a work whereby God is highly glorified. In this transaction, he chearfully complied with the divine will, became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, and therefore his name must be exalted above every name, and every knee must bow before him, Phil. ii. 8, 9, 10.

APPLICATION.

I. Use may be of *information:*

1. We here see what encouragement we have to pray as we are taught, *Thy kingdom come,* and that it may be increased and enlarged; seeing we pray for what God hath decreed, promised and foretold, and must certainly come to pass.

2. It must then be great folly to oppose the flourishing of Christ's kingdom; they who do it have a strong party to fight against, even the omnipotent God, who hath said of Christ and his kingdom, *He must increase.*

II. Use may be of reproof and warning to all who would hinder the increase of Christ's kingdom and glory in the world; such as,

1 Those who persecute and oppress his people.

2. Those who promote the violent settlement of ministers contrary to the will of congregations, and thereby put a stop to the conversion and edification of souls.

3. Those who promote infidelity, error, or any doctrine in the church, contrary to the simplicity and purity of the gospel, and the scripture-scheme of salvation by Christ and his surety-righteousness, whereby free grace is exalted and self-debased.

4. Those who refuse to subject themselves to the laws of his kingdom, and will rather obey their own passions and lusts, saying in their hearts "We will not have this man to reign over us;" if Christ be a King, let him be a King without a kingdom, subjects, or laws; if we could, he should have none. O sinners, take heed what you are doing; you directly oppose the will of that God, who saith, *He must increase,*

III. Use of *lamentation.* We may here take occasion to bewail the state of Christ's kingdom in divers places, in which it once flourished and increased, but now, alas! decreaseth; as in France, Germany, Poland, Bohemia, Hungary, Piedmont, and other foreign parts, and likewise in Britain and Ireland, and particularly in our mother church of Scotland! Oh! what a dreadful flood of infidelity, atheism, irreligion, damnable heresies, looseness of principle and of practice, contempt of God and religion, scoffings at the truths of God and serious-godliness, hath broke out in this age, and swelled to a greater height than at any time since our blessed reformation. Our holy Christian religion, in its firm foundations and infallible proofs, hath been openly attacked and ridiculed by professed infidels, and pretenders to reason amongst us, and that notwithstanding the strong obligations they ly under by their baptism and education, to adhere to it. And many pretended friends have been undermining and destroying it, by promoting opinions and practices inconsistent with its purity and interest. Yea, all ranks of us, whether magistrates, ministers, nobility, gentry, citizens and commons, are sadly chargeable with the prevailing defections and declensions of the age. Alas, we have left our first love, and have wofully degenerated from our ancestors piety, zeal, and solemn engagements to the Lord! How lamentable is our neglect of family-worship, secret prayer, sabbath sanctification, and gospel-holiness! As also, our losing our former liveliness and spirituality in God's worship and service, and letting our devotion dwindle away into a dead formality, and mere bodily service! And, finally, how strong is the propensity of the present generation to vanity, lightness, plays, comedies, romances, idle diversions, contempt of ordinances, lying, cheating, perjury, and all sorts of immoral practices.

Upon account whereof God is provoked to forsake his ordinances, and smite our church with sore judgments, such as a spirit of division, a miscarrying womb, and dry breasts, impenitency and hardness of heart, suspending the Spirit's influences, so as hearts are not melted by the word. The angel descends not to trouble the waters, and the diseased step not in to be healed as in former days. Our hearts do not burn while Christ is talking with us; the times of refreshing come not from the presence of the Lord. And, alas! we who are in the ministry want not reason to fear that we have a hand in bringing on the judgments, by our undertaking the ministry for carnal ends, and without experimental knowledge of the Spirit's work in regeneration; helping in lax men to the ministry, and discouraging the more serious; little reading and studying the scriptures; want of zeal and concern for the conversion and edification of souls: Seeking ourselves in our public appearances, more than the glory of our blessed Master, not looking to him for furniture, and depending on his presence and Spirit for success: Not labouring more earnestly, and preaching more rouzingly for awakening and convincing of souls: laying stumbling-blocks before hearers, by sinful strifes, untender walking, and wrong steps, whereby they are tempted to abhor the offerings of the Lord, not acting as faithful stewards, by rightly dividing the word of truth, and speaking to the different cases of the converted and unconverted, saints and sinners; and not making it the great end of our sermons to convince lost sinners of their misery, to exalt a crucified Christ as their only remedy, and to lead poor souls to him. O that all ranks were brought to acknowledge their guilt, and to lament the hand they have had in stopping the increase of Christ's kingdom!

IV. Use may be of consolation to all the friends of Christ: Though you have cause of fear and trembling, because of the melancholy view you have of the church's case at present, her groans and grievances, defections, and backslidings, and the power and success of enemies; yet rejoice in the tidings my text brings, "Christ must increase." The church shall arise and shine, her light shall come, and the glory of the Lord shall rise upon her. It shall not be in the power of all her enemies, though hell and Rome be joined with them, to hinder this increase. Antichrist must fall: He hath been in a deadly consumption these 200 years, and will expire at length. Whatever be the opposition, Christ must overcome, triumph, and increase at last. His church will certainly outlive all her enemies. And though sometimes she may decrease in some places, yet we should mind that Christ's kingdom is like the sea, what it loseth in one place it gaineth in another. If it lose in Europe, and gain in America, Christ loseth nothing. And though his church

in our land be brought low, yet her Head and King lives, and many of his worthies have lived and died in the faith of it, that he would not leave her, but return and revive his work in her, with a powerful arm, and spreading glory.

V. Use, of *exhortation.* And here I exhort and obtest all ranks, high and low, to do what they can in their stations, by their prayers and endeavours, for the coming and increase of Christ's kingdom, as Christ directs, Mat. vi. 10. O how concerned was David this way! Psal. xxv. 22. and li. 18. And so were Asaph, Isaiah, Daniel, Nehemiah, Paul, &c. Psal. lxx. 14. Isa. lxii. 1. Dan. ix. 16, &c. Neh. ii. 3. Rom. x. i.—Consider also the woes and judgments denounced against those who are unconcerned for the interest of Christ's kingdom, Amos vi. 1, 6. Esther iv. 14. Likewise take a view of the blessings which would attend the increase of it. The Redeemer's glory would be magnified, the church would become a fruitful mother of many children, and many sons and daughters would be born to God. Then light would spread, knowledge be increased, ignorance vanish, error be abhorred, satan restrained, vice forsaken, virtue esteemed, love and peace cultivated. Then the lives of Christians would shine, sabbaths would be days of heaven, sermons and sacraments would be longed for, the friends of Christ valued as the excellent ones of the earth, and all wisdom's ways would be pleasant and delightful. And what happy times would these be!

Quest. What are those means and endeavours we should use for the increase of Christ's kingdom and glory in the world, according to our several stations and capacities?

Ans. 1. Let magistrates contribute to this noble end, both by their authority and example, discountenancing the immoral and vicious, and putting respect upon the virtuous and godly. Let them with zeal and impartiality execute our good laws for suppressing open vice, such as *drunkenness, uncleanness, profaning of the Lord's name, and of the Lord's day,* &c. Let them in their own lives be patterns to others in justice, sobriety, family-religion, and attending upon public ordinances: and no doubt their good examples would have great influence upon those around them.

2. Let ministers especially lay out themselves for this increase, by making it the great scope and end of their sermons to awaken secure sinners, and lead them to Christ; by diligent catechizing of them, and dealing particularly with young persons in private about their souls, and taking great pains with them at their first admission to the Lord's table. Let them be careful to keep back the ignorant and ungodly from that holy ordinance; and depend on the ministration of the Spirit for all the success of their endeavours. Let them beware of licensing or ordaining any to sacred functions, who are not of good report for true piety and soundness; and of imposing pastors upon congregations without their consent or good liking. Let them preach to their flocks by their good lives, as well as their lips; and in all things behave as true friends of the Bridegroom, desiring (like John Baptist) that their blessed Master may increase, though they should decrease; that his name may be great, though theirs should sink to nothing.

3. Let elders in their sphere contribute all they can to the flourishing of Christ's kingdom, by their fervent prayers for it, and studying to be exemplary in family-religion, sobriety and holiness of life: by reproving and admonishing of those who walk disorderly, informing ministers about them, and faithfully assisting them in the exercise of discipline, and in ruling and governing of the church.

4. Let teachers of youth assist in this work, by labouring to instill the knowledge of God, and the way of salvation through Christ, very early into their scholars minds; and to persuade men of the necessity and advantage of prayer, a new heart, godliness, meekness, chastity, sobriety, and justice. And likewise to train them up in the abhorrence of vice in all its kinds, and of every thing that may prove an inlet or encouragement to it.

5. Let parents and heads of families do what they can to set up and increase Christ's kingdom in their families, by maintaining the worship of God in them; sanctifying the sabbath in all their dwellings; catechizing and instructing children and servants, and requiring an account of the sermons they hear; reproving and curbing sin wherever it appears; and earnestly recommending Christ and the new birth, prayer, reading of the Bible, and holy living, to all within their gates; and especially to children, when their hearts are young and tender; for these are the hope and seed of the next generation. Let us follow the example of the Jews in Nehemiah's time, who repaired the walls of Jerusalem, every one against their own houses, Neh. iii. 10, &c. If every one would sweep before their own door, it would soon make a clean street. And if all, whether in public or private stations, would diligently apply themselves to that part of reformation-work that lies nearest to them, and within their reach, there would soon be a happy change among us.

6. Let those whom God hath blessed with worldly substance, employ part of it for the increase and enlargement of Christ's kingdom, by supporting charity schools, and encouraging ministers, preachers and catechists, to travel in dark places of the world, both at home and abroad, for propagating Christian knowledge, and bringing precious souls to Jesus Christ: surely, there is no better use that money can be put to; many of our fellow Christians have done worthily this way before us, and the good effects thereof are notorious; which should excite others to the like acts of charity and beneficence, which have such an evident tendency to save perishing souls, and increase our dear Redeemer's kingdom and glory.

Object. But (say some) we are poor and in low stations, what can we do for Christ's kingdom?

Ans. There are several things incumbent on you for this noble end, be what you will.

1. Let every man, whatever his station be, receive the gospel revelation with a firm unshaken faith, as the very truth of God, and the way of bringing men to eternal life, which God himself hath devised. Abhor the impious cavils of infidels against it, and receive gospel-truths with warm love and affection. Love and bless God, who, in his infinite love and wisdom, contrived this scheme of salvation, and Jesus Christ that executed it, by shedding his blood on the cross. Let each one by faith, put his finger in the print of the nails, and cry with Thomas, "He is my Lord, and my God."

2. Let every man study to recommend this excellent religion to the world, by conforming his practice to its rules, and adorning his life with shining holiness and virtue; and by guarding against all injustice and dishonesty, pride, passion, revenge, evil-speaking, and every thing that may stumble and beget prejudices in men against Christianity; who are too apt to impute the faults of its professors to the

religion itself. If every professed Christian would contribute, by personal reformation, to mend one, then we should all be mended, and the increase of Christ's kingdom would be glorious.

3. Let every one be searching diligently into the time prefixed for the church's being in sackcloth; viz. the 1260 years. And when (like Daniel) we understand by books that the time of finishing them is near, let us with him, Dan. ix. 2, 3. set our faces unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, that he may remove all hindrances, and hasten the time of the church's liberty and increase. If you can do no more for it, pour out earnest prayers to God for fulfilling his promises of the downfal of Antichrist and Mahomet, the inbringing of the Jews, with the fulness of the Gentiles: And that he would pour out a spirit of mourning and repentance upon the church of Scotland, and other reformed churches, for their decays and backslidings, put a stop to infidelity and error, maintain purity of doctrine and worship, remove the causes of division and contention, heal breaches, and restore peace: And that God may grant a spirit of reformation, and of zeal for Christ's kingdom, to all men of power and influence, that they may exert themselves for the enlargement of Christ's dominions, and the diminishing of satan's: and that he would send a large effusion of his Holy Spirit to qualify instruments for spreading his gospel through the world.

We are apt to be discouraged, when we see not likely instruments to carry on the Lord's work, and bring about the glorious things he hath promised; and to cry, "By whom shall Jacob arise?" Not minding that God can raise up children from stones, and instruments to serve him where they were not expected. Though we be oft at our wit's end, we should never be at our faith's end. God can never be at a loss to carry on his work, while he hath enough of clay and spirit to form instruments for his purpose. When the arm of the Lord doth once awake for his church, no impediment can stop him; he makes out that pleasant word in Psal. lxviii. 11. "The Lord gave the word, great was the company of those that published it." The pouring out of God's Spirit from on high, doth answer all objections, overcome difficulties, provide supplies, and afford remedies in the most desperate cases.

O how desperate like was Luther's attempt in the year 1517, when he, a poor monk, set himself against the torrent of idolatry and corruption that prevailed under Antichrist at that time! It seemed as ridiculous, as if a man had set his shoulder to a great mountain on purpose to remove it. And so it was in the reckoning of the wisest of that age; and hence, when Luther opened his designs to a great doctor, who disapproved of the Romish corruptions as well as he, he bade Luther retire to his cell, and pray, *Lord have mercy on us;* as if there was no remedy. Yet how wonderfully did the purity of doctrine and worship break forth and prevail to amazement, among sundry nations, so as to shake the foundations of Antichrist's throne, and give him a deadly wound, under which he hath been languishing ever since! There had been several attempts for reformation made by others long before Luther, as by Wickliff, Huss, and Jerom of Prague; but all were ineffectual, because God's time of reformation was not then come. But we see when once that time cometh, no man is able to hinder it, more than stop the sun from breaking out under a cloud. It becomes, then, all the Lord's servants and people, to keep in the way of duty, and wait patiently till his set time to favour Zion doth come.

How patiently did Joshua and the priests wait for the downfal of Jericho! Amidst the insults of enemies, they continued in their dutiful obedience to God, encompassing the city every day, and blowing with trumpets of rams horns, carrying the ark still alongst with them. This they did six days, once every day; and seven times upon the seventh day. All the six days the walls stood firm, not a stone moved, nor a pinning in it loosed; nor was there any alteration for the most part of the seventh day, until the evening, when God's set time was come; and then, without difficulty, all came tumbling down at once. In like manner, let us persevere with patience in the way of duty, looking to God, and blowing with the gospel-trumpet, which by many is despised as the sound of a ram's horn: but if we hold on, carrying Christ (the blest antitype of the ark) along with us, we shall come off with triumph at last. One thing is sure, Antichrist *must decrease,* and Christ *must increase.* Jericho must fall, and Zion must be built up. And however dark and cloudy the present time be, we are well assured from Psalm cii. 16. "When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory." The Lord in mercy hasten that time in Scotland, and in all parts of the earth, for Christ's sake. Amen. Even so come Lord Jesus. Amen and Amen.

FIVE SERMONS

PREACHED BEFORE AND AFTER

THE CELEBRATION

OF THE

LORD'S SUPPER.

SERMON XIII.

Being a Fast-day's Sermon before the Lord's Supper.

OF GOD'S WITHDRAWINGS FROM HIS PEOPLE, AND THEIR EXERCISE UNDER THEM.

JEREM xiv. 8.—*O the hope of Israel, and Saviour thereof in the time of trouble; why shouldst thou be as a stranger in the land; and as a way-faring man, that turneth aside to tarry for a night?*

THIS chapter was penned in time of a great dearth in the land of Judah, occasioned by a grievous drought and want of rain, which fell out about the latter end of king Josiah his reign: which calamity the prophet pathetically laments, and takes as a token of God's withdrawing his gracious presence from them; whereupon, verse 7. he makes a most humble confession of sin, in name of the church, disclaims any thing of worth or merit in themselves, and pleads only the glory of God's name.

The prophet's scope, in the text and context, is to deprecate God's judgments, and particularly that terrible one, of his withdrawing his presence from his church and people. "Why, (says he, verse 8.) shouldst thou be as a stranger in the land?" and verse 9. "Leave us not." So that he seems to pass from the consideration of the stroke of drought to that of God's withdrawing his presence from them. Whence we may observe, that God's people dread and deprecate the withdrawing of his gracious presence, more than the removal of all their creature-comforts, or any other judgment whatsoever.

More particularly, in the text we have, 1. The gracious titles he gives to God, as the grounds on which he pleads for his gracious favour and presence, "O the hope of Israel!" i. e. the object of Israel's hope, whose word and promise is the only foundation of their hope: "the Saviour of Israel in the time of trouble," i. e. the helper and deliverer of Israel in former times of distress. And then, from these grounds he doth, in the second place, humbly plead and expostulate the matter with God in a twofold question: 1. "Why shouldst thou be as a stranger in the land?" i. e. Why shouldst thou behave to us at this time as a stranger, in keeping at a distance from us, and inclining, as it were, to drop all acquaintance and correspondence with us: 2. "Why shouldst thou be as a way-faring man, that turns aside to tarry for a night?" i. e. Why shouldst thou seem unconcerned about our interest and welfare, like a traveller that comes into an inn, and never inquires into the affairs of it? Or why shouldst thou pay such short and transient visits, as if thou wast weary of us, and ready to depart for good and all.

Doc. That as sometimes it pleaseth God to withdraw himself, and behave as a stranger to his church and people; so there is nothing in the world that will be such matter of exercise and trouble to the serious seekers of God, as such a dispensation.

As this is plainly founded on the text, so also it is evident, from many other places of scripture, and the practice of the saints therein recorded, Job xxiii. 3, 8, 9. Psal. xiii. 1, 2. Psal. xxvii. 7.

In handling this doctrine, I shall observe the following method: 1. Premise some things for the better understanding of it. 2. Shew when it may be said, that the Lord withdraws from, and behaves as a stranger to his people. 3. For what reasons and grounds he useth to do so. 4. When it may be said, that people are duly exercised about this melancholy dispensation. 5. Whence it is, that this dispensation is matter of such exercise and trouble to the serious seekers of God. 6. I shall make some improvement of the whole.

I begin with the *first*; viz. To premise some things for the better understanding of this doctrine, and for preventing mistakes.

1. However God doth at any time withdraw from his people, yet we must remember, he never takes away his loving kindness from them, Isa. liv. 10.

2. However God may withdraw the sensible and comforting influences of his Spirit from his people: yet he never withdraws his Spirit from them, as to his real presence and inhabitation for the preservation and support of their spiritual life, John xiv. 17.

3. God's withdrawings from his people are never either total or final, but only in part, and for a time, Heb. xiii. 5. Isa. liv. 7, 8. God never leaves his people altogether, but is still graciously present with them one way or other; if not in respect of comfort, yet he is with them in respect of grace; if not in a way of quickening, yet still in a way of support; if not in enlivening their affections, yet it may be in enlightening their understandings; if not giving sensible enjoyments, yet in giving hungry desires: so that the Lord is still with them some way or other.

4 There are various degrees of God's withdrawing himself from his people; with some of them the day is only dark and cloudy; with others it is twilight, neither dark nor light; but with many it is night: with some, neither the sun nor stars have for many days appeared; but with others (according to their apprehension) it is a total eclipse.

5. We should distinguish betwixt God's withdrawing from his people in point of comfort, and his withdrawing in point of grace. These two do not still go together: for the first may be where the second is not. A believer may be deprived of the shinings of God's love and favour, when yet faith may be lively, desires strong, the heart tender, and grace in a vigorous condition; but oft-times God withdraws in point of grace, as well as in point of comfort: I do not mean in respect of the habit of grace, for this can never be rooted out, where it is once planted; but only in respect of the exercise and some particular degrees of grace: These may be lost, so as the soul becomes weak, and sometimes very feeble and languid in duty; the breath grows cold, the pulse beats low, "and the things that remain seem ready to die," Rev. iii. 2.

II. The second thing proposed, was to shew when it may be said that the Lord withdraws, and behaves as a stranger to his people.

1. When he withholds his wonted acts of kindness from them; sees them in trouble, and steps not in for their relief, as in former times. Of this the church complains, Isa. lxiii. 15. "Where is thy zeal and thy strength? The sounding of thy bowels, and thy mercies toward me, are they now restrained?" He suffered their enemies to gather strength, to rise up and oppress them, and bring them very low; and did not seem to regard their cry, nor shew his mercy or power in helping them; but withdrew his hand, and behaved as a stranger that was not concerned about them. It was on this account that Gideon reckoned God to be withdrawn from Israel, when the angel of the Lord appeared to him, Judg. vi. 12. and said, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." But Gideon was so much taken up with the distressed case of the church in general, that he waves the consideration of his own particular case, and says, verse 13. "Oh my Lord; if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of?" *q. d.* If the Lord were not withdrawn, and become as a stranger to us, surely he would not have suffered the Midianites to oppress us so sore and so long, without appearing for our help. In like manner of times reasons a poor discouraged believer, If the Lord were not withdrawn, why should my old lusts (which I once thought were both killed and buried) rise up and trouble me? Alas! I am left to struggle against them alone, and "iniquities prevail against me;" I strive to stem the tide, but it grows the more: "How long shall the enemy be exalted over me?"

2. When the Lord threatens to remove the signs and symbols of his presence from his people, viz. pure ordinances and sacraments; when he lets enemies combine, and carry

on their plots for this purpose; when our springs are in hazard of being stopt or poisoned, and we put to seek our "spiritual bread with the peril of our lives, because of the sword of the wilderness," Lam. v. 9. This hath been the lot of God's people in this land; now indeed we get our bread at an easier rate, but alas! we do not prize it, nor grow by it. May not God be provoked then to withdraw it, or send us to the wilderness again to seek it.

3. When though the Lord continues pure ordinances and sacraments with his people, yet denies the wonted blessing and benefit thereof to them, yea, blasts them: according to that sad word, Mal ii. 2. "If ye will not hear and lay it to heart, I will even curse your blessings, yea, I have cursed them already." This we fear is the case of many; they have the word and sacraments in purity and plenty, but do not find them blest; God's Spirit doth not concur with them, and their souls do not thrive under them. Surely the Lord behaves as a stranger to our assemblies, when ministers are straitened in preaching, and people are straitened in hearing; when we that are sent to you, feel much coldness on our own hearts, and have a number of cold hearts to deal with, and a live-coal is not brought from the altar to kindle the fire.

4. When the Lord frowns on his people in the course of his providence, denies them outward mercies, and denounces temporal strokes and calamities, yea, actually brings them on, whereby his people are brought very low; they look to God for pity, but no relief comes; their distress is long continued, and their trials lengthened out. So when Zion's captivity was prolonged, she cried out, Isa. xlix. 14. "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me."

5. The Lord behaves as a stranger to his people, when he trusts them with dumb and silent rods; trials whereof they understand not the language, and whereby they reap no benefit. This was the case of God's people, Isa. lvii. 17. "For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart." Though God's rod should have let him to see his sin, and lay to heart the cause of the controversy, yet he took no notice of it, but went on in his former course: Many, though God's hand be lifted up, they will not see. They are not bettered by his dispensations.

6. When the Lord denies access to his people in duty, and breaks off his wonted correspondence with them: They come to God's ordinary trysting-places with his people, ordinances both public and private, but he is not there; they seek him, but still they miss him, so as they are put to cry with that holy man, Job xxiii 3. "O that I knew where I might find him." O that I knew the place, the duty, the sermon, the sacrament, where I might find him; there I would go and seek him; I try prayer, (saith the poor soul) but that brings me not to him; "for when I cry out and shout, he shutteth out my prayer," as Lam. iii. 8. Alas! I get not access to God as formerly, he carries now to me as an alien; for when I come and knock, I find nothing but a shut door, and a silent God. In a word, the Lord withdraws, and behaves as a stranger to his people, when he withholds the manifestations of his countenance, the operations of his Spirit, and the special communications of light and life, which he useth to allow to them that love him.

III. The next thing was to enquire into the grounds and reasons, why the Lord deals so with his people. I grant, the Lord may thus withdraw from them out of his absolute sovereignty; but commonly he doth it for the correction of sin, Isa. lix. 2. As,

1. When they are guilty of gross sins and scandalous outbreakings, such as cast a reproach upon religion, and the good ways of the Lord, Isa. i. 13, 14. This is plain in David's case, see 2.Sam. xii. 14. compared with Psal. li. 11.

2. When they turn earthly-minded and prefer the delights of sense to precious Christ, then he withdraws, Isa. lvii. 17. They that have a strong relish for the flesh-pots of Egypt, are not fit to taste the hidden manna. When the Gadarenes came that length as to prefer their swine to Christ's presence, he turned his back, and departed from their coasts, Mat. viii. 28.

3. When we turn slothful and formal in duty, and do not stir up ourselves to seek God's face, then he withdraws, as is plain from Isa. lxiv. 7. Cant. iii. 1. If you put God off with bodily exercise, he will put you off with empty ordinances and dry breasts: If you serve him not with your spirits, he will deprive you of his Spirit. Wherefore, if you would have the Lord be with you, ye must shake off sloth, "Arise and be doing:" according to 1 Chron. xxii. 16.

4. When we neglect or slight the Mediator; by whom we have access and nearness to God, we provoke the Lord to withdraw and turn a stranger to us. And this we do, 1. When we do not look to Christ for strength to perform duty, but trust to our own strength for doing it. 2. When we make a saviour of our duties, and put them in Christ's room: And this we are prone to, especially when we attain to any freedom or enlargement in duty. All is well now, think we, God is well pleased, this will render us acceptable to him, and atone for former guilt; and thus the glorious Mediator is forgot, and the idol self is exalted in his place; which is most displeasing to God.

5. When we miscarry under signal manifestations and pledges of God's loving kindness; turn unthankful, remiss, and untender in our walk, after he hath taken us into his presence-chamber, and set us under the banner of his love. We are told how Solomon sadly miscarried, "even after the Lord had appeared to him twice;" for which the Lord was provoked to withdraw from him, 1 Kings xi. 9. And has not the Lord appeared to some of you, at communion-seasons, oftener than once or twice, and yet grievously have they miscarried after all? Great cause have ye to mourn on this account, and beg that the Lord may not plead a lasting controversy with you for it.

6. When we sin under, and after great afflictions or trials appointed to reclaim us, God is provoked to leave us, Isa. lvii. 17. Has not God smitten some of you, and brought you into the furnace, so that ye melted under his hand? But when in pity he delivered you again, ye soon forgot his dealings and turned to your old ways. Is it any wonder that he frown and behave as a stranger to you?

7. God is provoked to leave us, when we do not entertain the motions and kindly touches of his Spirit on our hearts; the spouse neglected these, so that her beloved withdrew, turned a stranger to her, and it cost her much travel and sorrow ere she got his countenance again, Cant. v. 2, 3, 6, 7.

8. When we grow hardened and impenitent under provocations, so as we have neither a due sense of our own sins, nor of the sins of the land we live in, Hos. v. 15. "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offences, and seek my face." Ah! was there ever more guilt lying on a land, and less feeling of it, than amongst us at this day?

IV. The *fourth* thing was to shew when it may be said that people are rightly exercised under such a dispensation, as this of the Lord's withdrawing, and behaving as a stranger to them.

1. We may be said to be rightly exercised under it, when we are truly sensible of our loss, and of our sins, as the procuring cause thereof; and hence are brought heartily to mourn and "lament after the Lord," as the prophet doth in the text and context, and as Israel did in the days of Samuel, 1 Sam. vii. 2.

2. When we place all our comfort and happiness in the favour and presence of God, and are unsatisfied with all other comforts without this; count all worldly things but loss and dung; look on sun, moon, health, wealth, honours, pleasures, houses, relations, yea, life and breath, as most empty and comfortless things without God; so did the prophet in the text, when he addresses himself with this title, "O the hope of Israel!" *q d.* All our hope is in thee, and we are poor, miserable, and hopeless creatures without thee; and so did the Psalmist, when he saith, Psal. lxxiii. 25. "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee."

3. When we are at pains to engage our whole hearts, and all the powers and faculties of our souls, to seek after a withdrawing God: "With my whole heart have I sought thee," saith David, Psal. cxix. 10. And because our hearts are deceitful, and ready to start aside from this work, we should be laying ties and engagements on them to be sincere and fervent about this work, for God takes special notice of such who do so; Jer. xx. 21. "Who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto me?"

4. When we diligently lay hold on all opportunities, and use all appointed means for finding an absent God; like the spouse that sought her beloved about all the city, both in the *streets and broad ways,* Cant. iii. 2. In all duties and ordinances, both private and public, our souls should *follow hard after him,* and pursue him closely, (as it were) from one ordinance to another, Psal. lxiii. 8.

5. When we wrestle with him in prayer for his gracious return to us, and fill our mouths with arguments in pleading with him, as the prophet doth in the text and context: 1. He pleads the glory of his name, 'Do it for thy name's sake." 2. He pleads their hopeless and helpless case without him, who was the fountain of all help and comfort: "O the hope of israel and Saviour thereof." 3. He pleads the former experiences they had of his kindness to them in their helpless condition: "O Saviour of Israel in the time of trouble." 4. He pleads his power; it was very easy for him to relieve them, whatever straits they were in: "Why shouldst thou be as a man astonished, as a mighty man that cannot save?" 5. He pleads the outward symbols and pledges of his presence he had given them, his temple, his ark, and oracles: "Thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us." 6. He pleads the covenant-relation they stood in to him: "We are called by thy name." Upon all which accounts, we beseech thee leave us not.

6. We are duly exercised under God's withdrawings, when we hold on in our close pursuits after him; notwithstanding of discouragements and disappointments, like Mary Magdalene, John xx. who would not leave the sepulchre when others left it, but searched it over and over again, yet waited on with patience, still looking for him, till at length she found her beloved. Thus was the Psalmist exercised, Psal. xxv. 15, 16. "Mine eyes are ever towards the Lord.—Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me, for I am desolate and afflicted."

7. When we are unsatisfied with the best means and ordinances, unless we find God in them: David was not content with his enjoying the tabernacle, the ark, sacrifices, the passover, and others of God's pure ordinances: but, in midst of all, "his heart and flesh cried out for the living God," Psal. lxxxiv. 2. Hypocrites, if they have the outward means, are well satisfied; for God's presence and absence is all one to them: but sincere believers will not be put off so; if God be not in the ordinances, nothing can please them, not the most powerful sermons, though an angel were to preach them; nor the most lively communions, though a glorified apostle should come and dispense them. The absence of God is such a great want to them, that nothing in heaven or earth can fill up, but himself.

V. The fifth thing is to shew, whence it is that the Lord's withdrawing and behaving as a stranger to his people, is such a matter of exercise and trouble to them.

I. Because of the incomparable sweetness and advantage they enjoy in his gracious presence, while they have it; for this is the sum and compend of all blessings, and hath all good things wrapt up in it. The divine presence brings light and life, health and strength, peace, and comfort, yea, complete satisfaction to the precious soul that doth enjoy it; no wonder then, that the people of God should be so much concerned for the want of it; for then they may cry out with Micah, and with just ground too, "They have taken away my gods, and what have I more?" Judg. xviii. 24.

II. Because of the effects and consequents of God's withdrawings from the soul; which being very sad and melancholy, are matter of great exercise and trouble to God's people: as for instance, 1. There follows usually on it, a great darkness upon the spirit; as, when the sun goes down, darkness covers the face of the earth; so when God withdraws, thick clouds do veil the face of the understanding, and the whole soul; so that the poor disconsolate soul is bewildered, knows not his way, nor what course to take, but is made to complain, as in Lam. iii. 2. "He hath brought me into darkness, and not into light." Alas! saith he, I know not where I am, nor how it is with me; I know not God's mind nor will towards me; I see not any comfortable sign, neither know I the time how long; I meet with many dark providences, dark ordinances, dark communions, all is dark to me.

2. Not only darkness, but much deadness and stupidity also seizes upon the deserted soul. Why are our spirits so dead in prayer, in hearing, and so dead in communicating? Is it not because the Lord is withdrawn? What these two sisters said to Christ, John xi. "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died;" may be well said by such a poor soul, Lord, if thou hadst been here present in such a duty, in such a sermon or communion, my heart had not been so dead; for why, as Moses saith, Deut. xxx. 22. "He is thy life;" so when our life withdraws, we are dead, and all things are dead to us.

3. There follows also an unspiritedness and disability for duty: the soul hath neither heart nor hand for prayer, for reading, hearing, communicating, meditation, self-examination, or any duty. Deserted Heman saith, "I am as a man that hath no strength," Psalm lxxxviii. 4. David's complaint is much the same, Psal. xl. 12. "Mine iniquities have taken hold on me, I am not able to look up." His spiritual strength was so wasted, that he was scarce able

either to speak or look to God. Now, what is the cause of all our weakness and incapacity for duty? Oh! the Lord is withdrawn. It is a true word our Saviour saith, John xv. 5. "Without me ye can do nothing." It were happy for us, that we were most sensible of this truth, for we are most apt to trust to our own strength, and think still we can do well enough for ourselves: like Samson, when he had sinned away both his God and his strength, yet he went forth to shake himself as at other times, "but wist not that the Lord had departed from him." So many are insensible of the Lord's departure, they go to communions, and think to shake themselves, as at other times; but, oh! there is a benumbedness and weakness that has seized on their spirits, they cannot now lift up their souls at his table.

4. There usually follows, on God's withdrawing, great witheredness and barenness on the souls of his people; their leaf fades, their fruit drops, and they quickly turn like the mountains of Gilboa, on which there is neither dew nor rain," John xv. 6. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered." It is his gracious presence only that can make us "fat and flourishing in the courts of our God."

5. We become exposed and liable to manifold dangers and enemies; for when God withdraws, our defence withdraws too. Hence Moses comforts Israel against their enemies, Num. xiv. 9. "Ye need not fear them (saith he) for their defence is departed from them, the Lord is with us." The Lord's presence is his people's defence against all the assaults of their enemies, whether from within or from without, against the power of their lusts, the policy of the devil, and cruelty of the wicked: but if their fence be removed, they are exposed to them all.

6. Another effect, which is matter of sad exercise, is, great trouble and anxiety of mind for former unkindness and ingratitude to God. Hence the Psalmist saith, Psal. lxxvii. 3. "I remembered God, and was troubled." Formerly he had remembered God, and was comforted; his meditation of him was sweet, but now it was far otherwise: Oh! says he, I now remember my unkindness to him that was so good to me; my conscience upbraids me for my unsuitable carriage: "Is this thy kindness to thy friend?" Where are all thy former purposes and resolutions? Thy promises and vows made at sacraments? Are they all come to this? Oh! thou hast sinned thy God and friend away from thee! It was the thoughts hereof that brake Peter's heart, and made him weep so bitterly.

7. There follows on it very melancholy and unwelcome thoughts of death and judgment. When God is present with the believer, he can say as in Psal, xxiii. 4. "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me." But oh! it is melancholy to think of going through that valley without him, and of appearing before him while he frowns and behaves as a stranger or enemy to us.

8. Sometimes there follows a revived sense of wrath, old wounds begin to open and bleed afresh; the deserted soul is driven back to the foot of mount Sinai, and begins to hear its thunders and curses renewed, though he once thought they had been all silenced by the blood of Christ. Thus it was with Heman, Psal. lxxxviii. 7. "Thy wrath lieth hard upon me," &c

Lastly, The fears of utter rejection is another consequent, that oft proves matter of sad exercise to the deserted soul. Alas! I fear my cause shall never be better, that my sky shall never break, nor my clouds dissipate; that I shall never recover God's presence again, but be banished eternally from it; so with the Psalmist, Psal. lxxvii. 9, 10. "Has God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" And Psal. cxix. 8. "O forsake me not utterly."

APPLICATION.

Use I. Of *Information*. 1. Hence we may be informed, that there are but few true seekers of God among us, seeing there are few to whom God's withdrawing is matter of much exercise or trouble; few mourning on this account, like the prophet, and crying, "Why art thou such a stranger to my soul?" Many are troubled for other trifling losses, but few that can say with David, Psal. xxx. 7. "Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled."

2. We may see the misery of those who are far from God now, and are like to be deprived of his presence for ever, Psal. lxxiii. 27. Unrenewed persons desire not God's presence here, but say to him, "Depart from us," John xxi. 14. and alas! their choice is their judgment, and shall be so for ever; for the Judge's sentence against them will be, "Depart from me," &c. If the Ephesians sorrowed most of all for that parting word of Paul to them, "Ye shall see my face no more," Acts xx. 38. how much more will such a word from Christ's mouth at the last-day be piercing and heart-breaking to the ungodly for ever?

3. How sad must the case of those be, from whom God withdraws, not to return again? The Spirit of God comes, and strives for a time with many; but, when resisted and grieved, he goes away from an unconverted soul, he seldom returns to strive any more. When the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, he came not again, but an evil spirit in his place, 1 Sam. xvi. 14.

4. Believers should not conclude that God has cast them off, because he is a stranger to them for a time; for this hath been the lot of the dearest of God's children, yea, even of his own beloved Son himself, when in this world.

Use II. Of *Reproof*. 1. To those who are so great strangers to religion, and the state of their own souls, that they know not what God's presence or absence is; and so indifferent are many about this matter, they never enquired to this day, whether God be a stranger or a friend to their souls.

2. To those believers, towards whom God may be behaving as a stranger, and yet they are insensible of it. They are become so unwatchful, and so much charmed with the delights of sense, and their spiritual senses so dull, that they are fallen into Samson's condition, Judges xvi. 20. "He wist not that the Lord had departed from him."

3. To those who, though they be sensible of the Lord's withdrawings, yet are not duly affected therewith: It is not matter of serious soul-exercise to them, as it was to Jeremiah in the text, and to Job, Job xxiii. 3, 8, 9. and to the Israelites, 1 Sam. vii. 2. "Who lamented after the Lord."

4. To those who are so far from being suitably exercised and affected with the Lord's withdrawings from them, that they are still sinning him farther away; by their formality in duty, untenderness of walk, slighting of the Spirit's motions, and venturing on sins against light. O believer! "Is this thy kindness to thy friend? Dost thou thus requite the Lord?" We do not marvel to see persecutors, and haters of God, driving him away, or to see Christ receiving

wounds from his enemies: but Oh! it is sad that precious Christ should get such wounds in the house of his friends.

Use III. Of *exhortation* to two sorts of persons. 1. To those who are strangers to God, and know nothing of his presence. 2. To those who have known it, but he is become a stranger to them.

As to the *first sort*, I exhort you, in the name of the Lord, to bethink yourselves, and consider your misery in this state; for "lo, they that are far from God shall perish." It is the character of those who are in a lost state, to be "without God in the world." Now, your misery, while such, is inexpressible. 1. You are utterly unfit to come to the Lord's table; for "what communion can there be betwixt light and darkness!" Or, betwixt those that have hitherto been strangers and enemies to one another. Remember, it is only a feast for friends: strangers to God are debarred. 2. Your state is most uncomfortable; the sun hath never risen upon you; God's face hath never shined upon you; it is still dark night with you, and you sit "in the region and shadow of death." 3 You are under the dominion of satan, the prince and ruler of darkness. 4. You are under the heavy clouds of God's wrath and indignation. 5. You sit constantly on the very borders of hell. 6. O sinner! consider what a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a dying hour will prove to thee. When thy soul is stepping forth into another world, how ready will it be to shrink back, and say, How shall I appear before that God, who has always been a stranger to me, and with whom I never had the least acquaintance! Can I look for any thing but a frowning Judge, and a fearful sentence? O strangers, come and "acquaint yourselves with God now," accept of his offers of mercy, and "be at peace" with him through Christ; and "thereby shall good come unto you."

Exhort. II. To those who have had acquaintance with God, but he is become a stranger to them. O poor soul, be suitably weighted and affected with this dispensation; let it be matter of exercise to thee upon a fast-day before the communion: it will be a heartless and fruitless communion, if God continue as a stranger to thee; therefore be not easy under his withdrawings.

Consid. 1. Your souls grievances can never be removed while God keeps at a distance from you; but they will still be growing greater: as for instance, While he is a stranger, you cannot have light for your darkness, but darkness will be increasing; you cannot have life for your deadness, but you will still be growing deader in spiritual things; you cannot have appetite for your food, but you will always be turning the more indifferent about it; you cannot have protection from your enemies, but you will still be brought the more under their power. Things will still be growing worse, the longer God is a stranger to thy soul.

2. Ordinances can neither be pleasant nor profitable to thee, while God is a stranger to thy soul; you cannot see any beauty in them, while God is absent; for without the Lord's presence, ordinances are dead, and a dead thing can have no beauty. It is his presence that puts a lustre on ordinances, and makes them shine, so as to confirm the friends of the gospel, and make enemies ashamed of their opposition. It is his presence that puts life in communions, and life in communicants, and causes them to prefer a day in "God's courts to a thousand elsewhere." It is his presence that makes ordinances fruitful, and his people's souls to thrive under them. Oh! why have you such lean souls and barren hearts under ordinances! It is, because the Lord is a stranger to them. Would you have your food blest, gospel-seasons fruitful, and your souls under the influence thereof, like watered gardens? Then seek the Lord's presence, 1 Cor. iii. 7. "It is not he that planteth, nor he that watereth, but God that gives the increase."

Quest. Seeing God is setting a solemn tryst with us at this occasion, and it highly concerneth us to make ready to meet with him: How shall we be exercised on this fast-day, so as to get distance removed, and breaches made up, that God may not be a stranger to us on the feast-day?

Ans. I shall give you some advices, and draw to a close.

1. Make no harsh construction of God's dealings with your souls, whatever they be, but justify him; leave your complaints upon yourselves, and blame your sins, that separate betwixt you and your God, Isa. lix. 2. We have a challenge from God that may soon silence all our murmuring, Jer. ii. 17. "Hast thou not procured this to thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God?"

2. Be still restless, dissatisfied, and uneasy in your minds, till the distance and estrangement be removed: and be expressing your uneasiness by frequent sighs, complaints, and lamentations after God; sit as a widow in his absence, and let none have your love but him alone; refuse all other comforters, till he himself return; imitate the church's practice, Lam. i. 16. "For these things I weep, mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul, is far from me."

3. Search diligently for the cause of the Lord's estrangement from you, as the Psalmist did, Psal. lxxvii. 6 "I communed with mine own heart, my spirit made diligent search." Oh! where is the idol? What is the sin that hath been the Achan in the camp, and provoked God to turn his back? And as soon as you find it out, see that you cast out the accursed thing. Let not thine eye pity, neither do thou spare it; for it has taken thy Lord away from thee. If thou canst not find it, then go humbly to God, and cry with Job, "Shew me wherefore thou contendedst with me," Job x. 2. Lord, what is the evil, the sin or lust which thou rebukest, and for which thou pleadest the controversy? Have I quenched thy Spirit? Have I neglected duty? Was I formal in communicating, or unthankful for former intimations of thy love? "Lord, what I see not, teach thou me; make me to know my transgressions, and my sin."

4. Seek to be deeply humbled for every evil and sin that you are convinced of; and particularly, for the heinous aggravations of them; say, O Lord! I am guilty in thy sight; I have sinned against more light, more mercies, more vows, and more proofs of thy loving-kindness, than others: I have gratified Satan, hardened the wicked, reproached religion, and dishonoured God more by my sins, than others do; so that thou mayest justly frown on me, and make the solemn day, which will be a day of feasting, rejoicing, and gladness to thy children, a day of darkness, gloominess, and distress to me.

5. Plead by faith the Redeemer's blood, for moving the estrangement, and bringing thy soul nigh to God; for nothing else can do it, according to Eph. ii. 13. say, Lord, though I deserve not to taste of thy supper, but to meet with a frown instead of a smile, a breach instead of a blessing, a cup of wrath instead of the cup of the New Testament; yet behold the blood of my Surety, and be merciful to me. Lord! I have broke all thy commands; but has not my Surety fulfilled them all? I have indeed affronted thy justice; but has not my Surety satisfied it? I have deserved

thy wrath; but he has endured it. Remember not what I have done against thee, but what he hath done and suffered for me; and let me be accepted in him who is thy beloved Son.

6. While God carries as a stranger to thee, be not thou a stranger to the throne of grace, but continue instant in prayer for the return of his gracious presence; plead the great need you have of it, and the helpless case you are in without it. Beg, however he deal with you now, that he may not be a stranger to you on the feast-day. Say, "Lord, if thy presence go not with me, carry me not hence. What will a communion feast avail me, without communion with thyself in it? I go not there for bread and wine, but I go to see Jesus: and what wilt thou give me, if I go from thy table Christless? O let Christ appear and be made known to me in the breaking of bread. Let me enjoy thy lightsome and reviving company in this state of pilgrimage and trouble. Descend into my heart by the influences of thy grace, and quickenings of thy Spirit, and let me ascend unto thee, by the breathings of faith, love, and desire. Lord, grant the request of an importunate petitioner, and come over the mountains of my guilt. Lord, stand not at a distance behind the wall, but shew thyself through the lettice of thy ordinance, and let me see the goings of my God and my King in the sanctuary. Oh! let me not go away empty from an inexhaustible treasure, cold from the sun, dry from the fountain, hungry, sad, and comfortless from a feast of love. But Oh! let me meet with my Saviour there, see his face, and hear his voice; and let me come from his table with my pardon sealed, my corruptions subdued, my graces quickened, my heart enlarged, and my soul refreshed and encouraged to run in the ways of thy commandments, and so inseparably united to thee, that no temptation may be ever able to dissolve the union."

Object. Oh! saith some poor soul, I fear all my endeavours will be in vain; for I have communicated unworthily before; I have shed the blood of Christ, and sinned against light; so that I doubt and fear that my day of grace is past, and I am cast out of God's sight.

Ans. However dark your case be, yet surely it is no darker than Jona's was in the whale's belly; who, though he never read or heard of any in such distress: yet when he is concluding, I am cast out of God's sight, he aims at a believing look to God in Christ, "Yet will I look again toward thy holy temple," Jon. ii. 4. Mind also Abraham's case, though he was an hundred years old, and his body as good as dead, yet he believed in God that raised the dead; yea, he believed, and hoped against hope. Lord help us to imitate him. Amen.

SERMON XIV.

A Preparation-Sermon before the Lord's Supper.

THE HAPPINESS OF BEING IN COVENANT WITH GOD.

PSALM cxliv. 15.—*Happy is that people whose God is the Lord.*

THERE is nothing in the world that is so much talked of, and less understood, than the business of a happy life All the world is in quest of happiness, some expecting to find it in this, and some in the other thing. The worldling looks for it in riches, the philosopher in knowledge, the ambitious man in honours, and the voluptuous man in pleasures. But how miserably are they mistaken! they seek happiness from the wrong airth; from things that can never suit the wants, nor satisfy the vast desires of the immortal soul. True Christians are the only wise men in the world, for they seek happiness where indeed it is to be found, viz. in the enjoyment of God who is the centre of bliss. And they who attain to this, must surely be the happy men, for the Spirit of God declares them so in my text: "Happy is that people whose God is the Lord."

In this psalm, the royal Psalmist doth bless and magnify the Lord for the signal favours and mercies he had received from him; and from his former gracious experiences, he is encouraged to address God for future mercies, both to himself and his kingdom: particularly, he prays for deliverance from public enemies, and the manifold calamities of war; for the establishing of peace and tranquillity, and for the prosperity of the nation; for the flourishing of their families and children, and for the increase of their flocks and cattle; and, in a word, that his people might abound in peace and plenty. Then he pauses, and makes a reflection upon the nation's prosperous circumstances, which he had prayed for: "Happy is the people that is in such a case;" happy they, who have such temporal prosperity and abundance, who have no want in their families, nor complaining in their streets. This is the judgment of the flesh, and the opinion of most men. But the Psalmist presently corrects himself, and retracts his former judgment, and prefers the judgment of faith, to that of sense: yea, rather, "Happy is that people, whose God is the Lord." As if he had said, "The former estate is indeed very desirable for a nation or people; but Israel or the people of God, their true happiness doth not consist in these things that are common to others with them; but only in this peculiar privilege, that the great JEHOVAH, who is the Lord of heaven and earth, is their God by covenant and special relation. That this God is their God, and they have a special interest in his love and favour, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace. Whatever portion such have in the world's good things, surely they are happy; and let others have what they will, if they want this covenant-relation, they are certainly unhappy and miserable; which they can never be that have it, want what they will; seeing the having an interest in God as ours, makes up the want of all other things; for all blessedness and happiness is included here. "Blessed and happy is that people whose God is the Lord."

Doct. That it is the greatest happiness we can possibly attain unto, to be in covenant with God, and to have God for our God.

David was still of this opinion through the whole course of his life, Psal. xvi. 5, 6. Psal. xxiii. 1, 2. And he sees no cause to alter it at his death; for, among his last words, he declares, that this sweet covenant-relation was "all his salvation, and all his desire," 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

The method I purpose for handling this subject, shall be,

1. To enquire when it may be said, that a person or people are in covenant with God, and have a special interest in him as theirs.

2. What is imported in this great privilege, to have God for our God.

3. How this privilege appears to be the top of our happiness.

4. Make improvement of the whole.

I begin with the *first*, When it may be said, that a person or people are in covenant with God, &c.

And for clearing this point the more, I shall, *first*, Consider it negatively, and shew what it is not; and, *secondly*, positively, wherein it doth really consist.

I. Negatively, To stand in a covenant-relation to God, is not to be understood here,

1. Of our being under the bond and engagement of the covenant of works. Though it is most certain, that all Adam's posterity, by virtue hereof, are engaged to God, to perform perfect obedience, and fulfil the whole law; yea, and by breaking it, are obliged to pay the penalty thereof, bear God's curse, underly death, and satisfy God's infinite justice; and so all of us are naturally in covenant with God in this respect. But oh! we have no happiness, no comfort, by being so; seeing we have broke the covenant of works, and incurred the penalty thereof; for though we still stand under engagements to God by it; yet he is loosed from all obligations to us, to make us happy: yea, by our breaking it, he is under engagement to destroy us. Oh! we cannot, by this covenant, plead any interest in God as our God, or Father: no, we can only look on him as our Law-giver, our Judge, our Punisher and Enemy. That is all the relation that God stands in now to us, by virtue of the covenant of works.

2. There is more requisite to make up this covenant-relation to God, than that blessed covenant of redemption, which God entered into from eternity with his Son Jesus Christ, as our head and representative, for saving the elect. That glorious transaction is indeed the foundation and rise of our covenant-relation to God; but doth not formally constitute and make it up. For an elect person cannot be said to be in covenant with God from eternity, unless by God's appointment and designation: he is never formally in it, till he believe, and thereby ratify and approve what Christ did from eternity, engage for him, and personally consent to take God for his God, in and through Jesus Christ the Mediator. So that you see, the covenant of edemption will not save you, nor instate you in covenant with God, if ye can say no more; there must be something done in and by you, to intitle you to that covenant of redemption, and to infeft and possess you of the privileges and blessings therein promised to Christ our Head; and this is only done by the subsequent ratification of that covenant and treaty, made with the elect in time, by the preaching of the gospel, which is called the covenant of grace.

3. There is more in this covenant-relation to God, which makes us happy; than our being visibly and externally in covenant with God by an outward profession of Christianity, and subjection to gospel-ordinances: for thus, every church that hath the word and sacraments, is in covenant with God. Hence the Lord says to the church of the Jews, Ezek. xvi. 8. "I entered into covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine." They were visibly and externally in covenant with God, by their subjection to his ordinances and institutions. They all did partake of the seal of his covenant; viz. circumcision: and hence, when a visible church makes defection from God, he threatens to come and "avenge the quarrel of his covenant," Lev. xxvi. 15. All the members of a visible church are federally in covenant with God by their profession of Christ, and being baptized in his name; but such an external covenant-relation to God, will not make us happy: therefore, let us beware of resting on it; and let us seek earnestly to be really and internally in covenant with God.

4. There is more in it than being nationally in covenant with God, by virtue of a solemn transaction entered into, and subscribed by the rulers, nobles, ministers, and representatives of a land; whereby they, with consent of the whole nation, bind and engage themselves and their posterity to the Lord. This did the nation of the Jews, and so they were God's covenanted people, above all other nations of the world; but yet this national-covenant did not entitle them to saving blessings, or give them an interest in God, as their God, in a saving way: for many were in that national-covenant that never came to be in a gracious state, though yet they received many special favours and deliverances upon the account of it. Some in this land have the honour of being nationally in covenant with God, which indeed is our glory, and perhaps the ground of many national mercies and deliverances; though it is not the spring of saving mercies, nor that which entitles us to God as our God, in a saving way. Many may profess to own this national-covenant, that never took hold of the covenant of grace, and gave themselves to God according the tenor thereof.

5. There is more in this, than the drawing up the form of a personal covenant with God, professing to consent thereto, and subscribing it with the hand. For all this may be done in such a manner, as will not entitle us to God as our God in a saving way. This work, though good in itself, and profitable to many; yet it may be performed by some in such an hypocritical, formal, or legal manner, as doth make it an abomination to an holy God, that looks for truth in the inward parts.

But II. Positively, we come to be in covenant with God in a saving way, when we are taken within the bond of the covenant of grace, and do consent sincerely to the gracious terms of it; for it is only by virtue of our coming into this covenant, that we have ground to claim this happiness of *having God for our God.* Now, for us to come into the bond of this covenant of grace, is by faith to "take hold of God's covenant," as it is called, Isa. lvi. 4. And this we do, when we are thoroughly convinced of our sin, misery, and undone state under a covenant of works, and do hence betake ourselves to the new covenant, or gracious method of salvation proposed to us in the gospel, through Jesus Christ and his righteousness; and do cordially acquiesce in, and approve of this noble contrivance, and accept of Jesus Christ as our only Mediator, Surety, and Peace-maker with God: and in him do sincerely make choice of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be our God and portion; and also give ourselves, soul and body, to be the Lord's, engaging, in the strength of our great Surety, to abandon sin, live for God, and walk with him in newness of life, as becomes his covenanted people. Now, when our souls are helped and determined by the Spirit of grace, to do all this heartily and sincerely, then do we enter among that "happy people, whose God is the Lord."

II. The *second* thing in the method, is to enquire into the import of this great privilege, to have God for our God. *I will be your God*, is the greatest promise and substance of the covenant of grace, being the great thing stipulated on God's part therein, Jer. xxxi. 33. and indeed it is the sum and compend of all his other promises. And imports these things:

1. Reconciliation and friendship with God, *I will be your God,* i. e. I will be no longer an angry judge, but a gracious reconciled God to you; my justice is appeased, wrath pacified, fury is not in me, I have found a ransom in Christ; he is the propitiation for your sins.

2. A near relation betwixt God and, yea, nearer than any relation among creatures. "I will be your God," implies, I will stand you instead of all relations. 1. I will be a Father in Christ to you, adopt you for my children, take you into my family, I will pity and provide for you, I will bequeath to you a rich inheritance, you are heirs of God, and coheirs with my eternal Son. 2. I will be a husband to you, "your Maker is your husband," Isa liv. 5. I will marry you to myself, I will love you, cloath you, enrich you, and provide a noble dowry for you. 3. I will be your king. I will take you for my subjects I will govern you, protect and defend you from all your enemies. Yea, I will be your physician, your shepherd, your guide, and instead of all relations to you.

3. *I will be your God,* imports a right and title to God, and all that is in him; intimate communion with him, and a communication of all good things from him Nay, there is still more in this expression than can be unfolded by words; there is more in it, than, I will be father, friend, husband, benefactor, &c. to you: More in it, than I will give you heaven and everlasting life, or all the blessings of heaven and earth, time and eternity: no, I will give you more, I will give you myself, a JEHOVAH, a whole Deity, i. e. all that is in me, all I am, all I have all I can do, is thine. O the magnificent bounty of God! for when he had no greater, no better thing to bestow on his people, he bestows himself on them

You may say, how can this be? An infinite God, so great, so glorious, we are not capable of receiving, comprehending, or enjoying him. *Ans.* So far as you are capable to receive and enjoy him, he is yours; all that is in him, is given to you for your benefit.

1. All he is personally, i. e. the three Persons of the glorious Trinity are yours, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. 1. God the Father is yours to love you, to elect you, and contrive redemption for you, John xvi. 27. "The Father himself loveth you." 2. God the Son is yours, to be a ransom for you, to satisfy justice for you; yours to be born for you, to live, to die for you, to rise again for you, to ascend into heaven for you, to sit at God's right hand for you, &c. All this is plain from Isa. ix. 6. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given." And Cant. ii. 16. "My beloved is mine." 3. The Holy Ghost is yours, to apply this redemption to you, to change your hearts, to teach you, sanctify you, work in you, dwell in you, to conduct and guide you to glory, 1 Cor. iii. 16. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." So you see, O believer, whatever God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is, and can do for your salvation and happiness, they are yours, and made over to you in the covenant of grace.

2. All he is essentially, his infinite essence is yours, i. e. all his glorious attributes and perfections. 1. My mercy is yours, O believer, to pardon your sins and deliver you from guilt, to sympathize with, and comfort you in all your trials and afflictions. 2. My wisdom is yours to provide for you, to counsel and direct you, and to turn all things about for your good. 3. My omnipotence is yours, to guard and protect you from all your enemies, to support and preserve you to salvation. 4. My goodness is yours, to enrich you, bestow grace and glory, and all good things on you. 5. My omniscience is your overseer, to watch over and warn you against approaching dangers. 6. My holiness is your fountain of grace, to sanctify and make you holy. 7. My omnipresence is your companion, to attend and solace you in all places and conditions. 8. My justice is your rewarder, to bestow heaven on you; and also your avenger to punish those that wrong you. 9. My all sufficiency is your inheritance, for giving you complete and perfect happiness. My unchangeableness is the rock of your security. My faithfulness, your pledge and surety, for the accomplishment of all my promises to you: and my eternity is the date of your happiness. So that, O believer, you see, all God's essential perfections are made over to thee in the covenant of grace, and therein thou hast an unsearchable treasure. In God's attributes there is a suitable remedy for all these maladies and miseries which sin has brought on you: his wisdom cures your ignorance, his grace your guilt, his power your weakness, his mercy your misery, his goodness your evil, his faithfulness your inconstancy, his holiness your impurity, his riches your poverty, and his fulness your wants.

Lastly, I will be your God, imports, that all that God hath shall be made over to you, 1 Cor. iii. 21. "All things are yours." All mine are thine. As for instance, 1. All my promises are yours; the promises both of this life, and that which is to come; my promises of pardon, my promises of healing, my promises of sanctification, my promises of quickening and strength, my promises of through-bearing and comfort in trouble, my promises of grace and glory; they are your inheritance.

2. My *gifts* and *graces* are yours, faith, love, hope, fear, humility, patience, and all the fulness that is in Christ, is yours; all these graces are yours, as armour to defend you, jewels to enrich you, and cordials to refresh you, while you sojourn in the wilderness.

3. My *creatures* are yours. My creatures on earth are yours, to serve and sustain you, my angels in heaven are yours, to guard and encamp about you. The earth is your walking and sojourning place, the heavens your country and inheritance. In a word, O believer! my ordinances and sacraments are yours, to strengthen and feed you; my providence is yours, to make all things work for your good; my rod is yours; my people is yours; my kingdom is yours; nay, my eternal Son Christ is yours; all he has done and suffered, even his whole purchase is yours: both things present and to come, life and death, this world and heaven, "all are yours," 1 Cor. iii. 22. Behold, when there was a covenant made between Jehoshaphat and the king of Israel, Jehoshaphat promised Ahab whatever he had or could do, 1 Kings xxii. 4. "I am, (says he,) as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses;" so in the covenant of grace, whatever God hath or can do, is made over to you. But what do I speak? For no created mind can conceive, nor the tongues of men and angels, shew forth the full import of this word, "I will be your God."

III. The *third* thing proposed was, to shew how this privilege of having God for our God, in covenant, appears to be the top of our happiness. And this doth evidently appear from these things.

1 From the vastness of the portion, which believers have in a covenanted God, as above described. There is more comprehended here, "than eye hath seen, ear hath heard, or the heart of man can conceive." In this covenant of grace

you have all that is good, all that is great, and all that can make you happy. You have covenant presence, covenant provision, covenant conduct, covenant protection, covenant support, and covenant strength for all duties, trials, and performances in this world: And you have eternal glory covenanted to you for the world to come. Now, can any thing be so satisfying to the renewed mind, as, to review this vast portion! It is pleasant for a man to view his temporal interests, to walk about his buildings, plantings, gardens, flocks, fields, &c. But what are these to this portion of the believer? It was a ravishing prospect that Moses got of Canaan from mount Nebo: How pleasant was it to view the lovely hills, the fruitful vallies, the winding rivers, the beautiful gardens, and flourishing trees, in that incomparable land! But all that was nothing to the believer's covenanted inheritance. View the covenant, and see who can number the promises and blessings contained in it; time would fail to mention them: Read the scriptures from the beginning to the end, and behold a dazzling and glorious sight! As the heavens are bespangled with stars in a winter night, so is God's word and covenant with shining promises. We may allude to that passage in God's covenanting with Abraham, Gen. xv. 5. God brought him forth abroad, and said, "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: so shall thy seed be." Look, O believer, to the firmament of the covenant, and tell the stars of the promises, if thou be able to number or weigh them; so shall also the blessings and benefits be, which thou hast to inherit.

II. To be in covenant with God, must be the top of our happiness, if we consider the suitableness of the promises, and blessings of his covenant to all our wants and exigencies. All that we stand in need of, and all we can desire, is fully provided for here. O believers, what want ye? What fear ye? What are ye troubled with? Here it may be suitably answered and remedied. Is sin and guilt your trouble? In this covenant there is pardon and redemption. Are your sins great? Here's the Redeemer's "blood that cleanseth from all sin." Are ye condemned by the law's sentence? Here's a sufficient righteousness for your justification and acquittance. Are you poor? Here's fine gold. Are you blind? Here's eye-salve. Are you naked? Here's white raiment. Are you starving? Here's the manna and the fatted calf. Are you diseased? Here's the balm of Gilead. Are you chained prisoners? Here's deliverance for the captives. Are you drowned in debt? Here's an all-sufficient Surety. Are you dead? Here's the resurrection and the life. Is pollution and filthiness your trouble? Here's a deep and open fountain that runs continually. Art thou weak and unable for duty? Here is covenanted grace and strength, which shall be sufficient for thee. This covenant contains all necessary and suitable supplies for thy wants; so that if God be your God, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, your needs shall be richly supplied, according to that promise, Phil. iv. 19. "My God shall supply all your needs, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

III. This covenant-relation to God is our greatest happiness, in regard it doth take the terror out of every thing that is terrible to the believer.

1. This covenant-relation removes all terror from our thoughts of God's holiness and justice. The wicked cannot think of a just and holy God without horror, and therefore, they banish the thoughts of God out of their minds; hence it is said, Psal. x. 4. "God is not in all their thoughts:" For as many thoughts as are in their hearts, God is in none of them. But believers may have pleasant and delightful thoughts of God as their reconciled Father in Christ: his holiness is a fountain of grace to them, and his justice the security of their happiness. The covenant-relation takes all terror out of justice, though the most terrible attribute of God unto a sinner, and makes it, that before was an enemy, become a friend, and enter into a strict alliance with the believer. Before it stood as a flaming sword at the door of paradise to keep them out: But now it stands as an advocate pleading for their entrance, 1 John i 9. "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." O believer, thy happiness is certain; for justice is come over to thy side, and pleads for thy pardon, because the debt is paid, and for the crown of glory, seeing the price is laid down.

2. This covenant-relation takes all terror out of afflictions: Why? It alters the very nature of them to believers, and makes them become good and medicinal to them, Psal. cxix. 71. Isa. xxvii. 9. Yea, they are changed into covenanted mercies, Psal. lxxxix. 32. Psal. cxix. 75. Christ hath shed his blood to purchase sanctified crosses to his people. So believers, whatever trials you meet with, though they be sharp and smartings, you may make such a reflection as this, The Lord sees I want this, otherwise I should not be exercised with it: My covenanted God knows that this, and no less than this, is needful for me.

3. It takes the terror out of the alarming judgments of God, that come on the wicked and ungodly. When God rises to take vengeance on his enemies, and punish sinful nations with his desolating plagues, you may say, These are the mighty acts of my God and king: These things display my Father's power and glory: but, in midst of all, his children are safe.

4. It will take the terror out of death: for though death strip you of other comforts, it cannot dissolve your covenant-relation to God. You may sing that swan-song, Psalm xlviii. 14. "For this God is our God for ever and ever, and he will be our guide even unto death." It is this that gives a believer peace in his latter end: it made David to triumph in the view of approaching death, 2 Sam xxiii. 5. Death must surely be the king of terrors to an unbeliever; why? It is terrible to think, "I am going to appear before that God I do not know, I have no interest in, nor acquaintance with: How can I expect help from him now, whom I never loved, nor sought unto before?" But a covenanted soul may say, "I will not fear, for I know whither I am going, the place I know, and the way I know, and the God of that land I know. Why should I be unwilling to go to my covenanted God and friend, with whom I have had sweet converse, whose presence I earnestly have longed for? Is not death my Father's servant, sent to bring me home to my Father's house, where I will be put in full possession of all the blessings of the covenant? Surely then the day of my death will be better to me than the day of my birth."

5. This covenant-relation takes the terror out of the great judgment day. Why? O believer, it is the day of your covenanted Redeemer's coming to take you home to dwell eternally with him. Doth not a chaste wife long for the return of her husband? And will not a believing soul, betrothed to Christ, long for the glorious bridegroom's return to consummate the happy marriage? Let others tremble at his coming, and cry to the "rocks to hide them from the face of the Lamb;" but surely you have cause to "lift up

your head with joy, for the day of your redemption draweth nigh."

IV. This covenant-relation to God is our greatest happiness; for it doth exceedingly sweeten every thing that is comfortable.

1. It sweetens the thoughts of Christ to a believer. When the word brings the news of his glory to your ears, or the sacrament sets him forth as crucified before your eyes, your hearts may presently warm to him, and cry with Thomas, "My Lord and my God!" and with Paul, "It is the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me;" and with the spouse, "My beloved is mine, and I am his:" "All he did and suffered was for me; his bloody sweat, his painful wounds, his dying groans, were for me. He thought on me when he was on the cross: my name is this day on his breast-plate: he still thinks on me, and pleads for me, as his covenanted spouse. "I know my Redeemer liveth; and because he lives, I shall live also." Good ground have ye to say with the Psalmist, Psal. civ. 34. "My meditation of him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord."

2. It will make gospel ordinances very sweet: As, for instance, (1.) Prayer may be sweet to a covenanted soul: Is it not sweet to come into God's presence, and call him our Father, and speak to him as such? "Father, grant me this, and the other good thing which I want." An uncovenanted soul comes before God as his judge: But Oh! it is comfortable to draw nigh to him as our reconciled God and Father in Christ, and with a holy confidence spread our wants before him. (2.) It will make the word sweet; a covenanted soul may read, and hear it as a love-letter come from his friend and husband, and may sweetly apply the promise of it to himself, and say, This is mine; this was God's gracious unchangeable purpose to me in Christ: And O but that would make the word as a lovely song in our ears! (3.) It will make the Lord's supper sweet. O covenanted souls, you can come to this holy table, as to a precious feast provided for you; you can come as God's friends and invited guests, and expect a kindly welcome from him: It is to you he saith, "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved," Cant. v. 1. This is your Father's table covered for you; many presume thither who have no right; but you have no ground to question your right, nor doubt your welcome: A communion day may be a pleasant day to you, and you may rejoice at the intimation and approach of it, and look on it as a foretaste of heaven, and a pledge of your eternal communion with God.

3. This covenant relation will sweeten your thoughts of God's works, both of creation and providence. When you walk through the fields, you may say, I walk on my father's footstool, which he hath given me to sojourn upon while I am here below. When you view the structure of the heavens, you may say, Behold my Father's palace, where he dwells, and where I will dwell with him ere long: If the floor and pavement of it be so glorious, what must its roof, walls, gates, and furniture be? Yet it is my home and dwelling place, prepared by Christ my forerunner. When you consider the dispensations of providence, and God's various dealings towards you, you may say, How great pains is he at with me to promote my welfare, and prepare me for heaven? Though dispensations be sometimes mysterious now, yet how wise and beautiful will the whole scheme of providence concerning me appear in the issue?

4. It will sweeten all your outward mercies: Why? you may receive them as love-tokens from heaven, and pledges of God's fatherly good will to you in Christ. Art thou raised from a sick bed, or delivered from any trouble? you may say of it as Hezekiah did, Isa. xxxviii. 17. "Thou hast, in love to my soul, delivered it from the pit of corruption." Again, every meal of meat, or morsel of bread thou eatest, may be doubly sweet to you; for it is the fruit of Christ's purchase; it is dipt in his blood, and comes through the covenant channel to thy hand: Thou mayest spy covenant-love in every common mercy; thou enjoyest it not as a creature, but as an heir: Thy Father sends it from his own table to thee, as an earnest of greater and better things laid up for thee hereafter. That word belongs to thee, which we have in Eccl ix. 7. "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works"

Lastly, This covenant-relation to God is our greatest happiness in regard of the sure and indissoluble nature of it, Isa. liv. 10. Mutable creatures alter their purposes, and break their leagues and covenants which they made; but God will never break his covenant of grace with his people. A covenant with a nation may be dissolved, as with the people of the Jews, because it is not built on the eternal purpose of God, to put his fear in their hearts; but it hath a respect to their obedience. But his covenant with the elect is indissoluble, seeing it depends on God's eternal purpose, to make them persevere in his ways. The covenant of grace doth not run thus, "I will be their God, if they will be my people;" but "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." He puts a condition indeed in his covenant of grace; but he has resolved and decreed from eternity, to work that condition in their hearts, Jer. xxxii. 40. "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." There we see, that God is on both sides in this covenant, he engages not only for his own part, but for ours, that we shall fear him, and shall not depart from him. How happy then are believers who are in covenant with God! They are a happy people; and nothing can deprive them of their happiness. Adultery may dissolve the marriage-covenant among men, but not so here; for God saith to his covenanted people, "Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again unto me: Turn, ye backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you," Jer. iii. 1, 14. Again, death cannot dissolve this covenant-relation, as it doth among men; but brings us the nearer to our covenanted God; so that a covenanted soul, when he finds death begin to assault his clay-tabernacle, he may even rejoice, and sing with the Psalmist, Psal. lxxiii. 26. "My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." What though my eye and heart-strings be ready to break, and the lamp of my life be like a candle burnt to the socket, and near the going out; yet still God is my God, and portion for ever. Thus Olevian, a dying saint, comforted himself, "My hearing is gone, my smelling is gone, and my sight is going: my speech and feeling are almost gone; but the loving kindness of God is still the same, and will never depart from me."

APPLICATION.

Use I. Of *Information*. We may hence see, 1. How far mistaken the world is about a believer's lot; they many times reckon them poor and despicable, and the off-scouring

of all things; but certainly they are, of all persons in the world, the wisest; for they make the wisest choice, and the best bargain: Nay, they are the richest too, for all things are theirs; though they oft seem to the world to have nothing, 2 Cor. vi. 10.

2. We may hence infer, that believers have no ground to envy the worldling of his portion, but rather to pity him; for he hath no more than what is seen by all, and that but for a short time, Psal xvii. 14. Luke vi. 24. A carnal man may say, This house, this estate, this money is mine; but a Christian can say, *This God is mine.* And a covenanted God is more than ten thousand kingdoms.

Use, II. Of *Terror*, to those that are out of the bond of this covenant: For if the people be so happy, *whose God is the Lord*, how unhappy and miserable must they be, whose God is not the Lord: Nay, your case is unspeakably sad and dismal; and Oh! that God would send a wakening word to all such, and sound an alarm in your ears this day.

1. You have neither art nor part in the God of Israel, Eph. ii. 12. He stands in no relation to you, but that of Creator, and so stands he to the devils: But what comfort can they draw from that? for "he that made them, will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them, will shew them no favour."

2. You are under a covenant of works, and under its fearful curse and sentence for the breach thereof. It is terrible to be under sentence of death by an earthly judge, and to be looking every hour to be taken forth to the scaffold; But your case is far worse; you are doomed to eternal death, and you may be looking every moment to be led forth to execution. When you awake in the morning, you may say, Shall this be the day of my execution? Shall I be taken to the scaffold of divine vengeance before night? Every head-ach or sick heart, every pain or stitch in back or breast, may put you to say, Is this the messenger that the Judge is to send to bring me forth? Sad is your case, O uncovenanted soul, you may sleep and wake in continual fear: for you are still tottering on the brink of hell, and ridge of destruction. Oh! tremble then to lie down another night in this condition. *In the name of God*, I obtest you to awake from sleep, and find no rest for *the sole of your foot*, till, like Noah's dove, ye come into the ark of the covenant.

Use III Of *Examination* O communicants, try if ye be within this covenant; remember, if you be not, you have no right to the seals of it; no right to sit down at the Lord's table. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat:" And examine yourselves by these marks.

1. Know you any thing of a change of your state? Can you say, "Once I was a bond-slave to satan, and an enemy to God: once I loved sin, and hated holiness: but now God hath opened my eyes, and humbled my heart for sin, and made me cast down the weapons of my rebellion at his feet: once I was at peace without Christ the Mediator; but now I see nothing but fire and wrath out of him: once I thought little of sin; but now I see it to be the most black and bloody thing in the world." Then this is a good sign.

2. If you be in covenant with God, you will certainly love God with your hearts, and love the Mediator, who brought you into the covenant. Can you say then with Peter, "Lord, thou that knowest all things, knowest that I love thee?" Lord, though I cannot hear, pray, praise, or communicate as I ought, yet thou knowest I love thee; yea, I love thee above all things. And though all the riches, honours, and pleasures of the world were in my offer or possession, and Christ would say, You must either part with these, or part with me; my heart would answer, Lord abide thou with me, and let them all be gone.

3. Those that are in covenant with God, have certainly made choice of God, as their God and portion. Can you say you have done this, O doubting communicant? Though you cannot say, that God hath chosen you, yet doth your heart truly chuse him? And are you resolved never to be satisfied without him? And whatever offers be made to you, yet you will be put off with nothing besides God. Then this may give you comfort.

4. Can you say you have made a resignation of yourselves, and of all you have to God, and you resolve to renew it again this night in secret, and to-morrow before men and angels? Then it is a token for good. It may be, doubting soul, thou art afraid to say, Lord thou art my God; but canst thou venture to say, "Lord, I am thine, I resolve to be thine, and thine only; I will not be mine own, I will not be the devil's, I will not be the world's, I will not be my lust's; Lord, I am resolved to be none's but thine." Well, let this comfort you when other marks cannot. For if once you come the length to say, "Lord, I am thine," you may say in the next place, "Lord, thou art mine," for the relation is always reciprocal: And this is the reasoning of the spouse, Cant. vi. 3. "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine."

5. Are you mightily pleased with the contrivement and design of this covenant, which is to debase self, and exalt free grace? And would you desire heaven, though it were for no more, but to stand eternal monuments of free grace, and join your note with the redeemed, eternally to cry, "Not unto us, not unto us, but to thee be the glory?"

And, *Lastly*, Are you inclined to perform covenanted-duties conscientiously, and that in a covenant-way, relying on covenant strength, and from a principle of love and gratitude to your covenanted God, and with an eye to glorify his name: Then fear not to come forward to take the seal of the covenant, for you belong to it.

Use IV. Of *Exhortation.* And this I shall direct to all that hear the gospel, especially communicants. O come take hold of God's covenant, and enter yourselves within the bond of it; and then come and take God's seal to the bargain. I here, in my great Lord and Master's name, make offer of God's covenant to all of you, be what you will, gospel-slighters, rebels against God, graceless and profane sinners, carnal and earthly-minded souls, hypocrites, formalists, backsliders, weary and heavy laden sinners, doubting and discouraged souls; I exhort and beseech you all to come and take hold of God's covenant, make choice of God for your God and portion, and Jesus Christ for your Mediator and Peace-maker with God, and resign yourselves freely to God in Christ. O sinners, the covenant is free, the call is pressing, the offer is great, the bargain excellent.

This is the most honourable and advantageous bargain that ever you made; the design of my whole sermon has been to recommend it, and persuade you to close with it: God knows how your hearts stand inclined. But I would have you all to remember, that our time is short, and the hour is coming, when we that are ministers must leave this work of beseeching, pressing, and arguing with you, and go to him that sent us, with a faithful account of the issue of our message. And O how sad and unpleasant will the account be that we must give of those of you whom we leave unpersuaded to take hold of God's covenant. It will be a melancholy thing, and matter of grief, to accuse any of you to the

Father; but we must do it, if you will not prevent it by your hearkening and obeying. If you do it not in time, as God is in heaven, you will eternally repent it: I do here warn you of your danger, and call heaven and earth to record against you that I am free of your blood O young people! what say ye to it? Will ye take hold of the covenant? Your baptism will not profit you, unless now, when ye are of age, ye ratify your parents deed, renew your baptismal engagements, and personally join yourselves unto the Lord in a perpetual covenant. If ye approach to the Lord's table without doing it, you will be unworthy communicants, you will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, you will but mock God and deceive your own soul. I have not time to answer objections against covenanting with God; I shall only speak to one question, and then conclude.

Quest. But you may say, what would you have us doing, in order to our being brought into God's covenant? We would gladly be among the number of that happy people, whose God is the Lord, and who are in covenant with him; but we know not how to get into it.

Ans. Surely the soul is not wholly passive in this transaction, but must be active in it. Something is to be done on our part, when we enter into covenant with God; and therefore we are called to "join our ourselves unto the Lord in a perpetual covenant," Jer. l. 5. I do not mean, that we can do any thing to enter ourselves into covenant with God in our own strength; no, it is God by his Spirit "that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure." The duty is ours, but the work is the Spirit's. It is the Spirit that courts the heart, and prevails with the soul to give its consent to this blessed bargain. But, in the mean time, let us be minting at our duty as we can, looking for the Spirit's concurrence. And there are four things to be done by us, in order to our being in covenant with God, and God help every communicant to aim sincerely at them this night. 1. Renunciation. 2. Acceptation. 3. Dedication. 4. Solemn engagement.

1. You must heartily renounce and break league with all the Lord's enemies and rivals, Hos. xiv. 8. and particularly renounce, (1.) Satan's government; though formerly you was led captive by him at his will, yet now solemnly renounce all subjection to him, and hearken no more to his suggestions and temptations, let God alone have the throne. (2.) Renounce the world, be no more a slave to it as you have been; set your heart no longer on its profits and pleasures, as your portion and inheritance; but make God your treasure. (3.) Renounce the flesh; however its lusts have been beloved by you, let them reign no more in you: but condemn them to be crucified as the murderers of Christ. (4.) Renounce your own righteousness in point of justification and acceptance with God, and solemnly disclaim all trust and confidence in your own duties and performances.

2. *Acceptation.* Heartily aim to make choice, and accept of God in Christ, as your souls portion and inheritance, Psal. lxxiii. 25. But observe, how God is to be chosen, only in and through Christ the Mediator; for "out of Christ he is a consuming fire;" therefore accept of precious Christ as your guide and way to the Father, and of his satisfaction and merits, as the ransom for delivering you from wrath. Accept of the Holy Ghost as your sanctifier, quickener, and comforter, and heartily acquiesce in the covenant of grace, and gospel-method of salvation through Christ, as "well-ordered in all things."

3. *Dedication.* As God gives himself wholly to you, so do you dedicate and give up yourselves, and all that you have, wholly and unreservedly to God, 2 Chron. xxx. 8. Give up your souls, with all their powers and faculties; your bodies, with all their senses and members; and all your enjoyments, temporal and spiritual, to be employed for God and his honour, and to be entirely disposed of for his service and glory.

4. *Solemn engagement.* You must resolve and engage, in the "strength of Christ our Surety," to live wholly to your covenanted God, and walk with him in newness of life, perform every duty he commands, suffer patiently what he inflicts, watch against every sin he forbids, and manfully fight against his enemies. Thus be aiming at your duty, and lay yourselves in the Spirit's way, and who knows but God will pity and help you, honestly to take hold of his covenant, and also himself say *Amen* to the bargain. The Lord bless his word. Amen.

SERMON XV.

A Preparation Sermon before the Communion.

THE RIGHT IMPROVEMENT OF THE DAY OF GRACE.

HEB. iii 7, 8.—*Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, to-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation,* &c.

IN this chapter, the apostle doth display something of the Mediator's glory and excellency; he shews, that he is far preferable to Moses, as much as the builder of the house is greater than the house; and that he alone is the eternal Son of God, the great prophet and teacher of his church. And having laid down several propositions to this purpose, he comes to draw an inference from them in the words of my text, *Wherefore,* &c. As if he had said, seeing Christ is the chief apostle and prophet of his church, a teacher sent from God to instruct the world, it is therefore our indispensable duty to hear his voice, comply with his counsels, and that without delay; and this exhortation the apostle strengthens with that of David, Psal. xcv. 7.

In the words we have, 1. The illative particle *Therefore,* which denotes the deduction of the ensuing exhortation from the preceding discourse. 2. We have the authority which the apostle cites for his exhortation, even that of the Holy Ghost, who of old spake by David, Psal. xcv. and now speaketh by him in the text. 3. In the exhortation, we have a duty required of us, viz. hearing of Christ's voice, *Hear his voice;* not the voice of a mere man, not the voice of an apostle or angel, but of the eternal Son of God, that glorious ambassador of heaven, who was sent to the world for advancing a treaty of peace; his voice we are to hear, his instructions and calls we are to comply with. 4. We have the circumstance of time, and special season when this duty is to be done, and that is presently, *to-day,* or in this solemn day of grace. 5. We have, in the following verse, a cautionary direction to all that sit under the gospel, to beware of hardening their hearts, or stopping their ears against Christ's calls, as the obstinate and hard-hearted Jews did in the wilderness.

DOCT. I. "That the consideration of the authority of the Holy Ghost speaking in the scripture, should mightily enforce upon us the duties there exhorted." We should consider whose authority we despise, when we slight the offers, calls, and duties pressed in the gospel, even that of the Holy Ghost; and it is a fearful thing to sin against the Holy Ghost.

DOCT. II. "That the voice which we are called to hear in and by the gospel is Christ's voice; it is not the voice of a man like ourselves, but the voice of the Son of God, and therefore should be awfully regarded." But the doctrine which I intend to handle at this time, shall be drawn chiefly from the season of pressing this duty.

DOCT. III. "That all who sit under the gospel, should be careful to improve the seasons of grace, and opportunities of hearing Christ's voice, which God allows them."

In handling this doctrine, I shall shew,

I. What is implied in hearing of Christ's voice in the gospel.

II. That there are some special seasons for hearing of Christ's voice, and what these are.

III. How we ought to improve these seasons.

IV. Reasons why we should carefully improve them.

V. I shall apply the whole.

I. As to the *First*, What is imported in hearing of Christ's voice in the gospel. I shall not insist on what is presupposed in it, viz. That our ears are naturally stopped against Christ; and it is only a work of his power on the soul that can open them, but shew what it directly implies.

1. This *hearing* doth import, our believing the word to be Christ's voice, and not the voice of man. As long as we regard what we hear, only as the voice of a minister, or man like ourselves, it will never humble us, nor prevail with our stubborn hearts; but when we begin to take it up as the voice of God, or Christ speaking to us from heaven, then the soul doth hearken, consider, and obey. Till Samuel knew that it was the Lord's voice speaking to him, 1 Sam. i. he still took the wrong course: he went to Eli, when he should have hearkened to God.

2. A close and serious attention of the mind to what we hear. The soul that hears Christ's voice stops his career in pursuing sin and the world, which always makes a buzzing noise about his ears; and applies his ear to hear what Christ saith; turns attentive to, and serious about the things of eternity.

3. The application of what Christ saith unto us in particular: As if Christ spoke to us by name and surname, and said to us, as Nathan did to David, "Thou art the man." We commonly neglect what Christ saith by his word, by putting it by ourselves to others, but we hear him aright when we bring what he saith close home to our own hearts and consciences, and say, "It is to me this word is directed; it is me that Christ intends, it is I that the law condemns, and that justice threatens. I am the guilty sinner that have shut out Christ, and preferred my lusts to him, and yet he now pities me, and calls me to open to him."

4. A thorough conviction of the necessity and advantage of yielding to Christ's calls. O saith the soul, long hath my Saviour knocked, saying, "Open to me, arise and come away," and yet I have sit still and given him a deaf ear; and now I am lost, undone, and condemned in my present case; if death knock before I open to Christ, I can look for nothing but the bottomless pit to open and swallow me up for ever. But if I open to Christ, I am happy, and out of the reach of wrath for ever.

5. It imports the soul's cordial complying with Christ's calls, and consenting to receive and embrace him as he is offered in the gospel; that is to say, as a prophet to teach us, a priest to atone for us, and a king to rule us. The man that hears Christ's voice, goes in heartily with the gospel method of salvation, acquiesces in that noble contrivance of grace, is well content to be justified by Christ's righteousness, to be taught at Christ's school, and governed by his laws.

II. The *second* thing to be discoursed is, That there are some special seasons for hearing Christ's voice, that should be carefully improven, and what these are. There are some advantageous opportune seasons of grace, wherein God is ready to receive and entertain us, which are called in scripture "an accepted time, and day of salvation," 2 Cor. vi. 2. an *accepted time*, i. e. a time well pleasing to God. *A day of salvation*, i. e. a day wherein the improvers of it may get salvation begun in pardoning and sanctifying grace, and eternal salvation completed in heaven, made sure to them. Now such times and seasons should be carefully managed, that they be not lost, as, alas! they are too many. I shall mention some of these seasons.

I. The *present time*, when you have the gospel-ordinances, and health and strength to attend them: That is a season carefully to be improven, and hence the Spirit of God saith so frequently, yea, no less than three times in this 3d chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, *To day, to day, to-day*, God cries to you, *To-day hear my voice*, but satan says to you, *To-morrow* is time enough. But surely, God's season is the best. O sinner! to day thou art in health, to-morrow thou mayest be in sickness. To day thou art living, to morrow thou mayest be dying: To-day thou art on earth, to morrow thou mayest be in hell. To-day Christ is smiling and inviting you to come unto him, but to morrow he may be frowning, and sentencing you to depart from him, never to return again. And should not the present time, then, when you enjoy ordinances, and health to attend them, be duly improven?

II. The *time of youth* is a special season of grace, Eccl. xii. 1. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth," O young folk, this is an accepted time, and a day of salvation: It is a most advantageous opportunity for hearkening to Christ's voice, for, 1. Now the heart is more tender, and the will more pliable than afterwards. Now the heart is sooner affected and melted for sin, than afterwards, for old age turns stiff and inflexible. The branches of a young tree will bow, and train up anyway, but when old, they will not ply. 2. Now you have not such sins to burden the conscience, harden the heart, and hinder you from coming to Christ, as you will have afterwards. 3. Now your minds and thoughts are more free of cares and anxieties about the world, than they will be afterwards, and so more fit for closing and transacting with Christ in the gospel. 4. It is a season that God especially regards. Under the law, he required the first fruits as his portion, and would have all the sacrifices that were offered to him, to be young, and in their strength, Exod. xxiii. 19. Lev. ii. 14. And still he loves the season of youth, and remembers the kindness of youth long afterward, Eccl. xii. 1. Jer. ii. 2, 3. The mourning, praying, and praising of young folk, is the most melodious music in God's ears: Wherefore, let the precious season of youth be diligently improven. Are there not some young communicants here? Oh! improve this day of salvation, a time of youth is the most usual season of conversion, and acquaintance with Christ. If you look through the land, a-

mong the people of God, you will perhaps find scarce one of a hundred, but will date his conversion, and first closing with Christ, from the time of youth. If a tree do not bud or blossom, when young, it is a sign that it is barren, and will not bear at all afterwards. O then! now in the days of youth lay a sure foundation-stone; take heed to your first communicating; strive for heart-sincerity in hearing Christ's voice, closing with the gospel-offer, and covenanting with God.

III. A season when people enjoy plenty and purity of gospel-ordinances with peace and safety, ought carefully to be improven. And now ye have such a season, you have plenty of ministers, plenty of sermons, sacraments, solemn calls, free offers, faithful warnings, earnest intreaties, and powerful persuasions, and none to make you afraid. It is prophesied of the gospel-times, Psal. lxviii. 11. That "the Lord shall give the word, and great shall be the company of them that publish it." Now you have many faithful labourers; in every parish you have such as publish the word, and preach the glad tidings of reconciliation: Many a time have you Christ crucified set forth before your eyes in the Lord's supper; and again, the Lord is to give you in this place a new occasion for it. These are precious seasons, which our fathers sometimes would have prized at a high rate; when they were put to seek their spiritual bread with the peril of their lives, "because of the sword in the wilderness" The Lord hath made his arm bare in behalf of the gospel: He hath disabled its enemies, settled the ark in its place, and still continues plenty of pure ordinances, maugre all the contrivances and attempts of enemies for their oppression. Oh! for hearts to value and improve such precious opportunities.

IV. A time when God gives a people providential warnings, to awaken and excite them to attend his word and ordinances, is a season to be improven. God hath oft threatened us with a bloody sword; and now he is threatening us with the approaching of the pestilence; that wasting stroke that lays heaps upon heaps, makes death to ride in triumph through the streets. Many warnings of approaching judgments have we formerly misimproven; and therefore, God may come upon us unawares, and surprise us with his judgments without warning. Well, while God is taking pains on us, and giving us warning at a distance, let us improve the season, by hearkening to Christ's voice in the gospel. "Let us be moved with fear, (like Noah) and provide an ark for the saving of our souls," before the flood of wrath approach. Nay, blessed be God, the ark is prepared to our hand, and there is a window opened in the side thereof for our entrance: let us take the wings of faith, and fly thither without delay.

V. A time when the *inward workings of the Spirit* on the conscience, concur with the external dispensation of the word and sacraments, is a special season to be improven. It is then, that a great and effectual door is opened both to ministers and people. Paul had this door opened to him at Ephesus, amongst many adversaries, 1 Cor. xvi. 9. Oh if it were so with us, we needed not fear all that adversaries can do against the gospel. But we have it to regret, that though God hath outwardly restrained adversaries, yet a "great and effectual door" is not opened to us: Still the door is strait both for ministers and people: God's Spirit is greatly restrained in our day. If it be asked, When is it that a wide or effectual door is opened? *Ans.* It is only when the Spirit of God is poured out in a plentiful way, both on ministers and people. When God's Spirit was thus poured out after Christ's ascension, then both the graces and the gifts of the Spirit were communicated in a plentiful measure. Then ministers had great light of knowledge and understanding, as well as the heat of zeal and love. It was easy for them to study and preach, they had clear uptakings of the matters of God, and a great readiness and liberty of expression. Their hearts were enlarged, their minds enlightened, their memories were strengthened, and they had a door of utterance opened, i. e. a great facility in declaring of their minds; they were no way straitened for proper matter or fit words, their hearts indited goodly things, and their tongues were as the pen of a ready writer. Thus it is still, when the Spirit of God is remarkably poured out: then the preaching of the gospel is both pleasant and powerful; ministers hearts are warmed, and peoples hearts are melted; ministers mouths are opened, and peoples appetites enlarged. There is such a thing as the Spirit of God his striving with the hearts and consciences of hearers, in and by the word, Gen. vi. 3. And when he thus strives, it makes an effectual door, and a special season of salvation. When the Spirit moves the waters of the sanctuary, people should not neglect then to step in, and be healed. Take heed you do not slight the strivings of God's Spirit with you in any measure, lest you provoke God to pass such a dreadful sentence against you, as that, Gen. vi. 3. "My Spirit shall no longer strive with you." And if you lose the precious season of the Spirit's striving, you perhaps will never recover it again.

Quest. When is it that the Spirit of God strives with sinners, in and by the gospel?

Ans. 1. When he opens the eyes, and gives the man a discovery of his sinful and miserable state by nature, and of the evil, heinousness, and danger of his sins; and so rivets and fastens conviction on the heart and conscience, that the arrows of the threatenings do stick, and the man is brought to thoughtfulness and anxiety about his future state; and and hence is made to cry, "What shall I do to be saved?" Oh! that is a season which ought to be carefully improven.

2. The Spirit strives, by making a man wholly dissatisfied with his present state, and all his earthly enjoyments, as long as he is in the dark about his soul's salvation. Though he may be in outward prosperity, he says, "All these things avail me nothing," while I am ready to be swallowed up by the wrath of God for sin; surely there is no living, no abiding in this state I am in. I am shut up in the prison of unbelief, and the house is all on fire about my ears; I must break the prison, and make my escape, otherwise I am undone for ever.

3. By making the man despair of help and deliverance by any thing in himself. Oh, saith he, I am a poor, miserable, helpless creature! Neither my doing, nor suffering, can free me from wrath. I know no course, no contrivance of my own, that can relieve me. My relief must certainly come from another airth; for I can never work it for myself.

4. By humbling the man to the dust for sin, particularly for mispending time, neglecting prayer, misimproving sermons, profaning sabbaths and sacraments, &c. Oh! says he, is there any creature more vile than I? Surely there is no toad more loathsome, no carrion more offensive, no puddle more unclean, than my soul before God: Can ever the arms of mercy open to embrace such a monster of sin as I have been? This is a choice season, which should be well improven.

5. By giving some light into the understanding, concerning the remedy provided for lost sinners. The soul begins, by the word, to discover something of the fulness and ability of Christ, as a Saviour, so that it is made to think there is hope in Israel concerning this matter: My case, says the sinner, is not so bad as the devils, for whom no remedy was ever provided.

6. By working some purposes and inclinations in the will toward the offered remedy; so that the soul makes its aims at Christ: Yea, is content to take any course for an interest in him. And therefore says oft with Paul, Acts ix. 6. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" What method shall I take to "be found in Christ, not having my own righteousness?"

7. By determining the soul to a conscientious and diligent use of the means, for getting Christ, and salvation through him.

8. By making a stir and commotion among the affections, and exciting earnest and passionate desires after Christ and salvation through him: So that the soul is made to say, "O that I knew where I might find him! Oh! when wilt thou come unto me? I will spare no pains to get a meeting with him, I will seek him through the streets and broad ways, and all the lanes of the city, crying, "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?"

Now, when the Spirit strives with any of you, in any measure, it is a precious season of grace, that should be carefully observed and improven

III. The *third* thing in my general method, is, to shew how these seasons of grace ought to be improven by us.

1. By highly valuing and admiring the distinguishing goodness of God, in affording us such days of grace and salvation. He deals not so with other nations: Jews, Pagans, Mahometans, and Papists, have not the gospel-light and offers of grace which you have. Be thankful to God, especially you that have more special and remarkable seasons beyond others: You that have health and strength, and youth on your side; you that have the Spirit of God striving with you in the ordinances, your eyes opened, hearts melted, consciences awakened, affections moved; O bless God for his distinguishing mercies.

2. By believing firmly what Christ saith to you by the word, and attending carefully to it Why? It is the word of the living God, more true, certain, and immoveable, than the foundations of the earth: Nay, heaven and earth will both sooner pass away, than one jot or one title of his word fall to the groued. Let your ears then be stopped against all the calls and solicitations of sin, satan, aad the world; and open only to precious Christ, saying with the Psalmist, "I will hear what God the Lord will speak."

3. By applying closely to yourselves what Christ saith, and meditating on it afterwards. When you hear any sin threatened you are guilty of, or any duty pressed that you neglect; bring that word close home to your hearts, and say, This word is to me, let me not forget it. O let it abide with me when I go home, when I eat and drink, when I ly down and rise up, when I go out and come in. Still think, you hear Christ's word sounding in your ears, and that you hear him crying, "Awake thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" Open the door of thy heart, and let me in. "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away." Why do you weary my patience, and let me stand so long neglected, "till my head is wet with the dew, and my locks with the drops of the night?"

4. By labouring to give kindly entertainment to the word, and the motions of Christ's Spirit on thy soul, presently striking in with conviction, submitting to reproofs, and hearkening to his counsels, saying with Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Say not to the Spirit's motions and strivings with thee, as Felix did to Paul, "Go thy way for this time, and when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." No, no, but forthwith give ear, yield and comply with the Spirit's strivings, and Christ's voice: Be content immediately to have thy sores lanced, and thy wounds searched to the bottom; and when conviction and soul-trouble for sin is begun, go not to stifle or quench it, or seek hastily to pluck God's arrows out of thy conscience; but cherish and entertain the work of God's Spirit, by meditating on thy sin, considering thy lost estate by nature, thy insufficiency to help thyself, together with the excellency and suitableness of the remedy which God has provided.

5. By frequent and fervent application to the throne of grace, begging, for Christ's sake, that God may both begin and finish his work in the soul. Acknowledge that you are able of yourselves to do nothing, and that it is by his grace only you can be saved; and when he begins by conviction, be thankful to him, and intreat, that these sparks, kindled by the breath of God, may not be smothered, but blown up into a flame: And still remember that the work is God's, though it be your duty to be casting on fuel by prayer and meditation; yet the sparks that kindle the fire may come from God's altar, the breath that blows it comes from heaven. Pray therefore, that the fire may come down, even a live coal from the altar, and that heaven's wind may blow on thy soul. Cry with the spouse, "Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out." Let the north winds of the law come, and convince, and awaken; and the south winds of the gospel come, and refresh, and comfort. Be earnest, O convinced sinner, in deprecating God's taking away his Spirit from you; make it a part of your daily prayer, to cry with the Psalmist, Psal li. 11. "Lord, take not thy holy Spirit from me." Lord forbid the new creature be stifled in the womb. O do thou quicken and preserve it. Let these convictions terminate in my conversion here, and salvation hereafter. Lord, thou art a rock, thy work is perfect: hast thou begun, and wilt thou not also make an end? Oh! suffer not these tender fruits to be nipped in the bud, or blasted in the blossom, either by satan's frost-winds, or the world's chilling blasts: But, Oh! preserve them to maturity, to the praise and glory of thy grace.

IV. The next thing is, the reasons of the doctrine; why we should so carefully improve our seasons of grace.

1. Because God looks for it, and expects it at our hand. When God plants trees in his vineyard, waters and takes pains on them, he looks for fruit from them, Luke xiii. We see what the Lord says of Judah, Isa. v. 1, 2. "My well-beloved (i. e. Christ) hath a vineyard (i. e. the church of the Jews) in a very fruitful hill; (i. e. a good soil, furnished with all possible means to make it fruitful:) And he fenced it, (i. e. protected it by his providence, from the incursion of enemies) he gathered out the stones thereof, (i. e. removed out of it whatever was noxious or hurtful, perhaps the idol-gods, put these out of the land) he planted it with the choicest vine: (i. e. with pure ordinances, and institutions of worship, good government, and discipline:) He built a tower in the midst of it, (i. e. for its defence, viz. the strong city of Jerusalem in midst of the land, which was built as a city com-

pact together, whether the tribes went up for worship.) Also he made a wine-press therein; (i. e. the temple and altar continually running with the blood of the sacrifices.) Now, after all, it is said, "He looked that it should bring forth grapes," which doth not import that God was uncertain of the event; but denotes what is just and equal, and what in such cases ought to be. Surely a vineyard, so attended and furnished, ought to bring forth fruit, answerable to all the acts of God's care and grace towards it.

And to bring the matter home to our case, God hath been at special care to plant a vineyard in this land: We have a good soil, well fenced, the stones gathered out, idolatry and superstition removed, a choice vine planted, pure ordinances set up, enemies disabled that laid it waste. God has built towers, and made wine-presses to us, viz. the sacraments, and especially the Lord's supper, where the blood of Christ, our great sacrifice, doth run plentifully to us, for pardon, healing, and washing. Now, doth not God look for grapes? Is it not just that we should bring forth fruit, answerable to all these privileges? Alas! for the most part, there is nothing but wild grapes with us; little suitable fruit of our solemn communion-days. You may see, what is the result of frustrating the divine expectations, Isa v. 6. Nothing but blasting, withering, ruin, and desolation.

2. Because of the shortness and uncertainty of the season of grace: None can tell how long it will last. You cannot promise it will continue as long as your lives, (though even these be most uncertain.) No; your special season and day of grace may end this very day, or at this communion-occasion, though you should happen to live many years after this. It is likely, God is saying to some hearing me, "To-day hearken to my voice, repent, and close with Christ my Son, or be henceforth hardened and undone for ever." O sinner, this night thy day of grace may cease; God may this day cause some of your hearts to warm by the word, others to tremble, others to mourn, others to purpose and resolve. Well, if you do not lay hold on, and improve this season, and hearken to Christ's voice, you may never get the like occasion again; nay, even though you should wish for it. Christ saith, Luke xvii. 22. "The time shall come, when you shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and shall not see it." This may be one of the days of the Son of man to you; for now Christ is offering himself, and pressing salvation on you, and striving by his Spirit (I hope) with some of you. Well, if you neglect to open your hearts to Christ this day, God may set a seal on them to-morrow, that they shall never be opened. You may afterwards desire another of such days as this; you may wish for one of the offers of that Saviour, for one drop of that blood you slighted, for one knock of his Spirit at the door of your heart, which formerly you neglected; for one of his motions or strivings with you; and yet it may never be granted. With some the day of grace is longer, with others shorter; with some it ends in childhood, with others it ends in youth; and with some few it lasts to old age: But, O sinner! thou hast no reason to expect the continuance of it a moment after this day.

3. Because if you do not improve your day of grace, you lose your souls. You may compare the text with verse 11th of the chapter; "because they hardened their hearts, and would "not hear his voice," in their day of grace, it is subjoined, "I sware in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest." We see the sad case Jerusalem was in when they lost their day of grace, Luke xix. 41, 42. "When he was near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes." Here it is said, "Christ wept," (orig. *Eclause)* which denotes a weeping with lamentation. "He wept bitterly," to let you all know what a sad and deplorable thing it is, for a people, city, or person, to lose their day of grace. The words he speaks are uttered in a weeping strain. Abrupt expressions come now and then from his mouth; he drops now a word, and then a tear; he would speak, but his weeping stops his voice, "If thou hadst known, even thou." *Thou* is reduplicate, or twice exprest, "Thou even thou." As if he had said, Thou ancient city, the city of David, thou seat of the temple, and of the sacrifices: "O if thou hadst known." Then he adds, "at least in this thy day." They had enjoyed many lesser days of grace, when they had faithful prophets dealing with them; these they persecuted and despised, and so lost these days: But these were but lesser days, which did not finally determine the state of that city; for they were to have another day, which is here called, "this their day, i. e. the day wherein the Son of God was to come among them, and preach the gospel to them, "three years and a half:" That was a special day of grace, and the day that determined their state; for since they did not improve it, "the things of their peace were hid from their eyes." God would deal no more with them, but left them to destruction. O sinner! O communicants! so will it fare with you, if you let your day of grace go over. Night will come on, wherein none can work, you will stumble in the dark, and fall headlong into the pit for ever.

4. Because God keeps a strict account of every hour and minute of your day of grace, that you trifle away; for he reckons it very precious, whatever you think of it. When God lights the candle of the gospel, he expects you should work by it; and he will not suffer this precious candle to burn without observation; nay, he counts every hour and minute it burns, and every hour and minute his Spirit strives, and will make you reckon for them at last. God takes not such strict notice of times of darkness and ignorance; for it is said, he winks at sinners living under them, Acts xvii. 30. i. e. He doth not so narrowly mark their diligence; but when he sends times of light, and of his Spirit's striving with sinners, he will not wink at one hour or minute, but exactly set down every sermon you hear, every communion you see, every call, every intreaty, every threatening, every reproof, every conviction and warning you get, whether by ordinances or providences, whether by conscience or by his Spirit. And, Oh! what a dreadful libel will these make up against you at the great day, if you neglect your day of grace.

V. APPLICATION.

Use I. For *information*. We may hence see, that it is not the bare enjoyment of the gospel, and communion-seasons that will make us happy, but the right improvement of the day of grace, which we enjoy therein.

Use II. For *lamentation*. We may hence take occasion to bewail the sad case of many that neglect and lose the day of their merciful visitation. It is said, Jer. viii. 7. "The stork knoweth her appointed times, the turtle, the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming," &c. And we are bid go learn of the ant, Prov. vi. 6. "that provides her meat in summer, and gathers her food in harvest,"

while the weather is good and dry, and food may be had. So that we see the brutes and silly insects observe their seasons. But, alas! many men neglect and forget theirs; they let their summer and harvest-days pass, without making any provision for eternity. Oh! how many among us may take up that sad lamentation, Jer. viii. 20. "Our harvest is past, our summer is ended, and we are not saved!" O that we could weep over many, as Christ did over Jerusalem, for losing their day of grace!

Quest. Who are these that thus lose their day of grace?

Ans. It is hard to be very particular on this head; I shall only give some general characters of such persons.

1. Those who have sat many years under pure and powerful ordinances, and were never affected thereby; but still remain dead and hardened under the most awakening calls and plainest reproofs. These seem to be given over to ruin, Prov. xxix. 1. "He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall be suddenly destroyed, and that without remedy."

2. Those who have had many secret motions and operations of the Spirit on their souls, to no effect; many purposes and resolutions to good, and all evanished; many of the Spirit's strivings, and all resisted: These are likely to be given over, Ezek. xxiv. 13. "Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee." When God's Spirit offered to cleanse that people from their sin, they, like Lot's wife, still hankered after it, and would not part therewith.

3. Those who have greatly grieved the Spirit of God, by venturing on sin against the light of their consciences, and the Spirit's motions, and so are turned wilful and resolute in sinning; such have the symptoms of rejection, Hos. iv. 17. "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone."

4. Those who are so forward and bent upon a sinful course, that they can endure no reproof or controul therein, but hate them in their hearts, who seek to reclaim them: Those have the symptoms of ruin upon them, Prov. xv. 10. Amos v. 10.

5. When persons are so far hardened in sin, that God ceaseth to be a reprover to them, and strikes their consciences so dumb and senseless, that they do not accuse nor challenge them: It is a sad sign of up-giving, Ezek. iii. 26. Hos. iv. 17.

6. When repentance is hid from people's eyes, so that they are not affected with the view of their sins, when they are laid before them; no dispensation of providence, no token of God's anger, neither judgments nor mercies, rods nor threatenings; nay, the flames of hell flashed in the sinner's face, do not breed any remorse in their consciences, nor relenting in their hearts for sin: When people arrive at this height, it is a sad sign that they are given up to wrath, Isa. xlii. 25.

III. Next use shall be of *examination.* O try, if ye have improven your day of grace, so as to hearken to Christ's voice, and comply with his gracious offers, O communicants, it is highly your interest to know this, that you may come with chearfulness, and feast with your Redeemer at his table. Now try it by these marks,

1. Had you never the experience of Christ's Spirit's work in opening your ear, and inclining your heart to close with his offers in the gospel? Do you experimentally know the [illegible]ness and multitude of your sins? Do you know something of the terribleness of God's wrath due to you for these sins? Have you seen your soul's need of Christ, as a man, pursued for his life, seeth his need of a city or refuge? Have you seen yourselves lost and dead men, if you get not into Christ? Have you felt ardent desires after Christ, and been made to say, "Give us Christ, or else we die?" Have you been content to take this lovely Saviour on any terms, to part with all for this *pearl of price,* and to count all but *loss and dung,* to be found in him.

2. Can you say, that Christ's word and ordinances where you first heard his voice speaking to you, are still precious and lovely to you for his sake? And hence you are made sometimes to cry out with the Psalmist, Psal. lxxxiv. 1, 2. "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." Sweet sermons, sweet communion-days, lovely occasions, when the bridegroom's voice is to be heard.

3. Are you filled with low thoughts of yourselves, and all your own doings and performances, and with high thoughts of Christ and his righteousness? And do you turn out all Christ's rivals out of your hearts, and undervalue the world and all things in it besides him, who is "the chiefest among ten thousands, and fairer than the sons of men?"

4. Do you find a great alteration and gracious change on your souls, since the time you heard his voice? Doth Christ sit as a refiner with you, changing both heart and life to the better? Are *old things past away,* old lusts, old thoughts, old desires, old customs, old ways? And are all things with you become new? You that formerly set light by Christ and his voice, and admired the world and its flattering pleasures, and said of Christ, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" Do you now value him, seek nearness to him in duties, enquire for him in ordinances, yea, meditate on him in the night watches, and, when ye awake, do you find your hearts with him? And is sin, that displeaseth him, your greatest terror? Then surely you are among that blest company that have heard your Redeemer's voice in your day of grace, and you may come with joy to his table.

IV. Use of *exhortation.* And here I exhort you all, in the name of Christ, to improve your season of grace. "To-day, while it is called to-day, O hear his voice;" and to-morrow, when he invites, O come unto his table. Hearers of the gospel, "This is now the accepted time, this is the day of salvation." What do you resolve to do? Christ is now come to cry and lift up his voice to this whole congregation, to try you once more if you will hear his voice, before your day of grace end. Well, his voice is to you all, I know none of you excluded, if you do not exclude yourselves.

1. O carnal earthly-minded soul, that has been a drudge to the world, and a stranger to Christ all thy days, his voice is to you this day: O come hear his voice, and close a bargain with him, it will be the best bargain ever you made.

2. O profane sinner, drunkard, swearer, liar, sabbath-breaker, whoremonger, sinner as black as hell, hearken to Christ's voice this day, and come and be saved from thy sins: Why will you stop your ears, and chuse to die in your sins?

3. O hard-hearted sinner, that never wast affected all thy life for the sinfulness and misery of thy natural estate, that never had a sore heart for offending God, that never mourned for one sin, Christ's voice is this day to thee, Isa. xlvi. 12. "Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness."

4. O prayerless sinner, that never bowed a knee in secret,

to cry for pardon of sin, and an interest in Jesus Christ, to save thee from the wrath to come, lend your ear this day, and hearken to Christ's sweet voice, while he calls, "Seek the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near," Isa. lv. 6.

5. Condemned rebels in the hands of justice, sentenced to die, and ready to be taken out to execution: O hear Christ's voice this day, and your souls shall live.

6. Slaves to sin and satan, who have many times heard the devil's voice, answered his calls, and complied readily with his temptations; will you hear the Redeemer's voice for once, and comply with his counsels before it be too late? Why will ye shut your ear against the lovely Saviour, and obey the voice of your soul-destroyer?

7. Obstinate sinner, that could never hitherto, either by the word or the rod, by ministers or providences, be prevailed upon to leave one of all thy sins, O be persuaded to hear Christ's voice this day, and no longer harden thy heart.

8. O gospel-slighter, that has many a day refused Christ's offers, spurned against his bowels, trampled on his blood, crucified him at the communion table: O come, hearken this day to his voice, and he will let you see, that though your case be sad, yet it is not desperate, for *he hath found a ransom.*

9. Hypocrites and formalists, that have had a mask of religion, but have all your days been dissembling and dealing deceitfully with God; come, deal ingenuously and sincerely with him for once, and hearken to his voice, give him your hearts, as well as your outward man.

10. Backsliders and covenant-breakers, who have broke many a vow, slighted many an engagement, and sinned against many a resolution: O hear Christ's voice this day, when he calls to you, "Turn, ye backsliding children," come to me, and "I will heal your backslidings, and love you freely."

11. Poor plagued diseased souls, who are groaning under many heart-plagues, and soul-distresses, such as atheism, pride, hardness, formality, &c. come hearken to Christ's voice, and he will be your Physician.

12. Weary and heavy-laden sinners, who are like to sink with the burden of your guilt, come hearken to Christ's voice this day, and he "will give rest to your souls."

13. Pursued shelterless sinners, who are afraid of the avenger of blood, hearken to Christ's voice, and fly to the city of refuge. Many motives and arguments might I use with you, to hear the voice of lovely Jesus, while he calls to-day.

I. Consider how earnest Christ is to persuade you to hear his voice; he stands at your doors, and knocks both by his word and Spirit; yea, he waits and knocks after many repulses and affronts, and promises that all former slights and refusals shall be forgiven, if ye will yet hearken and close with him. How oft doth he repeat his intreaties, Luke xiii. 34. "How oft would I have gathered you!" Yea, he weeps for sinners obstinacy, Luke xix. 41. Strange! Doth he gain any thing by your hearkening to his voice? What means this earnestness? It is all, O sinners, on your account. For (1.) He knows better than any the worth of your souls, and that a world cannot redeem them when lost. (2.) He knows well the miserable state of your souls without him; it is most sad and deplorable at present, and will be much more so through endless eternity: For if you hear not Christ's voice, you will die in your sins, and be tormented in them for ever. (3.) Christ is so earnest, because he knows the difficulty of winning souls. He knows satan has great power and interest with souls, to blind, harden, and delude them, and that it is not easy to undeceive them, and pull them out of his grips; and therefore he deals and strives so earnestly with souls to gain them.

II. Take a serious view of the state of your souls: While you stop your ears against Christ's charming voice; it is inexpressibly miserable. For, 1. Your souls are destitute of all that is good, Eph. ii. 12. You are as poor and wretched creatures as ever God made; you are without life, without grace, without peace, without pardon, without comfort, without righteousness, without ransom, without the favour of God, without the lovely image of God, without the Spirit of God, and without all happiness. 2. Your souls are in the possession of Satan, where Christ is shut out, the devil is let in; and where he dwells, there he hath an absolute dominion: he uses all the faculties of the soul as his tools and instruments, Eph. ii. 2. Oh! would not any man reckon it an unspeakable misery, to be in a house shut up with the devil? 3. Where Christ is shut out, the plague of sin doth rage, and its pestilential marks do daily appear; what madness is it then to refuse to hearken to the voice of this blessed cleanser? 4. The fire of God's wrath is kindled there, where Christ is refused; and what distraction is it to shut out Christ, whose blood only can quench this fire? 5. If you do not hearken to Christ, you have no way to prevent eternal destruction; for there is no advocate, no surety, to interpose for you, if he be refused. Surely, the thoughts of appearing before an angry God after death, must be terrible to a Christless soul; "For who can dwell with devouring fire? Who can abide with everlasting burnings?" I have read of a certain king of Hungary, who was a Christian; and being on a time marvellous sad and heavy, his brother, who was a brisk and gallant man, would needs know what ailed him. "Oh brother (saith he) I have been a great sinner against God, and I know not how I shall appear before him, when he comes to judgment." His brother answered, "These are but melancholy thoughts," and so made light of them, as courtiers use to do. The king replied nothing at that time; but the custom of that country was, (the government thereof being absolute) that if the executioner sounded a trumpet before any man's door, the man was presently to be led to execution. The king, in the dead time of the night, sent his executioner, and caused him sound his trumpet before his brother's door, who, hearing and seeing the messenger of death, ran quickly, and sprang in trembling in to his brother's presence, falls down on his knees, and beseeches the king to let him know wherein he had offended him. "O brother, (answered the king) you never offended me, but loved me: And (said he) is the sight of an earthly executioner so terrible to thee; and shall not I, who am so great a sinner, fear much more to be brought to the judgment-seat of an angry God?" What soul can think on this without terror, that hath not hearkened to Christ's voice in the gospel.

III. If you do not hearken to Christ's voice in the gospel, it had been better for you never to have heard the gospel at all; for your guilt is dreadfully aggravated hereby, and your misery will be the greater, both here and hereafter. We may gather this from Rev. vi. where, after the *white horse,* (i. e. Christ with the gospel neglected) comes the *red horse* of war, the *black horse* of famine, and the *pale horse* of pestilence. Neglecting to hear Christ in the gospel, ushers

in all outward miseries like a flood, Jer. vi. 8. "Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee, lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited." Then again how sad will your case be at a tribunal, and through all eternity? The devils, the Turks, the Heathens, and your own consciences, will bitterly upbraid you in hell, for refusing to hear Christ's voice in the gospel.

IV. Christ will not hear your cries in the time of misery, if you neglect his voice in the time of mercy. Prov. i. 24, 25, 26. Now Christ's voice is sweet, and full of mercy; but remember, O gospel slighters, the time is at hand, when you will hear Christ speaking in another tone, no more "open to me, and hearken to my voice," poor soul, but "depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," &c.

V. This may be the last season you will hear Christ's voice speaking to you; this may be the last communion and the last call that Christ intends to give you. This may be the last day of grace, and the last time that his Spirit will strive with you. If you stop your ear, or harden your heart this day, there may follow an eternal dead silence, and God's Spirit never strive any more with you, and so your day of grace is lost, and your soul lost for ever. O young folk, what say ye to it? A season of youth is an accepted time, and a day of salvation; for the Lord's sake do not lose it. You have now plenty of sermons, sacraments, and gospel offers; you have Christ crucified set before your eyes to affect your hearts, and bring you to a compliance with his calls. You have also loud warnings this day from God's providence, and (I hope) some of you the inward workings of God's Spirit on your consciences, concurring with these outward means. Well, then, give kindly entertainment to Christ's voice in this season of grace, while he yet stands beseeching you, come hearken to his voice, and accept of him as your Surety, enter into covenant with him this night, and come to his table, and seal it to morrow. O sinner, turn your back on the devil, leave your sins, and stop your course, and come and be reconciled to God through this peace maker, who is standing waiting to be employed. Well, what answer shall I carry back to my Master, that sent me to deal with you for this end? Shall I go and complain? "Lord, they are a company of obstinate sinners thou sentest me to; I entreated them to hearken to thy voice, and leave their sins; but there was no concern, no fear, no sense of sin among them. Had I been to preach to beasts, stocks or stones, they would have been as much moved as they. Alas! I have spent my strength in vain, my voice and lungs for nought; I thought thy sweet entreaties and charming voice would have melted their hearts; but neither comforts nor terrors had any effect."

Or shall I have ground to say? "Lord, I have offered sinners a Redeemer, and entreated them to close with him. Though they stood long out against thy threatenings, yet when they heard thy entreaties, their hearts began to relent, some began to sigh, others to weep, others to long after Christ; and I hope they are gone home to make a personal covenant with him this night, and sincerely design to return and seal it to-morrow." God grant this may be the event. Amen.

SERMON

SERMON XVI.

A Sermon after the Communion.

THE BELIEVER'S DIGNITY IN BEING AN HEIR OF GOD.

GAL. iv. 7.—*Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*

IN this chapter the apostle doth hold forth the happy state of believing Gentiles under New Testament times, that it is ever preferable to that of the believing Jews under the Old Testament. The Jewish church he compares to a child in minority, that is under tutors and governors, and is acquainted only with the first rudiments of religion; and likewise to the state of a servant, that is still kept under subjection and bondage; for that church was always in a servile condition, having been under the heavy yoke of a great many ceremonial rites and observances. But our blessed Lord Jesus, by his coming into the world, hath broke off that yoke from his people's necks, and hath brought them under a more spiritual and agreeable dispensation, and hath sent forth his Spirit into their hearts. Upon which account the apostle concludes them to be happy, yea even children of God, "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, &c.

In the text we have the happy state of the believing Galatians briefly represented. 1st. Negatively, *Thou art no more a servant*, i. e. no more in a state of servile subjection to the law, and to the Mosaic rites and observations. 2. Positively, *Thou art a son*, i. e. thou hast attained to a more excellent state of liberty, like to that of sons who have come to ripe age. He means not that believers under the Old Testament had not that privilege of being children of God, no; believers then were really sons, but kept in such a state, and trained up under such hard discipline, that they seemed more like servants than sons. But (saith he) to you, the believers under the New Testament, the discipline is changed, and you have attained to more honourable son like treatment. 3. We have an inference from this privilege of son-ship, "And if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." Among men only, the eldest son is heir, but all God's children are heirs.

In which we have two things. 1. The high dignity and preferment of God's children; they are heirs of God, i. e. they have a free right and title to eternal life, and all the gifts and blessings of God; yea, to the infinite God himself, who is the believer's chief good and portion. 2. The way of obtaining this dignity and happiness, through Christ, and the merit of his blood: He is God's eternal Son, and heir of all things, and being our Surety, he, by his obedience and sufferings, hath purchased a title to believers, to be God's sons by adoption, and joint heirs with him of the heavenly inheritance: "He is our elder brother, and is not ashamed to call us berthren." The inheritance is his by nature, but ours by grace.

From the words thus explained, observe,

I. That the privileges of believers under the New Testament, do exceed these who lived under the Old. The legal state was more servile, but the gospel state is more filial.

II. That though God hath one Son only by eternal generation, viz. our Lord Jesus Christ; yet he hath many sons by grace and adoption, viz. Believers.

III. That those who have the Spirit of God dwelling in

their hearts, and exciting them to prayer, have a good evidence of their son-ship, and filial relation to God This is clear, from the connection of this verse with the preceding.

IV. The doctrine that I am to insist on at this time is, "That it is the great honour and privilege of all true believers, to be the children and heirs of God thro' Jesus Christ."

This is confirmed from that parallel text, Rom. viii. 16, 17

The method for handling this subject, shall be, (1.) To enquire in what sense believers are the children of God.—(2) In what respect they are called heirs. (3) What is the heritage they are entitled to. (4) How it is they attain to this privilege. (5) To shew the wonderful free grace of God, in granting such a glorious privilege to believers, as to be his children and heirs. (6.) Make improvement of the whole.

I. As to the first, In what sense believers are the children of God.

1. *Negatively*, It is not to be meant here, that they are his children only, (1.) In respect of *creation*, for so all men are God's children, Mal. ii. 10. "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?" Had believers no farther interest in God than this, they should have but little comfort; for in this sense God is also Father to the devils and wicked men, for "he made them; but he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour." Nor (2.) is it to be meant, that they are his children only by providence; for so he is to all, Deut. xxxii 6. "Is he not thy Father that bought thee?" i. e. hath redeemed thee from slavery, and conferred great blessings on thee. Nor (3) Is to be understood of their being his children by profession, or external covenant engagements; for so all the members of the visible church are, Isa. i. 2.

2. *Positively*, Believers are the children of God, by way of special grace, and that in these several respects, (1.) In respect of *election*, God has chosen and predestinated them from eternity to be his children and heirs, upon whom he will entail the kingdom of heaven, Eph. i. 5. (2) In respect of *regeneration*, he dignifies them with a new birth, working a gracious change upon them, infusing in them a supernatural principle of holiness, whereby they become like their heavenly Father, and so they are said to be "begotten and born of God," Jam i. 18. 1 John iii. 9. (3.) They are his children by adoption; which is an act of God's free grace, whereby he assumes those into the number of his children, who were not so naturally, but were strangers and aliens: Yea, he takes those who were enemies, and of the family of hell, into the family of heaven; and graciously entitles them to all the advantages, dignities, and privileges of children.—As, for instance, He educates, brings them up, and makes provision for them, as for sons, Isa xlvi. 3. Matth. vi 32. Psal. lxxxiv. 11. 2. He allows them a share in his fatherly love and compassion, together with the protection and attendance of sons, Jer. xxxi. 20. Heb. i. 14. 3. He frees them from a servile state, or any base and drudgery work, and endues them with a free spirit, Rom viii. 15. 4. They have the chastisement of sons, which is most needful, Deut. viii. 5. Heb. xii. 6, 7, 8. 5. He allows them free access to, and a filial confidence with him in prayer; hence, in the verse preceding my text, the apostle saith, "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father." And, *lastly*, He entitles them to the inheritance of sons, as in the text, *If sons, then heirs of God*. And this leads to,

II. The *second* head, viz. *In what respect believers are called heirs*. And for the better illustration hereof, I shall shew wherein temporal and spiritual heirs do agree, and wherein they differ.

I. They agree, and resemble one another, in these things:

1. He that is an heir of an estate, hath his title freely conveyed to him; he pays not for it, because he has it by birth. So believers, who are spiritual heirs, have the title to their inheritance freely; and as they have nothing to pay for it, so it is given to them "without money, and without price." And though they have not a title to it by their natural birth, yet by their new birth, they become the sons of God, and heirs of heaven.

2. They who are rightful heirs of an estate, have the surest title of any other, because it is built upon nature: A father may frown upon his son and heir for his fault, but doth not easily disinherit him; nor will he turn him out of doors, as he doth a servant, for his offence. So believers, who are God's adopted children and heirs, have a most sure title to the heavenly inheritance. Though God may chastise them, yet he will not disinherit them, Psal. lxxxix. 32, 33, 34. "I will visit their transgressions with the rod:—Nevertheless, my loving kindness I will not take utterly from him. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips." Our title to the inheritance by the second covenant, is far surer than Adam's was by the first: for when he offended, God treated him as a servant, and turned him out of doors: But the believer, who is become a child and heir by Jesus Christ, is better secured by the second covenant; for he hath not only God's word, God's writ, and God's oath, to confirm it, but he hath the Mediator's blood sealing his charter, and an earnest of the inheritance already given him, viz. God's Spirit put into his heart, 2 Cor. i. 22. So that his right and title is indefeasible, and can never be altered.

3. An heir's title to an inheritance is reckoned more honourable than his, who obtains it another way. So the believer's title is most honourable, being made heirs of God, and co-heirs with his own Son Jesus Christ, Rom. viii. 17.—Christ is the natural Son, and has the primary right to the inheritance; but believers, by adoption, are assigned to a share, and made co-heirs with him. So that Christ and believers do, as it were, divide heaven betwixt them; they have the same Father, dwell in the same house, sit at the same table, reign on the same throne, partake of the same glory. O! What honour is this, which is put on worms of the earth? John xvii. 22, 24. John xx. 17. Rev. iii. 21.—Christ indeed being our elder Brother, his inheritance is double, and his power and glory is far greater than the glorified saints and angels, "insomuch as he hath, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent name than they." Heb. i. 4. Eph. i. 22.

4. An heir, during his minority, hath not the actual possession of his inheritance, as being incapable to manage it, and therefore hath tutors and curators appointed him; so a believer, though an heir of heaven, hath not the possession of the inheritance, while here. This life is the time of his *minority*, and Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are his tutors and curators, until he arrive at ripe age, and the years of his *majority*, when he will be fully "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light," and then he enters upon the immediate possession of all that is promised to him.

5. An heir of an estate, though he want the possession for a time, yet he hath a present maintenance allowed him out of it, suitable to his station and circumstances; so be-

lievers, during their minority in this world, have a sufficient maintenance granted them, out of that great inheritance promised to, and provided for them, As for *temporal things*, they have a competency secured to them while here:—"Their bread shall be given them, and their water shall be sure." And for *spiritual things*, they shall have as much grace, strength, comfort, and joy, as will bear their charges, until the time appointed come, when they shall enter upon the full possession of all.

6. An heir of a good estate may be somewhat straitened in his circumstances for a time, because of burdens on the estate, or some necessary restrictions laid upon him; yet comforts himself with the hopes of a plentiful estate at length: So the heirs of promise may be under many straits and difficulties while here, under burdens of corruption, fears of wrath, and hidings of God's face. They oft complain of little grace, weak faith, languishing desires, and of faint discoveries of God and Christ, and the invisible things of the other world: Yet nevertheless they should not murmur, but encourage themselves in the faithful promise and sure right they have obtained in Christ; and be thankful, if as much be allowed them out of the inheritance, as will bear their charges to heaven, where they thall be supplied to the full, forget all their straits, and remember their poverty no more.

7. An heir, whatever his present straits and circumstances be, is a respectful and honourable person; and they who know what he is born to, and what his expectations are, do put respect upon him: so believers, however mean and straitened they be, during their minority in this world, are very honourable persons, "the excellent ones in the earth," and, in many respects, "more excellent than their neighbours;" they are heirs of a great inheritance, and, upon this account, should be honoured by those among whom they live; for though they make no great outward appearance at present, yet, in a little, they shall be crowned with glory and honour.

II. *Temporal* and *spiritual* heirs do differ in these things:

1. Temporal heirs, however rich they be, are only heirs of a corruptible spot of earth; but believers are heirs of an "inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them." And what is earth to heaven?

2. Many heirs, here on earth, never come to the actual possession of their estates; for they may be squandered away, or lost by the ill-management of their parents or tutors; or they may be taken from them by oppression or violence; and oftentimes death comes and snatches away the young heirs before they attain to ripe age; so that they never win to the possession. But heaven's heirs will all certainly get possession of their inheritance; their tutors will not lose nor mismanage it to them; no enemy can seize it by violence; nor "thief break through and steal." And death will be so far from depriving them of the possession of their inheritance; that it brings them to the immediate and full fruition thereof, through a glorious eternity.

3. A temporal heir doth not fully possess the heritage till the father dies; but the spiritual heir doth possess it fully in his father's life-time. Our eternal Father lives for ever; and this doth not hinder the heirs possessing: What a mystery is here! In temporal heritages the father dies to give place to the son; but here the Son dies to bring the heirs of heaven to live and possess with the Father.

4. When a temporal heir comes to the possession, he can enjoy the inheritance but a short while; for death soon comes and dispossesses him. But the spiritual heir, when he gets possession of his inheritance, becomes immortal, and is for ever out of the reach of death.

III. The *third* head in the method was, to shew what the heritage is which God's children and heirs are entitled to; surely it is the greatest and largest that ever was: "All things are yours," 1 Cor. iii. 21. More particularly,

1. The *earth* is their inheritance, Mat. v. 5. though commonly they possess little of it, yet they have a covenant-right to make use of the good creatures, and the outward support and refreshments of life. The men of this world, though they have a general providential right to such things of the earth as they possess, yet they have no covenant-title thereto, as believers have: Their enjoyments come not to them from God as a loving Father, or as a God in covenant with them, promote their souls good: They have not the comfortable and sanctified enjoyment of the creature; no, this comes only to us in Christ, and is a part of the believer's portion. By the fall, Adam and his posterity were disinherited, they lost their covenant-right over the creatures, with the sanctified use thereof. But in Christ, who is the heir of all things, the title is renewed to believers, and they become heirs of the world: and whatever part of it falls to their share, they may look on it as a blessing of the covenant, a legacy from Christ, a part of his purchase, sanctified for their use, and designed for their good.

2. Heaven is their heritage, however poor they be in this world, yet they are heirs of the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him, Jam. ii. 5. The heirs of this celestial crown are like princes in disguise, travelling in a foreign country: strangers, that know them not, look only to their outward appearance; and are apt to think them poor and miserable; but their hopes and happiness lye in things not seen—they are heirs of the land that is afar off. Sometimes, with Moses, they are allowed to come to the top of Pisgah, to view this promised land, and this is most satisfying: At other times, with Abraham, they are admitted, as it were, to walk through it, and hear God say, "All this is thine all is made over to thee in Christ:" and this fills the heirs of heaven with joy "unspeakable, and full of glory."

3. In the text they are called "heirs of God;" God himself is their inheritance, as this is more than to say, they are heirs of both heaven and earth. "I will be your God," is the most comprehensive promise in the whole Bible, it imports an interest in all the blessings and promises of the new-covenant, in all the purchase and fulness of Christ, in all the gifts and graces of the holy Spirit, and in all the divine attributes and perfections. When the Lord saith to the heirs of salvation, "I will be your God;" how great is the inheritance he bequeaths to them! It is more than if he made over to them a thousand heavens, or ten thousand worlds; for, saith he, I give you the omnipotent Jehovah, I make over myself unto you, in all my essential perfections; my *omnipotency* shall be your guard, my *omnisciency* your overseer, my *omnipresence* your companion, my *bounty* your store, my *wisdom* your counsellor, my *justice* your rewarder, my *holiness* your fountain of grace, my *unchangeableness* the rock of your security, my *all-sufficiency* your inheritance, and my *eternity* the date of your happiness. Surely, O believer, the "lines are fallen to you in pleasant places," and you have got a goodly heritage."

IV. The *fourth* head was, to enquire how believers attain to this high privilege, of being children and heirs of God.—1. It is not from any worth or merit in them, but from the

free love and goodness of God, that hath predestinated them to the adoption of children, and chosen them heirs of the kingdom. 2. It is by the mediation of Jesus Christ, who, as their Surety, interposes for them, when under sentence of death; purchased the inheritance for them by his merits, and left it to them in legacy by his testament, which he sealed and confirmed with his own blood. 3. By the application of the Holy Ghost, who is the executor of Christ's testament, and who comes and infefts believers in the bequeathed inheritance, by renewing their souls, working faith in them, and disposing them to close with the Redeemer; planting all gracious habits in them, and thereby giving them the earnest and first fruits of the inheritance.

V. The *fifth* thing was, to shew the wonderful grace of God in granting such a glorious privilege to poor believers. If we seriously consider the grace of God in adopting us to be his children and heirs, we may well cry out with the apostle, 1 John iii. 1. "Behold! what manner of love is this the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God?" The wonderfulness of this grace appears in these things:

1. That he adopts us to be his sons and heirs, when he needed us not. Men adopt sons because they are childless, and need some to propagate their families, keep up their name, and perpetuate their memories: But the eternal Father adopts children and heirs, though he hath a natural and eternal Son of his own, who is the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person, a Son in whom his soul delighteth; and although he could have been infinitely happy without us, and needed no accession to his glory. We stood in need of a Father, but he stood not in need of sons.

2. That he chuses those to be his sons and heirs, who have nothing to recommend them to him, but are utterly unworthy of this dignity and privilege. Men usually adopt those of their kindred, or who are their friends and favourites; but God shews this favour to rebels, enemies, traitors, satan's slaves, and hell's heirs. Men adopt those in whom they see, or at least fancy, something of worth: Mordecai adopted Esther because she was fair: But God adopts those who are naturally most vile and unworthy, yea, despicable as worms, loathsome as carcasses, deformed as monsters, black as Ethiopians, and diseased as lepers. Having nothing to engage his love, but every thing to provoke his loathing of us.

3. That he should be at such charge and cost in adopting us. Men are at no pains about it, but to draw up a writ, and sign or seal it, and then all is done; but infinite wisdom and power must be set on work to make us sons and heirs; an eternity must be spent in contriving the method; the eternal Son of God must die to bring it about, and the charter of our adoption must be sealed with his most precious blood. Never was it heard, that any man let his only son suffer and die, to adopt an enemy; but this the great God hath done, which is the wonder of the redeemed, the wonder of angels, and will be the wonder of eternity.

4. That he exalts those whom he adopts to such high dignity and honour; for God to have pardoned his enemies, and delivered them from going to hell, had been much; for him to have taken his enemies, and made them his friends and favourites, had been more: But for God to take his mortal enemies into his bosom, and make them his sons and heirs; yea, beautify them with his image, value them as his jewels, entitle them to his kingdom, and make them coheirs with his own beloved Son, is such a prodigy of love, as surpasseth all infinite comprehension. To have advanced one of the blessed cherubims or seraphims so high, had been a stupendous act of grace: But to take a lump of polluted dust, a cursed sinner, a wretch as black as hell could make him, and raise him so high, yea, above the brightest cherub in glory, is eternally an astonishing wonder of free love.

APPLICATION.

I. Use of *information*. This doctrine informs us of these things:

1. Of the wonderful love and goodness of God, to poor elect sinners in Christ: he takes enemies into his family, yea, puts them among his children; and not only doth he confer the honour of sonship on them, but also puts the nature of sons in them; for they are sons by regeneration, as well as by adoption; both these are joined together, as is clear from John i. 12, 13. "To them that believe he gave power to become the sons of God, who were born not of the will of man, but of God."

2. That believers are of more noble and illustrious descent than any others; they are sons of the most high God. Some talk of their progenitors, and value themselves on their high extract: So the Jews vaunted that they were Abraham's seed, John viii. 33. But surely it is an infinitely greater privilege to be among the sons of God. David thought it no small honour to be son-in-law to the king of Israel, 1 Sam. xviii. 18. And shall any among us reckon it a small thing to be a son to the King of heaven.

3. That God is an infinitely rich and bountiful Father, who makes all his children heirs, and that of a great and splendid inheritance: Though his family be numerous, yet there is not one of them left unprovided; for he brings "many sons to glory," Heb. ii. 10.

II. Use of *examination*. Let us all try what right or claims we have to this honour and privilege, of being the sons and heirs of God.

I. Try, O communicants, if ye have the marks and characters of God's children. 1. Have you cordially made choice of God as your Father in Christ, and dedicated yourselves to him at this time, in a perpetual covenant, Jer. iii. 19. "How shall I put thee among the children! &c. Thou shalt call me my Father." 2. Have ye received the Mediator by a true and lively faith; for it is hereby we become children, John i. 2. "To as many as received him, he gave power to become the sons of God," Gal. iii. 26. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." We can be adopted only by virtue of his right, who is the elder brother, and heir of all things. 3. Are you like your Father? have you his image upon you, holiness? 4. Do you sincerely love Christ, your elder Brother and Redeemer? John viii. 42. "Jesus said unto them, if God were your Father, ye would love me." 5. Do ye love and esteem all the children of the family, as the excellent of the earth? Psal. xvi. 2. 6. Are ye heartily concerned for the interest and welfare of your mother, the church? Psal. cxxxvii. 6. 7. Are ye troubled for offending your Father? 2 Chron. xxxiv. 27. 8. Are you desirous of your Father's presence and company? Psal. xxvi. 8. 9. Have ye children's appetites for your spiritual food? Psal. lxxxiv. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 2.

II. Try if you have the Spirit and disposition of heirs. 1. Is it your main care to make sure your birth-right, and title to the inheritance? Many of God's children have not the assurance hereof, but they all labour after it, and are restless without it, Matth. vi. 33. 2. If you be heirs, you will high-

ly value your birth-right, and not be willing to part with it for a trifle; you will not (like profane Esau, Heb. xi. 16.) sell it for sensual pleasures, and gratifications of the flesh: Nay, your hearts will rise against satan's solicitations to break with your Father, and sell your birth-right, and say with Naboth to Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 3. "The Lord forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee." God forbid that I should part with my portion in Christ for worldly gain, carnal satisfactions, or any earthly delight whatsomever.

3. Your hearts and thoughts will be much set upon your heritage above, for it is your treasure, and "where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also," Mat. vi. 21. What do ye think most of, when ye are alone? Nebuchadnezzar, when he was alone, thought on his large territories, Dan. iv. 29, 30. "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom," &c. So, if you be heirs of heaven, your hearts will be running much thither.

4. In the time of your difficulties and straits, you will be drawing your comfort and encouragement from the large and goodly heritage you are entitled to; and likewise you will be looking and waiting when it will fall into your hands; yea, you will be sending messengers and spies to the land of promise to survey it, and bring you good tidings from thence, for your support, while in the wilderness: You will be feasting and entertaining yourselves with the thoughts of your rich inheritance and portion in Christ, and groaning within yourselves, "When shall I be with my Father and elder Brother above! When shall my pilgrimage be finished, and the time of my minority expire, that I may enter upon the possession." Rom. viii. 23. "We, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our bodies."

Lastly, All those who are heirs of heaven do get the seal and earnest of the inheritance put in their hearts, viz. the Spirit of God, 2 Cor. i. 22. Eph. i. 13, 14. "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession," As an earnest-penny secures our right to a bargain, and is also a part of it; so the sanctifying Spirit, or grace of God in the heart, is a pledge and earnest of the glorious inheritance above. O communicants! have ye got this earnest in your souls? Are ye beginning to reap the first fruits of the inheritance? Surely it will be matter of rejoicing to find it.

Quest. How shall I know if I have got the Spirit in my heart, as the seal and first-fruits of the inheritance?

Ans. By his actings and operations in your souls. 1. Wherever he is, he is an illuminating Spirit, that lets you see the evil of sin, and the excellency of Christ. 2. A humbling Spirit, that brings the soul to ly in the dust, and abhor itself for its abominations. 3. A Spirit of prayer, that inclines the soul to come to its Father, for the supply of wants, Gal. iv. 6. 4. A sin-subduing Spirit, that helps to weaken and mortify indwelling corruption, Rom. viii. 13. 5. A soul-sanctifying Spirit, that infuses, increases, quickens, and animates grace in the heart, Eph. iv. 23. 24. Now, wherever these gracious actings and operations of the Spirit are to be found, you may conclude you have got a seal of your heirship, the earnest and first fruits of the inheritance, and a pledge of your being shortly put in possession of all.

II. Use of *exhortation*, to two sorts. 1. Those who are aliens and foreigners. 2. Those who are children, and heirs of God.

I. I shall speak to those who are aliens, have no interest in God's family, nor the children's privileges; and yet many such have been presuming to eat of the children's bread, to which they have no right. I intreat you to awake from your security, and consider the misery of your state. O! that God would sound an alarm in your ears.

1. If you be not God's children, you are dogs; and yet you have been presuming to meddle with the children's bread, which is horrid sacrilege.

2. You are children of the devil, and of the family of hell; nay, you are Satan's bond slaves. There is no medium; either you are God's children, or the devil's slaves, John viii. 44. And what have Satan's slaves to do with God's holy things?

3. O alien and foreigner! thou art a child of wrath, an heir of hell; this is thy native heritage and portion, and this sad heritage will remain sure to thee; when thou leavest thy substance to others, this shall go alongst with thyself to another world. "The wrath of God abideth on thee," both here and eternally: O sinner! wrath is thy constant covering now, and the heavens are growing blacker and blacker every day above thy head. The earth is weary of thee; the pit is opening her mouth for thee; "Hell is groaning for thee from beneath;" and the thread of life, that is keeping thee out of it, is just ready to break. O! waken before it be too late.

4. Thou art "without God in the world;" thou hast no interest in God as thy friend; thou art far from God; he is thy wrathful enemy: Thy hell is begun already; for what makes hell, but exclusion from the presence of God!"—"Depart from me ye cursed." Now you are gone from God already, with his curse upon you, like the damned, only your case is not desperate as theirs is: There is some hope of your returning to God again: but there is none of theirs. "O! turn then to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope."

5. By presuming on the Lord's table, you have drawn a new curse on yourselves; for ye have been mocking God, shedding Christ's blood, murdering the blessed Redeemer: You have been acting Judas's part, saying, "Hail, Master," and "betraying the Son of God with a kiss." O! Satan's slaves, you have been eating Christ's bread, but God's curse was on the morsel you got; and you have drawn down new soul-plagues on yourselves. You'll be ten times more Satan's slaves than you were before; for to all your other sins you have added this, of "crucifying Christ afresh."

Quest. Is there any hope for such children of wrath, and heirs of hell as we are? "What shall we do to be saved?"

Ans. 1. I say to you, as Peter to Simon Magus, Acts viii. 21, 22. "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; thy heart is not right with God: repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God for forgiveness." Repent and weep over a slain Christ, whom you pierced at his table, and cry, "Lord, deliver me from blood-guiltiness." O! can you weep over a dead child, or friend? Can you weep for the loss of world's wealth, and not weep for the loss of your souls, and of your Saviour?

2. Retire into some secret place, and there meditate on your misery, while children of Satan, and heirs of wrath: Firmly believe your sad state, your salvation is impossible, while in it. There is a bill of exclusion passed in the court of heaven, against all under a covenant of works, which is your case, Gal. iv. 30. "The son of the bond-woman shall not be heir:" heirs of wrath must not be heirs of glory;

there is no salvation under this covenant, but on a condition impossible, perfect obedience to the law, and satisfaction to divine justice for the wrong already done. There is no promise in it of pardon, no place for repentance, no accepting the will for the deed. O! poor forlorn soul, put the question to thyself, how shall I live in this case? How shall I die in it? How shall I appear before a just God in it? Surely, a state of wrath is too hot a climate for my soul to live in.

3. Cherish convictions when God sends them: Go not to run away with God's arrows of conviction sticking in your consciences, to your employments, to work them out; to your cups, to drink them out; to your bed, to sleep them out; to your companions, to sport them away: No, but run with them to the great Physician Christ, that he may take them out with his own hand, and apply Gilead's balm to the wound. Alas! many destroy their immortal souls, by crucifying their convictions.

4. Presently embrace the sweet gospel-offers that are made to you; now is the day when the great trumpet is blown, that out-cast perishing sinners may come and accept of the gospel jubilee, Isa. xxvii. 13. Now liberty is proclaimed to the captives: Now the heirs of wrath may become heirs of glory: And what way is that! even by closing with Christ in a marriage covenant. Come marry the heir of all things, and you shall be freed from bondage, and heaven shall be your dowry. Come flee presently out of the dominion of the law, into the dominion of grace; and there the law's curses shall not reach you. Accept of Jesus Christ on the terms of grace, and you shall have a great heritage with him, an inheritance that shall last for ever. Worldly heritages do not last; all your riches and honours, profits and pleasures, must shortly be buried with you, they cannot accompany you into another world: But if you accept of Christ, as your Saviour and Surety, then the eternal God is your God, " and portion for ever." O heirs of wrath, what are your hearts saying? Are you content with this bargain? Are you willing to leave satan's slavery, and become children and heirs of the great King?

5. Remember that dreadful vengeance will shortly seize upon them that refuse such a glorious heritage: consider what is abiding you, Psal. xi. 6. " Snares, fire, brimstone, and an horrible tempest, shall be the portion of your cup."

Exhort. II. To those who are sons and heirs of God. I shall speak, in the *first* place, some things to you all in general.

1. Has God of his free mercy and rich grace, made you his sons and heirs, then be humble, and remember what you once were. When God found you, you were " children of wrath, even as others." Free love hath picked you out from among the multitude of condemned malefactors, hath commanded your fetters to be taken off, put a pardon in your hands, and brought you forth to the glorious liberty of the children of God, and made you " heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." You had nothing in you to engage him to love you, yet he loved you, when you were most loathsome: What matter of wonder is here: The glorious Bridegroom courted and espoused you to himself on the day in which you might have been led forth to execution! He took off your prison-garment, and cloathed you with robes of righteousness, and garments of salvation: He took the chains from off your arms, the rope from about your neck, and put his own comeliness on you, that you might be fit for the king's table! Be not proud of your gifts, graces, or attainments: but remember, that ye were once " children of wrath, even as others;" all you have is borrowed. Be humble also, and " remember your faults this day:" Mind, how you have forgotten your benefactor! How unkindly you have treated him that remembered you in your low estate! How unsuitably you have walked! " Is this your kindness to your friend?"

2. Pity the children of wrath, and heirs of hell, that still ly in chains of darkness. Be not unconcerned for them, seeing ye were once in the same condition with them; ye have got ashore, but your fellows behind you are still in danger of perishing. Put on bowels of compassion for them, pity them, and use all means for their deliverance.

2. Be content with your lot in a present world, and be easy under your present straits and difficulties, whatever they be; for you have the prospect of a great inheritance, from whence you may take encouragements under every trial. You may be easy under the world's hatred, and carry chearfully amidst all affronts and injuries, for you may expect to be envied. Favourites of princes are commonly slandered and abused. Joseph was hated of his brethren, because his father shewed more than ordinary kindness to him. " If ye were of the world, (saith Christ) the world would love his own: But because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you," John xvi. 19. But let this solace your minds; you are heirs of God, and dearly beloved of him.

4. Live as children of God, and heirs of the kingdom; walk worthy of your dignity, and behave suitably to your character. You have the angels, those great officers of the crown, and chief ministers of state, appointed to wait on you constantly, while here below, and you have a glorious expectation hereafter. Shew forth then the greatness and nobleness of your spirits, by undervaluing mean and sordid things. Let your speech and actions here look like the country to which you are going, that it may be said of you, as of Gideon's children, Judg viii. 18. " Each one resembled the children of a king." The heirs of earthly kings have been observed to have had generous and noble spirits, and have scorned to intermeddle with base and inferior matters. It is a common story of Alexander the Great, that when he was a little boy, and provoked to run a race with one of his inferiors, he first demurred, and then flatly refused the challenge, saying, " It did not become the son of a king to submit to so mean an undertaking, and contend with one so far below him." The brave spirit of that princely youth may shame those Christians who are the adopted sons of God, and heirs to a crown that shall never fade; and yet oftentimes are found groveling on the earth, like the men of this world, and busied about things very far below them. Let the heirs of heaven maintain a holy contempt of the world, and the things thereof. Let them set their feet on those things on which worldlings set their hearts; and reckon themselves richer and happier in their relation to God and the kingdom above, than any graceless monarch that ever wore an earthly crown. Shall earthly men make such a noise in the world, and think none comparable to them, because forsooth their heap of dung is some bigger than their neighbour's? (for so Paul esteems the world) and will the children of the king of heaven, " of whom the world is not worthy," Heb. xi. 38. be so low and mean-spirited, as to be amused and dazzled with the world's vanities: who yet have God for their portion, Christ for their husband, heaven for their home, and glory for their treasure?

5. Let the heirs of heaven be mutually concerned in one another; let them sympathize together, when any of them is in trouble, and also rejoice in one another's welfare. And when the time cometh that they arrive at full age, and are taken up to the possession of their inheritance, (though they be your near relations) do not quarrel God's providence, or mourn "as those that have no hope;" or carry, as if you grudged their happiness; but chearfully submit to your Father's will, and rejoice in their preferment; for the "day of their death is better than the day of their birth."

6. Be earnest in prayer, that God may raise up many young heirs to supply the room of those that he is taking home. Let the heirs of God be never so much increased, God's children will not envy their number, but greatly rejoice therein; seeing the inheritance is vast, and infinitely satisfying to both men and angels: and our heavenly Father is highly glorified in the multitude of his children. And, *lastly*, When heirs are brought into the family, carry affectionately to them; be kind to young heirs, especially during the time of their nonage and want of experience; be for "eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame," and great shall be your reward in heaven.

In the *next* place, I shall say something more particularly to those who were at their father's table yesterday, of whom I presume there have been, and are, several sorts.

I. There may be some (I hope) that have ground to say, That they came to their Father's table, and he smiled on them, and dealt bountifully with them. To such I shall say these few things: 1. Wonder at the Lord's kindness, and bless his name with your whole souls, for his distinguishing favours to you, who were by nature enemies of God, and children of satan. 2. Hold fast and improve carefully what you have got, and let not satan rob you of it. 3. Sympathize with other children of the family, that have not won your length, but perhaps are under great discouragements; mind their case, and speak a good word for them now, while you are favourites of heaven.

II. In the *next* place, I shall speak to those heirs of heaven, who, notwithstanding of their being at the table, remain full of doubts and fears, and are very apprehensive that God has not yet put them among the children, nor given them a right to the heir's portion. Well, what is the ground of your doubting? 1. Oh, saith one, I scarce feel the working of the sanctifying Spirit of God in my soul, which is the common earnest or pledge of the inheritance, that God useth to give to his heirs while here. *Ans.* Though grace be weak in you, you must "not despise the day of small things," or say you have none at all: Nay, bless God, if thou canst spy any spark of grace in thy heart at all, and pray that God may cherish it. A man that gets an earnest of a good bargain, is not much discouraged whether it be a greater or a smaller piece of money, a sixpence, or half-a-crown, for he thinks the least piece is a sufficient earnest or pledge from an honest man of his bargain; and he is easy, seeing he knows he has to do with one that is faithful, and will not go back of his word: Indeed he might be discouraged, if that which he got were not an earnest-penny: But there is a great difference betwixt a piece of money that is given in gratitude, and that which is given only in earnest, as a pledge of a far greater sum, or of a very rich bargain. O heir of heaven, remember this, the small degree of grace thou hast, is given only as an earnest of more grace, yea, of eternal glory itself.

2. Another may be saying, Ah! but I want that love to God, that a child should have to his father. *Ans.* 1. It is good thou art sensible of it, and that thou knowest thy wants. 2. Canst thou say, it is thy greatest grief thou hast not more love to thy Father; yea, that thou wouldst give a world, if thou wast master of it, for more heart-love to him? Then take comfort, for there is sincerity of love to God in thy heart.

3. Another may say, I have not the spirit of prayer, which God useth to bestow on his children; I cannot attain to these enlargements and fluent expressions, that I see others have in prayer. *Ans.* 1. It may be they are old experienced Christians thou conversest with, and they likewise have their ebbings and flowings as well as others; for the "Spirit blows when and where he listeth." Thou seest perhaps the one, but art unacquainted with the other. 2. It is thy happiness, thou hast to do in prayer with one that looks not so much to the words of the mouth, as the affections of the heart. If thou hast a heart centering on God, and flowing out towards him in duty, God loves that better than the most eloquent expressions.

4. Ah! saith some poor soul, I cannot attain to any tenderness of heart and frame in prayer. *Ans* 1. Is it thy greatest grief and trouble that it is so? Then it is a good sign, thou hast some tenderness in thy heart. 2. Dost thou look to thy elder brother Jesus Christ, that he may plead for thee, and send his Spirit to help thy infirmities? Our blessed Lord Jesus has prayed for many that could not pray for themselves. Cry to him for the quickening influence of his Spirit, to enable you to call on his name; for he "gives his Spirit to them that ask him."

5. It may be, some poor drooping soul is saying, I came to my Father's table yesterday, but, instead of any comfortable discovery, all I got was a frown: my father frowned, and seemed angry with me. *Ans.* 1. Thou hast reason to be thankful, that he took any notice of thee at all; for sometimes God holds communion with his people by frowns and reproofs, and thereby humbles them for sin, and draws them nearer to himself. 2. Perhaps God is correcting thee for some former sins against light, which as yet thou hast not mourned over: For those whom God takes into his family, and puts among his children, he will correct in his fatherly love, but "his loving kindness he will not take away from them." Let all the children of God, and heirs of heaven, submit, in a humble and kindly manner, to the reproofs and corrections of their heavenly Father. And let them say, as Elihu to Job, under his sharp trials, "What I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do so no more." "Lord, train me up during my minority, as thou pleasest; make use of what discipline towards me, thou thinkest best for me; only (if it be thy blessed will) make it known to me for my comfort, that I do really belong to thy family, and shall not be shut out of doors for ever. And so my soul shall live and praise thy name.

SERMON

SERMON XVII.

A Sermon after the Communion.

THE FAINTING BELIEVER STRENGTHENED FOR HIS WORK.

ISAIAH xl. 29.—*He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength.*

THE prophet having concluded the preceding chapter with a prophecy of the captivity of the Jews into Babylon, though it was many years before it came; he in this and the succeeding chapter, furnishes the church and people of God with a great many precious promises for their support and comfort, during that long captivity; which surely would be of great use to them in that cloudy and dark day.

In the latter end of this chapter, the prophet is reproving the people of God, who are now supposed to be captives at Babylon, for their unbelief and despondency under their affliction, in saying or thinking God had either cast them off, or could not help them, verse 27. For remedying whereof, he puts them in mind of God's power and all sufficiency to help in the greatest straits, verse 28. And in the text and following verses, he assures them of God's compassion, and readiness to help them under all their sinking discouragements, "He giveth power to the faint," &c.

More particularly in the text, we may notice these things: 1. The sad case of many of God's people in captivity, "They were faint and without might," i. e. They were under pressures and burdens both outward and inward, that were ready to crush them, and make them faint away; they were called to several pieces both of service and suffering, for which they had no strength nor might of themselves. 2. We have their mercy and privilege under this sad case; *power* and *strength*; i. e. spiritual strength mainly, which is graciously promised them for their encouragement, under all their faintings and trials. 3. The author of this privilege, "The everlasting God, the Lord Jehovah, with whom is everlasting strength, who fainteth not, neither is weary." 4. The way how this mercy is conveyed; it is in a way of free gift, without any worth or merit on our part; he giveth it, and he increaseth it; he giveth strength where it is not, and he encreaseth it where it is already given in any measure.

DOCTRINE. "That as the Lord's people while here are liable to many fainting discouragements, under which they cannot support themselves, so the Lord is pleased to give them suitable strength for all their exigencies" This is also confirmed from that gracious promise, recorded in the following chapter, Isa. xli. 10. "Fear thou not, for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." And the psalmist confirms this truth by his own comfortable experience, Psal. cxxxviii. 3. "In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength to my soul."

The method I chuse for prosecuting this doctrine, shall be,

1. To enquire into those fainting discouragements, which believers labour under while here.

2. Why the Lord doth let them meet with such trials.

3. How it is that the Lord doth strengthen his weak and fainting people.

4. What are the great ends and uses for which the Lord gives such strength to his people.

5. Give some reasons to prove, that the Lord will certainly give them this strength.

6. Make improvement.

I. As to the first; viz. To instance some of those fainting discouragements that believers labour under while here, and which, in a special manner, do call for divine support. And these are of two sorts; viz. Either of a temporal or a spiritual nature.

1. Sometimes they meet with external afflicting providences, which are very discouraging: As, (1.) When they are trysted with *poverty* and *want*, so that they know not how to subsist themselves and their families; this is a great trial, and requires spiritual strength from God to help them to carry right under it. (2.) When they are destitute of *earthly friends*, and have none to comfort or sympathise with them in trouble; this is also a heavy trial that needs strength from God (3.) When they are loaded with *reproaches* and *misrepresentations*, and that not only from enemies, but even from friends; this hath been very sinking to the best of God's people. (4.) When they are trysted with the death and loss of near and dear relations, pleasant children, and helpful friends; this case has been afflicting to many. (5.) When they are under bodily sickness or racking pains, so that they "have no rest in their bones, wearisome nights are appointed for them, and they are full of tossings till the dawning of the day." (6.) When they have a near view of meeting with death, that king of terrors, and terror of kings. (7.) When they are under the oppressions and persecution of cruel enemies. These are trials that the dearest of God's children are exposed to, and under which they would be ready to faint, if they were not strengthened from above. And especially those outward pressures are very sinking, and discouraging to them; especially when they think it is their sin that has brought them into these sad circumstances, or when their trials are of a long continuance, and it may be something in them appears to be singular, as it was in the case of the Jews in Babylon. Then it is that God's people are ready to faint and succumb, and should look to God to step in with suitable supplies of strength.

2. Sometimes God's people are trysted with fainting discouragements of a spiritual nature: As, (1.) When they find indwelling corruption, and heart-plagues strong and prevailing: This case was very affecting and afflicting to David, Psal. lxv. 3. and to Paul, Rom. vii. 24. and to the church, when they cried out, Isa. lxiv. 6. "Our iniquities like the wind have taken us away:" *q d.* The tide is so strong, we have no might to stem it. (2.) When the *enemy is exalted over them*, and satan doth harrass them with blasphemous injections, horrid atheistical thoughts, and violent temptations; he sometimes tempts God's children to the greatest of sins, as he tempted Job to curse God: How is the soul ready to faint at such a time, if it get not strength from God! and crieth out, "How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me? It is like a sword in my bones, when the enemy reproacheth me, and saith daily to me, where is thy God? O my rock, why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?"

3 When God hides his face, and they cannot get access to him in duty; so as they think, they are given up and left

to struggle with satan and corruption in their own strength. That is a melancholy case to the soul, under which it would faint, without secret support from God.

4. When they find their hearts wholly out of frame for any spiritual duty; by reason of much backwardness to it, wearying of it, and corruption working in them, which carries them away from God in time of duty: Such as atheism, unbelief, worldly mindedness, heart-hardness, &c. Now the soul would faint, and wholly backslide from God, if he did not secretly uphold it.

5. When the soul is brought back again, as it were, to the foot of mount Sinai, and made to hear the thunderings thereof, and the curses of a broken law renewed: The law gets a new commission to take the man into custody, and put his feet into the stocks: So that the old wounds are opened, and former guilt is revived, and God seems to behave to him like a stranger or an enemy. Thus he did to Haman, Psal. lxxxviii. Now, at such a time the soul is ready to faint, and say, " Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Will he be favourable no more? Hath he forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? But especially if sickness, or the messenger of death, come and knock at the man's door, while in such a case, Oh! how is he distressed with the melancholy apprehensions of death and judgment? " Death (thinks he,) is near, and I am most unready for it; judgment is approaching, my accounts are unclear, and the Judge's face all covered with frowns." Now the soul indeed would faint if God in Christ did not support it.

6. As believers have many fainting discouragements, upon the account of their own case, so also upon a public account, in respect of the church and land wherein they live: as, 1. When they see a spirit of slumber and deep sleep fallen upon professors, so that they are not moved with the judgments of God, when denounced both by his word and providence; yea, though " the fire be kindled, and burning round about them, yet they lay it not to heart." 2. When they see religion under a great and visible decay among all ranks, many turning daily more careless and indifferent about duty, more slack about family-worship and secret prayer, and daily more carnal and worldly in their conversation. When they see christian love decay, divisions and animosities increase, malice, envy, and hatred of one another prevail, and people growing more selfish, minding their own things, and careless about the things of Jesus Christ. 3. When they see God's Spirit in a sad measure withdrawn from the assemblies of his people; ordinances become as a sealed book, dry beasts, and a miscarrying womb, so that Ichabod may be written on them, or *God is departed;* when they see communions lifeless, and not what they wont to be. Christ is absent, and yet few sensible of the judgment, or laying it to heart, so as to lament after the Lord. They see many busy to sin him away, but few endeavouring to pray him back again. The sincere seekers of God are often like to faint under this discouragement. 4 When they see many professors making soul-slips, yea, falling into scandalous sins, to the reproach of religion, and hardening of the wicked; and but few like to be found sincere in their profession. 5. When they see those that are truly godly, tender and conscientious in their walk, public-spirited and concerned for the interest of Christ, removing and going off the stage: This is a very melancholy and sinking discouragement to the few that are left behind, under which they need support from God: hence it was that the Psalmist cries so so earnestly, Psal. xii. 1. " Help, Lord, for the godly man that ceaseth: for the faithful fall from among the children of men."

II The second thing proposed was, to enquire why the Lord lets his people be trysted with such fainting discouragements.

1. To correct them for their former faults and miscarriages; hence we read, Jer. iv. 18. when the Lord had threatened several sad things against his people, he saith, " thy ways and thy doings have procured these things to thee." God will have his people to smart for sin; not to make any satisfaction for sin, but to render sin bitter unto them.

2. To humble and make them low, in midst of their great attainments and signal enjoyments: Believers are still apt to be puffed up with these, if they were not kept under by humbling dispensations. Hence, even Paul himself had a messenger of satan sent to buffet him, " lest he should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of revelations, 2 Cor. xii. 8.

3. To let them know the difference betwixt earth and heaven, a militant and triumphant state. When things go well with us in the world, we are apt to say, with Peter on the mount, " It is good for us to be here." But when these go ill, God's people turn their tongue, and say with the Psalmist, Psal. lxxiii. 27. " It is good for me to draw nigh to God." When we live at ease, we are ready to think ourselves at home: but when trouble comes, we begin to say, " Arise, let us depart, this is not our rest." It is not easy to wean us from the comforts of this life: and therefore God many times doth rub gall and wormwood on the breasts of this present world, to imbitter its comforts, and take our hearts off it.

4. To awaken the spirit of prayer, and make them more importunate in their addresses to the throne of grace, Psal. cxxx. 1. Christ suffered the storm to continue, till the ship was almost overwhelmed, that the disciples might come and awaken him with their cries to help them, Matthew viii. 25.

5. That his people may get new proofs of his love and tender care in strengthening such weak reeds as they are, to endure such storms; and in his stepping in so seasonably for their relief and support, when ready to faint and succumb. God's people have much to speak on this account, to the praise of his free grace, Psal. xciv. 18. " When I said, my foot slippeth, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up."

6. To cause his people long for heaven, and mend their pace, in the way to it, Phil. i. 23. There is a great difference betwixt our prayers in health and in sickness; our repentings in prosperity and adversity, Isa. xxvi. 16. Hos. v. 15. He that in prosperity prayed with a cold heart and dry eyes, can in affliction cry aloud, and mingle his prayers with tears. Though heaven was much out of sight and out of mind before, and he had scarce a thought of flitting; yet now when distress comes, he begins to sigh with David, Psal. lv. 6. " O that I had wings like a dove; for then would I flee away, and be at rest: I would hasten my escape from the windy tempest."

III. The next thing is to enquire, how it is that the Lord doth strengthen his weak and fainting people. And here I shall do two things: (1.) Enquire into the nature of the spiritual strength the Lord doth give his people. (2.) Into the way and manner how he conveys it to them.

As to the *first*, This spiritual strength, supposeth, that

the soul is made alive, and raised out of the grave of sin and a natural state, by the quickening spirit of God. And that the soul is united to Christ by faith, who is the fountain and channel of all grace and spiritual strength.

But more directly, God's strengthening his people, imports these things:

1. The Lord's creating and implanting the habits of grace in the soul, which are the strength of the soul: and therefore called the armour of God, and our shield and helmet, Eph. vi.

2. His increasing of grace in the soul; for he not only plants these habits, but strengthens them, and gradually perfects what he has begun, Psal. xcii. 12, 13.

3. His breathing on his work of grace in the soul, and thereby actuating his people's graces, and drawing them forth into a lively exercise: For God must not only plant grace and increase it, but also set it a work, and bring it into action," Phil. ii. 13. "It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do."

4. The Lord's strengthening of his fainting people, imports his letting out, and conveying of fresh supplies of grace to his people, in the time of their need. Not only doth he plant, increase, and actuate grace, but likewise he doth come in with seasonable supplies and reinforcements to the weak and decayed graces of his people, answerable to their pressures and exigencies. Grace of itself is but a creature, and subject to perish, and would soon be destroyed by the frequent attacks made upon it, if it were not seasonably reinforced with new supplies from its author. And thus the Lord, from time to time, feeds the believer's lamp with fresh oil; gives it more faith, more love, more hope, and more desires; and thus he gives power to the faint, and strengthens these things which remain when ready to die.

5. It imports the supplying the soul with experiences of the power, mercy, and faithfulness of God, for the nourishing and strengthening of faith in the time of trial; and therefore we find the Lord, when he is strengthening his fainting people, in the text and context, he refers them to their former experience, verse 27, 28. "Hast thou not heard? Hast thou not known?" How then sayst thou, that God hath forsaken thee? Often do we find David strengthening his faith this way, Psal. xlii. and cxvi.

6. It lies, in the Lord's applying to the soul his gracious and comfortable promises, and thereby animating his people with spiritual courage and resolution to grapple with all their enemies and difficulties. He shows that God is on their side, that his "grace is sufficient for them, and that he will never leave them, nor forsake them," Isa. xli. 10. Psal. cxviii. 6. Heb. xiii. 5, 6. 2 Cor. xii. 9.

7. The Lord strengthens his people, by giving them an encouraging view and prospect of a happy outgate from all their trials and discouragements, and of a glorious victory over all their enemies, Job. xix. 25. Rom. xvi. 20. 2 Tim iv. 7, 8.

II. I come to the *second* thing; viz. To shew the way and manner how this spiritual strength is conveyed to believers. And this you may take up in these following propositions:

1. God has treasured up in Jesus Christ his Son, a fulness of grace and spiritual strength for his people. As our Mediator is the purchaser of this strength, so he is the trustee, to whom it is given in order to be bestowed upon believers: This is clear, (1.) From the promises of God for giving strength, they run in this channel, Zech. x. 12. "I will strengthen them in the Lord; (i. e. in Christ) and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the Lord. (2.) From the precepts of God, which are in the same strain, Eph. vi. 10. "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." 2 Tim. ii. 1. "My son, be strong in the grace that is in Jesus Christ." (3.) From the practice of the saints, they all look for their strength this way, Isa. xlv. 24. "Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." And Paul saith, Phil. iv. 13. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." So that Christ is our head of influence and store-keeper. The stock of our grace and strength, since Adam's fall and mismanagement, is all put in Christ's hand; he is the great steward of heaven, the key of the store-house is in his custody, and on him we must daily depend for necessary supplies.

2. The way that Christ our head and treasurer communicates his strength, and gives out the necessary supplies thereof to his people, is by the ministration of the holy Spirit, and his gracious operations and influences on their souls, John xv. 29. John xvi. 14, 15. And for this effect, the Spirit of God dwells in believers, to excite and draw forth their graces to frequent acts and a lively exercise; and to give them those gracious aids and assistances, their exigencies do call for.

3. The way that the holy Spirit gives this strength to believers is, in the use of appointed means, both public and private, Psal. lxxxiv. 4, 5, 6, 7. Where we see, that those who would go from strength to strength, must dwell in God's house, and attend his ordinances. We expect not our daily food without labouring, tilling, sowing and reaping; so neither can we look for spiritual strength but in the use of the word, sacraments and prayer.

IV. The fourth thing in the general method, is, To show what are the great ends and uses, for which the Lord gives this spiritual strength to his people.

1. He gives it to them for doing or performing of duty; for without new supplies of strength we cannot act spiritually, nor persevere in duty: Hence the spouse cries out, Cant. i. 4. "Draw me, and we will run after thee." And the Psalmist saith, Psal. cxix. 32. "I will run the ways of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart." God's work must ever be done in God's strength.

2. He gives it for suffering, and bearing of crosses and afflictions, and we need God's strength that we may do it without murmuring or fainting, Col i. 11.

3. For fighting, we have strong and dangerous enemies to conflict with, the devil, the world, and indwelling sin; and we have no strength of our own to resist or subdue them: wherefore, we must look to God for supernatural strength.

V. The next thing was to give reasons, why the Lord will certainly give suitable strength to his people under all their exigencies.

1. Because it was purchased for them by their Surety, Christ, and promised to them in him, Zech. x. 12.

2. Because they were, in the most solemn and serious manner, recommended to the care of God by his beloved Son Jesus Christ, when he was leaving the world, John xvii. 11.

3. Because of their near relation to him, and his great love to them; they are the subjects of his kingdom, the children of his family; yea, they are, as it were, the wife of his bosom; and will he not then take special care of them?

4. Because they rely and depend wholly upon the Lord himself for this strength and support, Isa. xxvi. 3. Psal. lvii. 2.

5. Because the Lord knows that his people have many strong and dangerous enemies; and that they have no inherent strength to hold out against them, having lost all that by the fall. Yea, he knows that they have a natural bentness to backsliding, that the seed of the worst sin is in them, and of themselves they cannot stand before the least spark of temptation; and so would be infallibly undone, if he did not strengthen them, Hos. ii. 7. Psalm xix. 13.

APPLICATION.

Use I. Of *Information.* We may hence see,

1. That worldly prosperity and carnal joy are no sign of God's favour: For God's people are subject to many fainting discouragements here. Wicked men receive their good things in this life, but believers' good things are to come.

2. We may hence be informed of the difference betwixt the two covenants *of works* and of *grace.* Adam, by the *first,* was to do all by his own inherent strength; but believers, under the *second,* do all by borrowed strength, and must constantly be beholden to God for new supplies. And it is well for us that it is so, for our stock is far surer in God's hand, than in our own. When the prodigal got his stock in his own hand, he presently left his father's house, *went into a far country,* and squandered all away, and so would we, if God should trust us with it. Besides, by this gracious method, believers are kept humble all their days, and put to keep up a constant correspondence with a throne of grace, and give all the glory of their through bearing to God's free grace. Blessed be God for the well ordered covenant.

3. We may hence see, how great security believers have for their through-bearing; almighty power is engaged for them; they are strengthened and "kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.' So that everlasting strength must fail before a believer can finally miscarry.

Use II. Of *Reproof.*

1. To those who are too secure and confident when they attain to any spiritual comfort or joy, and do not remember the fainting discouragements God's people are subject to while in this world. O communicants, have you been kindly entertained at this feast! Be not vain or secure, all things here are changeable: How suddenly was David's case altered? Psal. xxx. One time he is mounted up in prosperity; but being too confident, he is presently cast down and troubled. And in Psal. cxix. we find him at one time "rejoicing in God's testimonies, as much as in all riches;" and very soon after, his " soul is cleaving to the dust, and melting for heaviness." Go not then to build too much on sensible consolations, for these come and go at God's pleasure; it is in heaven only you can have continual day without night or cloudings, but here you are to look for changes, yea, for fainting discouragements, therefore prepare for them by securing a title to divine strength.

2. To these believers who give too much way to fainting discouragements, and do not encourage themselves in their covenanted God, and his strength. I do not marvel, O communicants, though ye be cast down, who are sensible of the hidings of God's face, the prevailing of heart-plagues, the buffetings of satan, &c but only give not way to excessive discouragement: I call it excessive, when it is ready to make you give over hopes, lay aside endeavours, indispose you for holy duties, refuse to apply to Christ your all-sufficient-help, or refuse comfort from God's promises of strength and support. Some indeed think religion lies in desperate unbelieving thoughts, and in making of complaints: but surely there is no religion there, otherwise we must conclude Cain, Judas, and the damned, to be godly. Religion rather lies in the actings of faith, and improving God's promises for strengthening us in doing his will.

3. To Arminians, who maintain the doctrine of free-will; viz. That it is in the power of a man's free-will, to do that which is spiritually and savingly good, if he please to use his natural abilities. Oh! how little do these men know themselves that talk so: for if it be not in the power of a man's will, when graciously changed and renewed, to do good, without superadded supplies of grace and strength from God, from time to time, as certainly it is not; far less can a natural and unregenerate person do it, that is dead in trespasses and sins.

4. To those communicants who look not entirely to God in Christ for strength for the work and warfare, duties and difficulties before them; but lean too much to something in themselves, or something they have got at this occasion.

1. Some trust too much to the stability of their own resolutions and engagements: They have vowed and sworn, and they hope likewise to perform accordingly. But do not depend upon these, otherwise they will soon fail you; as they did Peter after the first communion. The Psalmist was under many resolutions to keep close to the way of duty, yet he says, Psal lxxiii 2. " My feet were almost gone, and my steps had well nigh slipt." And he acknowledges, it was nothing but God's mercy that held him up," Psal. xciv. 18.

2. Others trust too much to the stability of their gracious habits, without looking to God for daily renewed influences of strength, for actuating and recruiting their weak graces. But, what is grace, faith, love, fear of God, repentance, hope? Of themselves, they are but vanishing things, and if they were not seasonably strengthened and supplied from heaven, they would soon die, Rev. iii 2.

5. We may here reprove those who make it an excuse for the neglect of duty, *They want strength.* Oh! it is, because they want will. For can you say, That though you have no strength of yourselves; yet you desire to cast your impotent souls in God's way, and aim at duty as ye can, looking to God for strength, and pleading his promise? Could you say this, it were something. Were you like a man rowing up the water, and still beat back by the impetuous stream, you might have some shadow of excuse; but when you do not make sincere attempts, you can have none.

Quest. How shall we undertake to perform duty, when we are dead, and find influences and strength withdrawn?

Ans. Whatever be our case or frame, yet still God's command is of binding force on us, and obliges us to do it.

2 No pretence of indisposition can warrant our not obeying a divine command: for our deadness and indisposition is our sin, and one sin can never excuse another, *Two blacks cannot make one white.* So that in a dead hour, you must essay to do your duty, though you can do nothing but the very outward form.

3. You must aim at your duty to prevent greater evils, for if you neglect it wholly, your case grows still worse: Your deadness increases, your hardness, impenitency, darkness, weakness and indisposition, will still grow greater.

4. By aiming at duty, you put yourselves in God's road; and when, like the blind man, you ly in Christ's way, you

stand fairer for a visit or an alms from him, than those who stay at a distance.

5. Duties performed, when we are indisposed, may be very pleasing to God. It must surely be acceptable to our gracious Lord and Master, to see one of his weak or lamed servants attempt to go his errands, though he halt and make but slow progress in his way: Nay, this will move his tender heart to pity him, and give him strength. And many a time have his servants got supplies of strength on a sudden, when they have been essaying duty. Their souls, "ere they were aware, have made them like the chariots of Aminadab," Cant. vi. 12. Therefore, *O discouraged communicant*, persist in aiming at thy duty, whatever be thy present frame. Who knows, when thou art lifting at thy heavy burden, but God will graciously lend thee a lift and lift it for thee.

Use III. Of *Trial*. O communicants, examine, if you have got any spiritual strength at this solemn feast. Many a weak believer has found it a strengthening meal to their fainting souls. Mark, if it be so with you. 1. Do ye find your graces more quick and vigorous than formerly. As, for instance, 1. Is faith more lively? Are you better pleased with the contrivance of grace, and method of salvation, than before? And are you now enabled to abandon your own righteousness, and go to your Surety Christ; laying the burden of your sins upon him, and leaning wholly to him for pardon and acceptance with God: And also looking to him as your head of influences for heart-purity and sanctifying grace, and strength to perform duty? 2. Is your repentance and grief for sin increased? Do you see more of sin's deformity, and abhor it as the enemy of Christ? And are you more afraid of piercing your Redeemer by it, and more resolved against wicked company and temptations to sin, than before? 3. Is your love and desire toward Christ more quickened? Are you more restless without his presence? Would you part with your best enjoyments, in a world, for a sight of his face? Are you more desirous of heart-holiness, that you may be capable to serve Christ, and advance the interest of his kingdom?

2. If this ordinance hath been a strengthening meal to you, then you will find more delight in duty than before, you will be inclined and enabled to pray more fervently, to hear more attentively, to praise more affectionately, to receive more believingly, keep the sabbath more exactly, watch over your heart and ways more diligently: and, in a word, to be more humble and pious towards God, more just and righteous towards man, and more sober and temperate towards yourselves; yea, you will be more afraid to shift or neglect any known duty, than you were before.

3. You will be more animated and encouraged to "fight the good fight of faith," to resist the devil's temptations, and the world's allurements, to struggle against your lusts, and mortify indwelling sin. And you will be setting conscience on the watch-tower, to give warning of the enemies approach; and you will not be slow to take the alarm.

4. If you have got more strength, you will be better reconciled to the cross than formerly; and content with patience and submission to underly what troubles and afflictions the Lord thinks fit to tryst you with for your soul's good; yea, and kiss the rod when it comes, saying, "Good is the will of the Lord concerning me."

Use IV. Of *Exhortation*. Let me hence exhort you to several duties.

1. Let those believers, who are not trysted with such fainting discouragements as others, bless God for his tenderness towards them, and bear their smaller trials the more patiently. How gentle is your exercise, and soul trouble, in respect of Job's, David's, Heman's, and many others, dear and near to God, who have been ready to faint under their burdens, and pressed above measure; God is gracious to you, he sees you are weak, and will not overburden you.

2 Let none misconstruct believers' exercises of spirit, nor despise them, because they are frequently faint and discouraged: For the greatest spirits in the world have been thus exercised. David was a man of singular valour, that had a heart as "the heart of a lion," 2 Sam. xvii. 10. A man of eminent wisdom, and therefore said to be "wise as an angel of God," 2 Sam. xiv. 20. A man of a chearful temper, and a great master of music, and therefore called the "sweet singer of Israel" 2 Sam. xxiii. 1. And yet we frequently find him sore troubled, bowed down, cleaving to the dust, and sharply exercised under the hidings of God's face, and other soul-distresses

3. Doth God give suitable strength to his people in all exigencies? Let none abuse this doctrine, by giving up with the use of the means that God has appointed; and neglecting to use their own endeavours. For though believers have Christ to lean to, all their way in their journey to heaven; yet none must expect to be carried thither upon his shoulders, without setting down a foot. We may warrantably look to him for strength for every duty; yet it is in our using the means that this strength is conveyed.

4. Beware of leaning to yourselves, and neglecting to look for this promised strength. (1.) Lean not to your own purposes; for your "goodness is like the morning dew." (2.) Lean not to your gracious habits; for these are but creatures, and ready to die. (3.) Lean not to your duties and performances; for they are defiled and unclean. (4.) Lean not to your frames; for they are fleeting and inconstant. And besides, it is highly dangerous and provoking to God, for to trust in any of these; remember the fearful curse that is pronounced against him "that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord," Jer. xxvii. 5, 6. Whom then shall we trust? Read Isa. xxvi. 4. "Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength"

5. Let all believing communicants bless God for this new and excellent method of salvation through Jesus Christ. The new covenant is far better than the old. Now, our stock is not in our hand, but in Christ's, and he manages it for us; which is our great happiness. As when God brought Israel out of Egypt with a high hand, he did not set them down on the other side of the Red Sea, and then bid them shift their way to Canaan: no, he led them on their way; yea, "As a man carries his children, so he bare them all the way they went." So when God, in a day of his power, brings an elect soul out of spiritual Egypt, he doth not set him in the way with a stock of strength in his hand, and then leave him to march through the wilderness alone: no, he leads and supports him all the way; for he knows that the whole country rises on him in his march, and if left to go alone, without special and renewed aid, he would never get to Canaan.

Quest But what course shall take to get these seasonable supplies of strength from God, that I may be helped safe through the wilderness, without fainting and upsitting?

Ans. Take these directions:

1. Labour to be thoroughly convinced of your impotence and insufficiency, that you may be weak in your own sense

and feeling; for the way to be strong, is to be weak, according to the apostle's experience, 2 Cor. xii. 10. "When I am weak, then am I strong." Hence also it is said of these worthies, Heb. xi. 34. "Out of weakness they were made strong," i. e. out of weakness felt and apprehended.

2. Humbly represent and bemoan your impotence before God, like Ephraim, Jer. xxxi. 18. "I heard Ephraim bemoaning himself, I was a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke." He felt his own impotence and aversion to what was good; and then he groans and looks up to God for power: "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the Lord my God." And, in the next verse, we see how readily the Lord stept in with pity and help to him. Thus also did Jehoshaphat, and found help, 2 Chron. xx. 12. "We have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee; q. d. Though we be weak, yet we know thou art infinitely powerful, and full of compassion.

3. Use well any small power you have, and it will increase. The right arm is more strong and vigorous than the left, because it is more exercised. So grace, the more it is exercised, the more it grows, Matth. xiii. 12. Prov. x. 29.

4. Wait on the Lord in the diligent use of the means; for it is promised, Isa. xl. 31. "They that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength." And in Psal. xxvii. 14. "Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." We must use, but not trust to the means, but to God in the due use of them.

5. Walk tenderly, and guard against every known sin; for sin lets out the soul's strength, as bleeding lets the spirit out of the body.

6. Be often looking, in a believing way, to the Mediator Christ, your Treasurer and Head of influences; and derive all your supplies of strength from, and through him alone.

7. Carefully entertain the Spirit's motions, and fall in with them. "Grieve not the Spirit of Christ, which is sent to strengthen you; otherwise you will cast away your strength from you.

Lastly, Acquaint yourselves, O communicants, with the word of God, and its gracious promises of strength; lay them up in store against the time of need, and plead them humbly with God: For prayer, grounded on a promise, is likely to prevail. This was David's argument under his faintings, Psal cxix. 28. "Strengthen thou me according to thy word." And he had the experience of its prevailing with God, Psal. cxxxviii 3. "In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul." I shall add no more, but conclude with the apostle's words, 1 Pet. v. 10. 11. "The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Amen.

SACRAMENTAL
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AND A VARIETY OF SCRIPTURE SONGS FOR ZION'S TRAVELLERS IN THEIR WAY THITHER.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED, BY WAY OF APPENDIX,

I. A Lecture concerning the Institution of the Lord's Supper, on 1 *Cor*. ix. 17. *to the end.*

II. A Preparation Sermon, from Josh. iii. 5.—*III. An Action Sermon, from Cant*. ii. 4.

BY

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OF DUNDEE.

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SACRAMENTAL MEDITATIONS.

THE PREFACE.

THE eternal Son of God, when taking his leave of an ungrateful world, instituted the sacrament of the Supper, as a lively resemblance and memorial of his bloody sufferings and death in the room of his people; and also to be a bright and lasting evidence of the amazing love of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to perishing sinners.

As God once sent his Son into the world in a lowly habit, clothed with human flesh, to save sinners; so now he sends him in a homely dress, clothed with the elements of bread and wine to assure us of his love, and to engage us to come to him. Kings expect that their children will be respected, though their officers be neglected. Surely (saith God) "They will reverence my Son:" They will make him welcome, and hearken to him.

In this most august ordinance of the New Testament, the great God approaches very near to us, and we to him; and yet it is to be deeply regretted, that many, who profess to believe this, come to it with so little thought and preparation, and with so much indifferency and carelessness of spirit. Oh, shall we adventure so near the great God, who is infinitely holy, in whose sight the heavens are not pure, and in whose presence the sun and stars are dimmed, and the brightest seraphims do gather in their wings, and account themselves as little flies before him! And shall we, who are creatures so mean and so vile, be careless and unconcerned, when we make the nearest approach to this great and holy God, that we can make on this side heaven!

Ought we not to go blushing, ashamed and deeply humbled on many accounts, and particularly for our ingratitude for redeeming love, that "love which passeth knowledge;" and for our contempt of "God's unspeakable gift," the greatest sin in the world; yea, we should go wondering that we are out of hell, for many thousands are burning there, who have not sinned so heinously in making light of precious Christ as we have done.

Moreover, reader, consider if you go to this ordinance unpreparedly, or with indifference, you not only make light of the Lord Jesus Christ, but you are "guilty of the body and blood of the Lord," 1 Cor. iii. 27. Surely, that word may cause you to quake and tremble; blood guiltiness of any sort is a dreadful sin, and especially to be guilty of the "blood of the Lord." Murder is a sin that cries for vengeance on the actor, and gives God no rest till he punish it, Gen. iv. 10. "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the earth" If it be a crying sin to murder a common person, what must it be to murder a king? "Who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless." 1 Sam. xxvi. 91. O then what a crime must it be to murder the eternal Son of God, who is thy exalted King, thy everlasting Father, thy dear Redeemer, and thy God, who gave thee a being. Child-murder is a heinous crime, but, what Christ-murder is, no tongue can tell! If on him that slew Cain (that wicked man) vengeance should be taken sevenfold; what vengeance will be taken on him that crucifies afresh the Lord of glory? This consideration should make all of us afraid of careless and unworthy communicating.

If we would communicate worthily, we must be earnest, not only for the life of grace, but also for the liveliness of grace; not only for the truth and sincerity of grace, but likewise for the activity and vigorous exercise of grace. So that a believer himself doth not eat and drink worthily, unless the grace that is in him be excited and exercised at this ordinance. There must be not only faith in the truth of it, but there must be faith realizing, applying, appropriating, and making use of Christ's death and purchase in this ordinance. Not only must there be a disposition of soul to be humbled for sin, but there must be actual mourning and melting of heart for sin, and for particular sins, when we look on him we have pierced by them. Not only must there be a principle of love to Christ, but also an exciting of love to flame out to Christ, who loved us and gave himself for us.

Worthy communicating being a work of such importance, the following Scriptural Meditations and Advices are humbly offered to Christians, as an help in their preparations for it. Reading and thinking much on the subjects here proposed, may, through God's blessing, be useful to promote their habitual preparation for the holy supper. Christ's body and blood herein exhibited, are pure and holy things, and should be received in prepared and cleansed hearts. His body never saw corruption in the grave, nor will be mixed with it in hearts where corruption is allowed. It lay in a virgin-womb, and in a virgin-sepulchre, and will still be entertained in virgin-souls and affections; in hearts purified and consecrated to God. In those Christ chuses to reside, and not in those where sin and the world, with the lusts thereof, are harboured. Oh, had we grace to maintain and cherish the fear of God, and the love of Christ habitually in our souls, we might, without much pains, be prepared for coming to him at his table.

Did we always bear in our minds, that sacramental occasions are solemn appointments, and Bethel meetings with God, for renewing covenant, and entertaining fellowship and communion with him, we would guard more against formality creeping in upon us in our preparations for, and in our attendance upon this ordinance, than, alas, we do. Oh, such formality will provoke the Master of our solemn feasts to withdraw from them, and then what poor, dry, melancholy, and lifeless things, will they be? What are sacraments without Christ's presence in them? O let us

never be satisfied with communion-sabbaths, without communion with Christ in them.

On the other hand, if we would keep up communion with Christ in these ordinances, let us beware of relying on our previous pains or preparations, either for our right performing of our duty, or for our acceptance in it: For we are never more ready to miscarry, and to be disappointed, than when we are guilty of this resting. Sundry go to the Lord's table with great humiliation for sin, and yet come away without comfort: Why? because they make a Christ of their sorrow. O what worth can we see in our best preparations, confessions, prayers, tears, humiliations, &c. if we compare them with the law of God? We have more cause to be ashamed of them, than to lay any stress on them. Could we renounce all self-confidence, and disclaim all our provision in point of dependence, and cast ourselves wholly on Christ for strength, through-bearing and acceptance, we would have better success at the Lord's table, than commonly we have.

We are never more fit for this holy table, than when we are most humbled, and most ashamed of ourselves, because of our unfitness for this solemn approach; and we are never less fit than when we think ourselves most fit and prepared for the duty. A holy deniedness to all-sufficiency, and a deep sense of unworthiness and unfitness, is the best preparation we can attain to for this solemn ordinance. Let us make holy David our pattern, when going to partake, Psal. lxxi. 16. "I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." And let us pray with the spouse, Cant. iv. 16. "Awake, O north-wind, and come, thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out." Amen.

Dundee, August 1747.

SACRAMENTAL *MEDITATIONS.*

MEDITATION I.

From Heb. xi. 7.—*By faith Noah prepared an ark to the saving of his house.*

THOUGH the flood, that drowned the old world, was at many years distance, yet Noah was moved with fear at God's warning him of it, and prepared an ark for his safety. And shall not unconverted, unbelieving sinners, who have a far more terrible flood threatened against them, and may be only a few days distant, take warning, and provide with all speed for their safety? O shall I, a wretched, guilty sinner, take rest, while I am within the flood-marks of God's wrath, and not arise in time to provide an Ark to flee to for my safety? But, O good news, I have not the Ark to provide, it is prepared to my hand: God, in his infinite wisdom and pity, hath made ready an Ark long ago for lost sinners of Adam's race to fly to; and now it is completely furnished and finished, and all things are ready, so that I have nothing to do but go and take possession.

O what had become of me, and other perishing sinners, had we the Ark to build for ourselves? Nay, the whole creation had not been able or sufficient for this purpose. How soon would the raging flood of divine wrath sweep away all the arks of men or angels' building! But thanks be unto God for ever, for the excellent well built Ark of God's devising, for the many spacious rooms and safe lodging-places within it, for the suitable accommodation and plentiful provision laid up therein, and for the door opened in the side thereof for perishing souls to enter by. The salvation of sinners by a crucified Christ, is a well-ordered scheme, a beautiful contrivance! blessed be the infinitely wise Contriver for it. I see all things in Christ crucified necessary for me: he is made of God to men, "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption" There is in him infinite wisdom to guide me, a spotless righteousness to cover me, precious blood to wash me, the Holy Spirit to sanctify me, his good word to direct me, his just laws to govern me, and his infinite fulness to supply all my needs:—Safe and happy then would I be, were I found in him. O that, upon trial by scripture-marks, I could conclude myself to be within the Ark, to wit, a *crucified Jesus*

Can I say, I have been warned of God, and moved with fear to fly to this Ark? Have I discovered my shelterless state by nature, the waves and billows of wrath rising and rolling against me? Have I seen my own inability to provide an Ark for myself, and the excellency and fitness of the Ark of God's providing? Have I been made willing to abandon all false arks, and earnestly inquisitive how to get into the true Ark? Have I been made willing to use all appointed means for this end, to read, hear, meditate, pray, repent, believe, essay to climb up the sides of the Ark, and press to get in at the door thereof? Have I been willing to venture my all in the Ark, like Noah, notwithstanding of the discouragements, scoffs and hatred of the world, for so doing? Have I willingly acquiesced, sheltered, and lodged my soul in God's Ark, and been made to say, "This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell!" Come what floods will, Christ shall be my Ark, his righteousness alone my refuge and hiding place.

Alas! upon impartial search, have I not cause to fear, that I have not yet fled to the Ark, but am still exposed to the devouring flood? And can I be easy or quiet in such a case? Can I forbear crying, What shall I do to get into the Ark Christ? Nay, what would I not do to get into it? Lord, what would thou have me to do? Wouldst thou have me to humble myself, confess, mourn, part with sin, close with Christ in all his offices? Prescribe, Lord, what thou wilt, I will not scruple what thou enjoinest me, but obey thee without reserve. I am resolved upon it, whatever it cost me, that the solicitations of the flesh, the temptations of satan, the scoffs, reproaches or persecutions of the world, shall not stop me from flying to the Ark; I would break through all these to be found in it. Lord, increase and strengthen my faith for that end; and help my unbelief.

O how suitable is the Ark Christ to my destitute and miserable condition: In myself I want all things, but I see a supply for all my wants in the Ark. I am poor, but I see gold in the Ark to make me rich: I am wounded by sin, but I see balm in the Ark to heal my wounds: I am blind, but there is eye-salve in the Ark to make me see: I am pe-

rishing with hunger, but I see bread in the Ark to satisfy me: I am naked, but in the Ark there is white raiment to clothe me: I am polluted, but in the Ark there is a fountain to wash me: I am exposed to more terrible floods than Noah was, but I see the Ark Christ can save me from them all: Noah's ark saved him only from a flood of water, but the Ark Christ saves from a flood of the curses of the law, and the wrath of God, which will sweep away all the unbelieving world. This flood rose, swelled high, and dashed furiously against our Ark; but the Ark was proof against it, and sheltered all the elect world from the flood; so that not one drop did light on them. O how excellent is this Ark! for it can save me from being overwhelmed or carried away with any flood, and particularly it can save me from being carried away with a flood of Satan's temptations, which sweeps away many; or with a flood of indwelling corruption; with a flood of error; with a flood of profanity; or with a flood of neutrality and indifferency about spiritual concerns: By which floods, multitudes are destroyed. Let me then by faith fly to this blessed ark, where all believers are preserved from these destroying floods. Behold I run, I fly: May Jesus draw me, and help me in.

Blessed for ever be the God of heaven, for providing such an Ark for fallen sinners upon earth. I desire to count all things but loss and dung, that I may be found in this Ark, among *the preserved in Christ Jesus*, whom no flood can reach. However this Ark may be slighted by the world, I'll prize it above all things, and count them for ever happy who get into it, seeing God declares it, that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. The ark was slighted by the old world, and Noah ridiculed for preparing it for himself and his house; but it soon appeared that Noah was the wisest man that then lived upon the earth. Few there were that entered with Noah into the ark, and no doubt were reproached and mocked for their singularity; but soon was the world persuaded that they were the only wise and happy men in it. Better surely it was to have followed the eight persons that went into the ark, than to have joined eight millions of those who were drowned in the flood. Should I be so foolish as follow the old world in undervaluing the Ark, I must lay my account to be shut out and perish with them too: Wherefore, I will not fear the reproach of men, for being singular in my esteem for glorious Christ. May I be numbered among that happy company (however few they be) who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, and will bless God eternally for providing this Ark for drowning men! May I be one that will ever bless my lovely and loving Jesus, that pitied me and took me in, when others were washed off from the sides of the Ark, as adhering only to it by a dead and formal profession! May I be one that will ever sing to his praise, O amazing free love! that pitied and distinguished me, when the flood came; that graciously drew and determined me in such a manner, that I got into the Ark and was safe, when many others were washed off and perished for ever!

MEDITATION

MEDITATION II.

From 2 PET. ii. 4.—*God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell.*

HOW admirable, free and distinguishing, is the love of God to mankind sinners, in pitying them in their low and lost estate! O how different is the case of *fallen men* upon the earth, from the case of *fallen angels* in hell, and that of damned souls there! Manna is rained down upon us, while an eternal shower of fire and brimstone falls down upon them. They are bound in chains of darkness, whilst thou, Lord, art drawing us with cords of love. Thou didst not spare angels, nor take on their nature; but thou hast spared us, married our nature, and exalted it to the heavens. They continue without hope under the deluge of God's wrath, whilst the pleasant rainbow of the sacrament appears to us, as a token of God's covenant of grace, and of his willingness to secure us from that overflowing flood, by the interposition of his dear Son in our nature. O how welcome should we make that gospel rainbow!

Lord, thy wrath soon broke out against the angels that fell; thou didst punish them immediately upon their sinning against thee. Thou didst not wait for their repentance, nor make any offer of mercy to them, but, presently, upon their first offence, didst condemn them to everlasting chains of darkness. O how far different is thy manner of dealing with us! Long hast thou waited upon us after we have sinned; yea, thou hast followed us with thy mercy, after many refusals of it, and even after our trampling the precious blood of Christ under our feet! Marvellous and peculiar is thy mercy to fallen men in respect of fallen angels! Glory to sovereign free mercy, that thou didst not cast us off for ever without a parley, as thou didst them; but waits to be gracious to us, long stretching out thy hand, and calling us to repentance, saying, "Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die?"

Against the sinning *angels* God was so provoked, that he resolved within himself, and hath kept his resolution ever since the beginning of the world, and will keep it to all eternity, that he will not so much as enter into a parley with those creatures, however glorious they once were, nor be reconciled to them upon any terms; yea, that he will hear of no terms, but will revenge himself upon them to all eternity. May not then the hearing of this cause us to quake and tremble? for, why might not the Lord have dealt with us in the same manner, who were far more wretched and miserable creatures than angels? Surely, if a king be so angry with an offending *nobleman*, that was once his special favourite, as to banish him from court, and afterwards hear of no terms of reconciliation with him: Would not a *footman* or mean servant, that had offended, when hearing of this, begin to dread, and say, O what will become of me, a poor man, when the king treats his peers so severely? I may surely despair of a remission or reconciliation with him. So, in like manner, we poor clay worms, upon hearing of God's severity to fallen angels, might have been overwhelmed with fear, if the Bible had not told us, that the Son of God his "delights were with the sons of men;" that "verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took upon him the seed of Abraham," Heb. ii. 16. and that he gave himself to be a sin-

offering and sacrifice for men! Astonishing news! Glory to God for these glad-tidings of great joy.

O admirable love to *Adam's* rebellious offspring! Hast thou, Lord, past by angels, and remembered us in our low and lost estate! and in thy infinite compassion become our Surety, to appease divine justice for our heinous sins, when no other sacrifice could do it! O what shall we render to thee for this distinguishing love! Surely our condition in *Adam* was no better than that of the *angels* who left their first estate. By nature we were in a most dreadful case, lying, like *Isaac,* bound on the altar, to be a sacrifice to the justice of God, and the sword of justice lift up to give us the killing blow, until the Son of God discovered himself, as the *ram* caught in the thickets, and calling to justice, Hold thy hand, loose them, and bind me in their room; I'll be the sacrifice for them. In choosing fallen men, and not angels, God gave an amazing instance of the sovereignty of his grace, that would be merciful to whom he would be merciful; he would pass by the superior nature, and choose the inferior; prefer vessels of clay to vessels of gold! What can we say? Nothing, but wonder at God's free grace! Unspeakable love! Lord, it had been much if thou hadst provided an angel to mitigate our sufferings in hell, by giving us drops of water to cool our tongues; but that thou shouldst have condescended to come and change rooms with us, ly in hell for us, and suffer the very pains and agonies due to us, is *love that passeth knowledge.*

Lord, when I consider thy distinguishing pity, and low stoop, to purchase and recover such clods of earth and sin with thy blood and agonies, I am amazed at thy love, confounded at my own ingratitude, and ashamed at the coldness and hardness of my heart! Oh! was Christ willing to change rooms with the like of me, and shall not I be willing to change rooms with him, and at his demand to part with the filthy rags of my sins, and take on the robe of his righteousness? O shall not this amazing love of Christ constrain me to love him again, and live to him that died for me? Shall it not constrain me to think on him? constrain me to commend him? constrain me to adhere to Christ's truths and ways? to persevere in prayer, praise, and holy walking?

Are fallen angels left, and fallen men pitched upon to be the monuments of free grace, to fill up the vacant rooms which angels fell from? What shall I say to this, but, "even so, Father, for so it pleased thee:" Let thy sovereign free grace be the eternal song of both men and angels. "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory." Blessed be God, that I hear this joyful sound of reconciliation with fallen men, and of a treaty of peace carried on with them: The devils never heard, and never will hear such news.—But, O if I come not in, and accept of the terms and offers made to me in the gospel, I will put myself in a worse case than the devils: For it cannot be charged upon fallen angels, as on fallen men, that God was willing to be reconciled to them, and they would not. Now, then, when the gospel-treaty is proclaimed, God forbid I be found guilty of refusing his terms, scorning his offers, and defying his threatenings O how shall I escape, if I neglect so great and wonderful salvation as is tendered to me? Neglect it, Lord, I dare not, I will not. Lo, I come, I accept, I embrace, I take hold of thy covenant, and the seal of it tendered to me: I renounce the old covenant, I break league, this day, with all thine enemies, I proclaim war against them: I close with Christ Jesus, both as my righteousness and my strength: I make a full and free surrender and resignation of myself unto the Lord, to be his, and his only, in all I am, and in all I enjoy, to be ordered and disposed of for his glory and service. Lord, I am thine; I will not be my own, I will not be the world's, but I will be thine, thine only, and thine wholly; thine to love thee, serve and obey thee, without reserve: Since thou wouldst have no nature but mine, I will have no will but thine I renounce my own will, and take thine for my rule. Lord, I am thine, O save thou me; and I will trumpet forth the praises of free grace and redeeming love for ever. Amen.

MEDITATION III.

From Psal. cxlviii. 20.—*He hath not dealt so with any nation.*

THE nation of Israel was singularly privileged above others; they were taken into covenant with God, they had God's word and ordinances, the means of conversion and salvation; they had the gospel-revelation, the knowledge and promises of the Messiah. But we, under the New-Testament times, and in Britain, are yet more peculiarly privileged with clearer light and discoveries of the Messiah, than the nation of Israel had. They lived under a darker and harsher dispensation of the covenant of grace by Moses, whose first miracle was the turning of *water into blood;* but we live under the clearer and sweeter dispensation of it by Christ himself, whose first miracle was the turning of *water into wine,* that chears the heart. The nation of Israel were called a people near unto God; but in gospel-times we are allowed yet nearer access to God, than they had. The children of Israel were not allowed so much as to touch the mount on which the Lord came down; the men of Bethshemesh had not liberty to look into the ark, the place of his residence: But, behold, we are allowed to take a near view and steady look of a crucified Jesus in the sacrament, who is "the image of the invisible God, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person." Yea, we have liberty not only to look to him, but also to touch him, handle his wounds, embrace his person, and lodge him in our hearts.

The advantage of a clear revelation of a crucified Christ in the gospel-ordinances, and particularly in the Lord's supper, is an invaluable privilege. If the royal psalmist admired the divine goodness in causing the sun, moon and stars, to shine in the firmament for man's behoof, and therefore cries, "What is man, that God is thus mindful of him?" How far greater cause have we to say so, when we observe how God causes the Sun of righteousness shine so brightly in the firmament of gospel-ordinances, and the *day spring from on high to visit us* with the light of saving knowledge, and of eternal salvation through him? Again, if the Psalmist exalts God's goodness so much in his giving the beasts of the field, fowls of the air, and fishes of the sea to be food for man: What ground have we to admire and praise God's infinite mercy, in giving us the flesh and blood his own dear Son to preserve the lives of our souls? O what rare gospel-feasts are these which God allows us in the land wherein we dwell! And O how wonderfully are they pre-

served and continued with us, from time to time, by the miraculous working of God's mercy and power! While others are visited with cleanness of teeth, and a famine of the word of God? *He hath not dealt with every nation* as with us.

And, Lord, how distinguishing is thy goodness unto me a most unworthy creature! By thy mercy I was born in a valley of vision; and I dwell in a lightsome Goshen, when multitudes of others, in Pagan and Popish nations, are covered with Egyptian darkness, and sit in the region of the shadow of death; I hear heaven's free market-days of grace proclaimed, when others have silent sabbaths; I am invited to a rich banqueting-house, when others are starving for the want of the bread of life. O that I could value my mercies aright! It is a great privilege that I am allowed to speak to the great God in prayer, and to hear him speak unto me in his word! But still he puts a greater honour upon me, by calling me to enjoy intimate communion and fellowship with himself, yea, inviting me to sit down with him at his table, and feast upon the fruits of Christ's death, and benefits of his purchase! Oh, I am not worthy of the least crumb that falls from the children's table, and far less of being set down at the table with the children to eat of their bread, and share of the dainties provided for them by their heavenly Father. If Peter, after having seen Christ's glory, and his own vileness, judged himself unworthy to be in the same ship with Christ, and therefore cried, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man." How should I, the chief of sinners, adventure to sit at the same table with him, and feed upon his flesh and blood! Amazing condescension!

O what distinction doth God make among nations, in sending the gospel to them, with clear views and pressing offers of a crucified Jesus to perishing souls? And what cause have we in these nations, of admiring the distinguishing goodness of God to us in this respect beyond others! Would we not admire his goodness, if he caused the sun shine only in our horizon, as he did on Goshen; when other nations were covered with darkness, as the land of Egypt was? Yet surely the gospel-sun is by far a greater mercy. The gospel is indeed a *joyful sound*, Psal. lxxxix. 15 so called, with allusion to the silver trumpets made use of under the law to call people to the solemn assemblies, and to intimate to them the feast of the passover, which represented the love and sufferings of the Messiah. A joyful sound the gospel is, indeed, if we compare it with the sound of the law's curses and threatenings thundered from mount Sinai against sinners. But, behold, this joyful sound, bringing salvation, comes from heaven, even to heaven-daring sinners, who had openly rebelled against the God of heaven! Glad news! blessed are they who know the joyful sound; know it, so as to believe it, admire it, entertain it, and comply with it, so as to receive Christ offered therein to lost sinners.

Lord, I make this joyful sound welcome; it is music to my ear, and a cordial to my heart. I reckon their feet beautiful who bring such glad tidings to my soul. O how welcome would men make them, who would bring them an invention, that would secure their estates from consuming, their houses from burning, or their bodies from dying! But here we have the sure news of an invention that doth much more for us than all this; even a device that secures us from hell, and ensures us of heaven. Ought I not then cheerfully to comply with this joyful sound, and fall in with the call thereof? God forbid that I should stop my ears at it; it had been better for me then, never to have heard of it at all: How dreadful would my case be at the judgment day! How would devils, Turks, Heathens, and my own conscience, upbraid me in hell, to all eternity, for my folly in slighting this joyful sound! Surely God may slight the mournful sound of their prayers in the time of distress, who slight the joyful sound of his gospel in time of health. But, Lord, I bless thee for it, I love it, I receive it, I welcome it, I fall heartily in with it, and will admire it for ever.

MEDITATION IV.

From 1 John iii. 1.—*Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!*

IN the amazing work of our redemption, we are called to behold and admire both the love of the Father, and the love of the Son. Unspeakable love of the Father! that contrived our redemption, pitched upon and gave the Redeemer. O how readily accepted he of the Son's offer to suffer and satisfy infinite justice for sin in our room! Upon our fall he might justly have said, No, the soul that sins shall die personally, I'll admit of no surety. But glory to the blessed Father, such was his love to us, that when the dear Son said, Father, I will be the Surety for sinners of mankind, let my blood be shed for theirs, let the blow light on me, let me die in their room; such was the love and pity of the Father to us, that he presently accepted the offer, held our Redeemer at his word, saying, Be it as thou hast said: "Awake, O sword, against the man that is my fellow; smite the shepherd," and spare the sheep. I'll glorify my justice upon my own dear Son, rather than upon them. Amen, said the blessed Son of God: I will be the sacrifice!

O love unspeakable, both in the Father and the Son! human love, angelical love, is nothing to it! O what is the love of creatures one to another, to this love of God to man! astonishing love! that the eternal Son of God, intreated by no man, but hated of all men, should in his love and pity intreat for men: yea, undertake and die for them, when enemies to God and all that is good! "O the breadth, O the length, O the depth, O the heighth of this love of Christ, which passeth knowledge!" I may possibly feel it, but I cannot fathom it. The love of creatures is nothing to the love of Christ. It was great love that Jacob bore to Rachel, that he endured the heat of summer, and frosts of winter for her: But all this was nothing to the winter-storm which Christ suffered for us. It was extraordinary love that Jonathan had to David, that he would peril his life to avert his father's wrath from him: But what was that to Christ's love, that took on his eternal Father's wrath, which was infinitely greater than Saul's, and actually laid down his life to avert that dreadful storm of wrath from us! What love was it that made him stand before the mouth of hell-furnace, and suffer himself to be scorched with it in the most terrible manner, that he might stop the flame from breaking out on us! Behold him receiving the sword of justice into his bowels, to prevent its being sheathed in our hearts. Behold, when the sea of God's wrath raged and was tempestuous, threatening to swallow us all up; Christ came, and said, like Jonah, Spare these poor sinners! take me up, and cast me into the sea

in their stead, that the storm may be appeased against them! Christ was willing to be cast into the sea of wrath, to be a blessed plank of mercy for shipwrecked souls to grip to, and be saved.

Admirable love of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who would give his dearly beloved Son, out of free love and pity to man, to die and suffer wrath for him! and would chuse rather to see his dear Son agonizing and struggling under infinite wrath for a time, than to see an elect world struggling in hell among devils for ever! O who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord! who can shew forth all his praise! O Father of mercies, from all eternity thou foresaw our fall and misery, and, in thy wisdom and love, didst contrive a noble remedy for us: Thou even didst provide a Surety for man before the debt was contracted, a Saviour for him before he was lost; and by this glorious Surety thou hast found out a noble way to satisfy the demands of justice and intreaties of mercy, and glorify both these divine perfections at once. By this, Lord, we know thou lovest us, that thou hast not with-held thy Son, thine only Son, from us, to be sacrificed in our room, and graciously callest us to commemorate thy love, in providing this sacrifice, at thy holy table. Instead of this, thou mightest justly have called multitudes of us together, to make us a sacrifice to thy justice for our heinous sins and rebellion against heaven. But behold, thou callest us together to thy table upon a quite other design, even to intimate to us a sacrifice of thy own providing, sufficient for us all; and actually to behold the bleeding victim of the innocent Lamb of God, who willingly, at his Father's call, gave himself to be slain to take away the sins of the world! Lord, what didst thou see in such creatures, to make thee to love us after this manner? Nothing, but much to make thee loath us; yet the time when we were most loathsome, thou madest it the time of love! Surely "thy thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor thy ways as our ways!" How astonishing was thy conduct in redeeming us when lost? And worse are we than devils, if we be not ravished with the love of the Father, in projecting our redemption; and with the love of his eternal Son, that made him leave his glory in heaven, and even wade through hell to save the dregs of the creation.

O what manner of love is this, that the Father did give his eternal Son, to die for those who deserved eternal wrath for their rebellion and treason against himself! When notice was first given in this lower world, that the Son of God was coming down to it from heaven; what could have been expected, but that his business here would be to condemn the world, and hasten the execution of those he found in arms against him? But, O who can think, and not wonder, that he should have sent him to suffer and die for such as forfeited their lives, and deserved to be slain; yea, for such as were alienated from the life of God, and full of enmity against him, unworthy of any place of abode upon earth, and by their wickedness fully prepared for hell: O how surprising is it, that God would, in this our miserable state, send the Son of his love to die for us, to rescue us from deserving wrath, and purchase a new title for us to life and glory! Behold, what manner of love this is, that the just should suffer for the unjust, the just Prince for the unjust rebels, that were in arms against him, the King of Glory for the children of disobedience, the obedient Son for mortal enemies! O this is such a manner of loving, that the highest transport of wondering cannot reach: "For scarcely for a righteous man will one dare to die; but God commends his love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," Rom. v. 7, 8.

O how am I able to hear, speak, or think of this love, and my heart not burn with an admiring sense of the freeness and riches of God's grace; and with a vehement hatred and indignation against my sins, which contributed to pierce and crucify my glorious Redeemer! Can I be but ravished with love to him, when he comes to communicate his love to me at his table, and say, Behold how I have loved you, and given myself for you! I was "cut off, but not for myself:—I was wounded for your transgressions, and bruised for your iniquities." It was for you I was betrayed, reviled, condemned, and crucified; for you my hands and feet were nailed to the tree, my head crowned with thorns, and my side pierced with a spear: And all this I suffered, that you might be saved from hell, and get sin forgiven, and God reconciled to you for ever.

MEDITATION V.

From Psalm viii. 4.—*What is man that thou art mindful of him?*

WHEN David beheld the heavens, with its glorious luminaries, the sun, moon, and stars, and the mighty works of God in the creation, and considered what a mean figure man made amongst them; he admires God's condescension and goodness, in his concern and pains about him, in his works of providence and redemption. Lord, what is man, fallen man, that thou shouldst notice him so much? A poor, vile, sinful worm! And yet how singularly minded and honoured is he, in God the Son his undertaking to be his Cautioner and Ransom? Had he done it for angels, it had not been so marvellous; but what is man, that God should visit him in this manner! should pay him a homely visit in human nature, to see what ailed him, to hear his complaints, and know feelingly his wants and miseries, that he might the better sympathize with him, relieve, and supply him!

But who is this that comes to pay this visit to man? even he that is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, who is infinite in majesty and power, in riches and glory. How awful are the descriptions given us of him in the Bible! "Great is the Lord and of great power, his understanding is infinite. He calls the stars by their names. Whatsoever he pleased, that did he, in heaven and in earth, in the seas, and all the deep places." And it is said of his coming to judgment, Dan. vii. 10. "A fiery stream issued forth before him, thousand thousands ministred unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him." And yet this Almighty Person, the great God, condescends to clothe himself with our nature, and stoops to the very ground, in the most lowly manner, to pay a kind visit to his rebellious creature, man, even man that is a worm; and when he gets not access to him at first, he continues to stand and knock at his door. O how marvellous is this, that he who was Omnipotent, that could by a word have annihilated fallen man, and created a more amiable creature in all respects in his room, should stoop so low to him! That he who was Omniscient, and perfectly knew man's unworthiness, his enmity, his ingratitude, and what unkind returns he would make for the greatest kindness, should court him so ear-

nestly! That the Judge of heaven should come down from the bench, and put on the pannel's clothes, that he might answer and satisfy the law for him! That the great General of the armies of heaven, should put himself in the room of a poor condemned deserter, to suffer for him! That the Creator should stoop to die for the creature, even the great God for a worm, man, is love that swallows up our thoughts and language! What can we think! what can we say of it! it is love that passeth knowledge! the most penetrating angel cannot fathom its height, its depth, its breadth, or its length! Why? for its height is infinitely higher than the highest heavens; for its depth, none can see its bottom, for it made him stoop as low as hell; for its breadth, it is as broad as the whole earth and the whole heavens, too; it comprehends all his people, even the poorest outcast on earth, as well as the highest saint in heaven; for its length, it never ends, but continues without interruption, notwithstanding of provocations, nay, it is drawn out parallel with the longest line of eternity.

Lord, what is man, that thou shouldst have minded him, visited him, and loved him so! A creature most unlovely, ugly and black as hell; that had got the image of God razed out, and the image of Satan pictured in its room. A creature lame and impotent, that could not rise but as Christ lifted him, could not stand but as he upheld him, could not walk but as he led him, nor move but as he drew him. A rebel, that was in league with hell, that hated his Sovereign, and was plotting with the devil to pull the crown off his head. A creature made loathsome by sin in God's sight; yea, more loathsome than the new born infant wallowing in its blood, than Job when full of boils, than Lazarus full of sores, or a dead carcase crawling with worms. A creature that was undesirous of God's visit or help, and unwilling to accept of it; that said to him, "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." A creature that contemned his love, rejected his offers, and trampled his blood. Who would have pitied such a creature? one so poor, so vile, so miserable! It had been much to have given him an alms; but for the Son of God to give his life for him, may strike men and angels with astonishing surprise for ever. "Lord, what is man," a poor feeble crawling worm, "that thou shouldst be mindful of him" after this manner? And what are we, that we should still have the offers of this love continued to us? O shall we ever make light of this love any more? "I believe, Lord, help my unbelief."

There is a parallel text, Psal. cxliv. 3. "Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him? Or the son of man, that thou makest account of him?" What a poor little thing is man, that thou shouldst make so great account of him, put such respect upon him above all other creatures, so as to condescend to stand in a nearer relation to him than to any other; as that of a Father, a Brother, a Husband, a Friend, &c. yea more, thou hast dignified this poor thing, man, so much, as to assume his nature into an ineffable, personal union with the second Person of the ever glorious Trinity, whereby the nature of man is exalted above all the angels of heaven. It is not the angelical, but the human nature, which God hath chosen to tabernacle in: and now it is honoured so far, as to be set on the right hand of the Majesty on high. The great account God hath of this little thing, man, appears further in the great cost he hath laid out for him. Why, God not only gives his creatures to die for man, to yield him food, but he also gives his Christ to die for him, to procure him eternal life. Again, how great is the goodness which God hath laid up for him hereafter? Eye hath not seen it, ear hath not heard it, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive how great it is! O what a favourite of heaven must this little creature, man, be!

Lord, who can but wonder at the honour thou hast already put upon man, and at the favours thou still designs for him! Great things hast thou laid out, and great things hast thou laid up for man. I admire thy low stoop in the visit thou madest man, in the incarnation of thy dear Son, and in thy visit in the gospel-proclamation, and offer of pardon through him! but let me still plead for another visit, in the effusion of thy holy Spirit: This other visit thou knowest is necessary, to make the former effectual to my salvation. May then thy holy Spirit work faith in me, to fall in with thy glorious device for the redemption of man in all points, to accept of thy love offers, and rest upon thy free promises of salvation through Jesus Christ, and his most perfect righteousness. Amen.

MEDITATION VI.

From 1 Cor. x. 4.—*And that Rock was Christ.*

HOW useful was that rock in the wilderness to the Israelites sojourning there, after it was smitten by Moses's rod: When they were ready to perish in that dry desert, the rock sent forth streams of water to them in great abundance; streams that followed them up hill and down dale, in all their turnings and windings, marches and countermarches, through that weary land. That rock was to them a lively type of Christ, who, being smitten by the rod of the law's curses, whose minister Moses was, sends forth plentiful supplies to his people, while travelling in the wilderness of this world. There are two principal streams of blessings which he sends forth, most useful to us; to wit, a stream of *blood* for our *justification*, and a stream of the *Spirit* for our *sanctification*. The channel or conduit-pipes, for conveying those streams to us, are the ordinances and promises of the gospel, and through these pipes these blessed streams run freely to all true believers, from the Rock Christ, which was broached for them.

Oh, how costly was our redemption to our dear kinsman Jesus Christ! dear did our souls cost him! The Rock of our salvation was cleaved asunder, rent and pierced to the very heart, to let out the waters of life to us, by which only we can be preserved from eternal death, and obtain eternal life. How costly and precious are the streams of Christ's blood and Spirit, his mercy and grace, which flow from the smitten Rock, and follow us through the wilderness in the free offers of the gospel! They are life-giving streams, fire-quenching, heart-softening, soul-cleansing, healing and fructifying streams: Welcome, then, should we make these streams to our souls in this dry and thirsty land. Likewise the rock was to the Israelites a shadow from the heat, and a covert from tempests and storms: So Christ our Rock screens us from the scorching heat of vindictive justice, and from the waves and billows of God's wrath. How necessary and useful is the Rock Christ to the souls of fallen men! Oh, let me never, Jeshurunlike, light-

ly esteem this Rock of our salvation. O let me never go to false rocks, or false streams, for shelter or supply in straits, when the true Rock is so near, and the saving streams run so close by my door: yea follow me daily in the channel of the word and sacraments; streams appointed by Heaven to answer all the cases and ailments of lost sinners. O shall God in his tender mercy provide such a wonderful remedy, set the Rock a-broach for me, and cause its streams to follow me; and I shall be so foolish as turn my back upon them, and refuse to apply or make use of them? O save me from such cursed ingratitude and madness; "I believe, Lord, help my unbelief."

O how much should my heart be affected at the holy table, when I see the Rock of my salvation smitten by the rod of justice, and behold the bloody spear pierce into his heart! O Rock of ages, what made thee to rend and cleave so! O brightness of thy Father's glory, who hath disfigured thee so? O River of life, clear as crystal, who hath troubled thee so? Oh, it was my sins, my pride, my passion, my unbelief, my worldliness, my hardness, impenitence, &c. these were the cause of my Redeemer's sufferings. The iniquities of sinful men were laid upon him. When he was pierced, it was I that should have been smitten. When he groaned and swate blood, I should have howled and roared in hell. Harder than the rock is my heart, if I can see my dear Saviour smitten and pierced, and not mourn. O can I see his side and heart streaming out blood, and mine eyes not pour out tears! Can I behold the Rock smitten for the sins of men, and not adore the holiness and justice of God manifested therein? Can I see my innocent Saviour wounded and slain for my sins, and my soul not hate them; yea, shall I not be filled with horror and trembling at temptations to sin?

Let me, at my Saviour's call, approach to his table, and come near to the Rock of my salvation, and hearken to the raging billows of infinite wrath, dashing against the Rock for my sins, and even making the Rock to groan, sweat and tremble under the pressure. O what a dreadful hurricane of wrath did he endure, to keep the swelling ocean of divine wrath from overflowing guilty men? Surely my glorious Immanuel's groaning and sweating blood under the strokes of God's vengeance, is a greater evidence of the implacable wrath and indignation of God against sin, than if he had hurled all the rocks of the creation into the midst of the sea; yea, or a thousand worlds of men and angels into hell. O that, while I am beholding this sight, I may tremble at sin, come by faith under the shadow of this Rock, and run into the clefts of it for safety. Here I would be out of the reach of the law's curses, and threatenings of wrath; and though I hear the roarings and dashings of the sea upon the Rock, yet a drop of it could not touch me.

O that I could imitate Moses, when I am at the table, and smite the Rock by the rod of faith, that the streams of Christ's blood and Spirit may flow out to me. What was his error will be my wisdom, to smite the Rock oftner than once, to put forth many acts of faith on Jesus Christ; such as the discerning, assenting, approving, deriving, receiving, closing, embracing, trusting, pleading, applying, appropriating acts of true faith. May I, like Israel of old, Deut. xxxii. 13. be helped by faith to suck honey out of the Rock, and oil out of the flinty rock: Honey and oil, sweetness and fatness, quickening and comfort. How shall I come at this honey? only by sucking: And how shall I suck, but by the mouth of faith? There is no sucking without it. Neither can I suck by faith, unless God make me do it; for it is said, Deut. xxxii. "He made them to suck honey out of the rock." It is God that must give me both a mouth and strength to suck, faith in the habit, and faith in exercise. It is only the blowings of the north and south winds on the garden, that make the spices to flow out. "Awake, O north wind, come, thou south, blow upon my garden;" bring faith to life, that I may suck honey from Christ in the sacrament. Christ's breasts are now full; O let not faith be wanting; for if it be wanting, I can suck nothing. Blessed be God, Jesus Christ, my Redeemer, is the author of faith. Lord, increase my faith, that I may suck honey from the Rock. 2. But what honey may I expect from it? *Ans.* The honey of pardon of sin. O how sweet is this honey!—The honey of peace and reconciliation with God:—the honey of a law-biding righteousness:—the honey of access to, and communion with God:—the honey of enlargement of heart, and loosing of bands, &c. O let me ever suck from this Rock, the Rock that answers all my needs, and richly supplies all my wants. Let me also, under all my straits, support myself with the Psalmist's cordial, Psal. xviii. 46. "The Lord liveth, and blessed be my Rock." Why should believers in Christ droop in any condition, or look like dead men, while their Lord liveth, and their Rock standeth? Blessed be God, my Rock is a living and lasting Rock: my hopes may die, my comforts die, my frames die, my gifts, my wealth, and my relations; these may all die; but I rejoice in the news, that my Lord will not die, nor my Rock fall. He once died for me, but he is risen again: Good news! now he is alive, and will die no more.

MEDITATION VII.

From Zech. xii. 10.—*They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and mourn.*

THIS promise hath a respect, not only to the Jews when converted, but to all sinners, when brought to repentance. We have all pierced Christ, in as much as our sins were the cause of his death: "He was wounded for our transgressions." Now, a believing sight of a pierced Saviour, is the best spring of sorrow for sin; it is faith's look to a crucified Christ, that will set us a mourning after a godly sort. O that this promise may be made good to me at this time, that I may be helped to look believingly upon Christ, as pierced for my sins, my pride, my passion, my unbelief, my carnality, my disobedience, my impenitence, my sins of the heart, of the tongue, and of the life; that I may confess and bewail them, mourn and weep over them before the Lord. Oh! when shall I mourn and weep, if not now, when I am called to look upon my dear Lord and Surety at his table, all red with blood for my red and scarlet-coloured sins? I will not now stand afar off, and look to my Saviour on the cross, as those women who followed him from Galilee, Luke xxiii. 46. No, I will come close to him, take a near look, and a narrow view of his wounds and piercings by my sins, that I may see how wide and deep they are, that my eye may affect my heart with godly sorrow for sin.

When I look on him, I'll consider the dignity of the Per-

seen pierced by and for me; he is the almighty Creator, the glorious Immanuel, the Plant of Renown, the Prince of the kings of the earth, that is pierced and nailed to a cross. Jeremiah laments, in the captivity, that princes were hanged up by the hands, Lam. v. 12. But what were the princes of Israel to the Prince of peace, the King of glory, whom I see hanging nailed through the hands on the cross, and his blood poured out like water upon the earth! O it is royal blood, the blood of God, that I see running down to satisfy justice for my sins; and will not such a sight cause me to mourn for them? Can I look on my lovely Redeemer, stript naked, mounted up, and fixed with nails to a tormenting cross? Can I see his head pierced with thorns, his back pierced with scourgings, his hands and feet pierced with big nails, his side pierced with a spear, and his heart pierced with sorrows for my sins, and my heart not mourn for them? Yet all the piercings and wounds of his sacred body were but small, to the piercings and agonies of his soul, when he drank of the cup of the Father's wrath for me, which made him cry out, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.—My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Can I behold this loving Jesus, standing in my room, bearing the wrath of a Deity for me, and my heart not bleed? Can I see him, when the sword of justice was drawn to smite me, opening his breast to receive the stroke into his heart, and my heart not melt within me? Lord, grant me such a sight by faith, of a wounded bleeding Saviour, as to make me a melting and mourning sinner.

How can I leave this subject, until my heart be more affected? Had I been personally at mount Calvary, and with my bodily eyes had seen my dear Redeemer racked and nailed to the tree! Had I seen him lifted up between heaven and earth, that the nations might behold him, with his arms stretched out to embrace sinners! Had I beheld his dying looks, and heard his dying groans! Had I seen his precious blood for many hours run from his wounded hands and feet to the earth! Could I have stood by with dry eyes, or an unconcerned heart, especially when I had thought he was suffering all this out of love to me, for my sins, and in my room!—Why then should not I be as much concerned, when I come to his table to celebrate the memorial of that fearful tragedy, and look upon the outward signs which represent the same! Lord, give me faith's eye to behold the things signified thereby, even the bleeding and dying of the glorious Immanuel. And what kind of blood is it I see running down! It is innocent blood! precious blood! royal blood! heart-blood! Nay, the blood of the eternal Son of God, one drop whereof is worth an ocean of our blood, and is of infinite value; and yet behold all this blood is shed for such worms as I am! O can I think long upon this subject, and not find my heart pained with love, and be ready, with Joseph, to seek a secret place to weep in? Had an ordinary man been executed for my crime, it would have affected me all my days; how much should it touch me to see the Son of God put to death for me? The sun fainted, the heavens mourned in black, the earth quaked, and the rocks rent, when this black tragedy was acted; how much more should my heart rend and mourn at the representation of it before my eyes! Surely my mourning should be great, deep, and bitter mourning, as in the text, like the mourning of a parent for the death of an only son; or like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo! O what was the death of king Josiah to the death of King Jesus, the eternal Son of God! O my dear slain Lamb, shall I mourn and weep over thee!

Oh! can I see his blood run down in streams, and my eyes not pour out some drops! Did Christ sweat blood, and weep blood for my sins, and shall not I weep tears for them? Shall I not give drops of water for streams of blood? Alas! am I more sparing of my tears for Christ, than Christ was of his blood for me! How fast did the blood trickle down Christ's cheeks in the day he wore the crown of thorns for me? But how slowly do the tears fall from my eyes, when I commemorate his dying love! Can I shed tears in plenty for a dead child; and have I reserved none for a slain Saviour?—Yea, slain for my sins! How sad is it to see so many weeping eyes at a funeral, and so many dry eyes at a communion-table: Alas, this is a sad sign of few looking by faith to him we have pierced! few sensible of the evil of their sins, that were the hammers which drove in the nails into his body O for a realizing act of faith, representing all that the Lamb of God suffered, in the greatest certainty and clearest evidence, that it is no devised fable. O for an applying and appropriating act of faith, to bring all home to myself, and say, "He loved me, and gave himself for me."

What a hard heart is this I have beyond others! Can I see others weeping and mourning over a slain Saviour, that sit at the same table, eat the same bread, and drink the same cup with me, and cannot I get one tear! Is God come with his bottle waiting for my tears! Do others pour into it plentifully, and have I not one tear to drop into God's bottle! Lord, what means the hardness of my heart, and the dryness of my eyes, at the sight of my Saviour's bleeding and dying for my sins? When should I mourn and weep, if not now? Was there ever such an occasion for tears? Oh! doth God intend to reserve weeping for me in hell, where tears shall never be dried up? This is what I deserve, if I be hard-hearted and dry-eyed now. But, Lord, pity my hardness, and give me such a look as thou gavest Peter, that may cause me to weep, and weep bitterly, at the remembrance of my sins which pierced thee.

MEDITATION VIII.

From LUKE xxii. 61, 62. *The Lord looked upon Peter.—And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.*

LORD, since my looks to thee are so slight, so wavering and inconstant, that they make little or no impression on my hard heart, do thou vouchsafe to look upon me with pity and with power; for thy looks are efficacious, and melt down the hardest heart. O give me such a look as thou gavest to Peter, when he denied thee, and began to curse and swear: A look that may bring me to myself, and cause me weep, and weep bitterly, at the remembrance of my sins, my unbelief, my pride, my passion, my disobedience, which pierced thee, my dearest Lord and Saviour. "Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me," Psal. cxix. 131. Christ's look to backsliding Peter was merciful, and full of compassion; his bowels yearned for his poor disciple, when ready to fall into the devil's arms by a total and final backsliding, and prevents him speedily. He would not let him ly long in that dismal state he fell into, as it were on the very brink of hell, but presently plucks him back, and recovers him. In like manner, Lord, look on me, and re-

cover me speedily, when I fall into sin, lest my next step be into hell.

Christ's look to Peter was a preventing look; he looked on Peter before Peter looked to his Saviour for mercy, and before he looked on himself, or upon his sin, and the danger he was exposed to by it. Glory to my Redeemer, that watches over his people, sees and minds their danger, when they themselves are little thinking upon it; he is more careful of them than they are of themselves. How marvellous was Christ's love, that would be so concerned about Peter at such a time, when he himself was amidst his bloody enemies, and upon trial for his life: even then, as it were, he forgets his own danger, and takes notice of the danger of his servant. He being "the great Shepherd of his sheep," ventures all to rescue one of his flock out of "the mouth of the lion, and from the paws of the bear." O who would not desire to belong to the flock of such a faithful, loving, and compassionate Shepherd!

The look Christ gave Peter, was a convincing look; it laid open his sin to him, with all its aggravations, which made it very bitter to him. It spoke such language to him as this: "O Peter, what hast thou done? Hast thou cast off thy Saviour? And hast thou said, thou knowest not me, who knew thee from the womb, and am going to die for thee? Dost thou not know me, that called thee from thy nets, that impowered thee to preach the gospel, and work miracles, that kept thee from sinking in the waters? Am I not he thou sawest shining on mount Tabor? Even he thou saidst thou wouldst rather die than deny? O for such a convincing look from Christ, that would pierce and melt my heart, and make me weep bitterly, both now and at his table, for my base ingratitude, in disowning and piercing my dear Redeemer!

Christ's look to Peter, was a powerful and overcoming look, it conquered his will, loosed him from the world and sin, and made him yield presently to Christ: He was not able to hold out a moment longer, but, like Joseph, seeks a secret place to weep in. O how powerful is a look from Christ! it is sufficient to bow the most stubborn will, and melt the hardest heart; it can turn "the rock into standing water, and the flint into a fountain of water," Psalm cxiv. 8. How powerful was the look he gave to poor Jerusalem, when "lying in their blood;" a look that caused them to live, Ezek. xvi. 6. How powerful was the look he gave to Zaccheus on the sycamore tree, Luke xix. 5. O for such a look as would bring me presently down, in like manner, from the sycamore of my self-conceit and self-righteousness, and from my best beloved sins and idols, and cause me receive Christ joyfully into my heart, and go with cheerfulness to his table, and receive the seal of his covenant, saying, "My Lord, and my God."

Christ's look to Peter was a peculiar and distinguishing look; the power and grace of God went alongst with it to change Peter's heart, and bring him to his right mind. Christ looked on many thousands that were never the better of it. He looked on Judas after he betrayed him, and when he presumed to kiss him, and reproved him too for his base treachery: but neither that look nor reproof melted his heart. As the beams of the very same sun hardens clay and softens frozen earth; so a look from the same Jesus, "the Sun of righteousness," left Judas hard and impenitent, whilst it softened Peter's heart. The one went on in his villany, whilst the other relented, and melted into tears. Why? he looked but on the face of Judas, but he looked on the heart of Peter. He looked upon the one with a frowning judicial look, but looked upon the other with a recovering and drawing look. Christ's look to Peter was accompanied with the inward influences of his Spirit on his heart, otherwise it had been ineffectual. O if he would vouchsafe such a gracious look to my frozen heart, and soften it! I would fain bring my hard heart, and lay it before this blessed Sun, and wait until he draw by the cloud, look through, and shine upon it. Lord, I tremble to go to thy table with this hard heart, lest thou shouldst look on me with anger, as thou didst upon these, Mark iii. 5. upon account of the hardness of their hearts. Lord, I desire to be grieved for my heart-hardness, and to look to thee whom I have pierced by it. Give such a look to my heart as thou gave to Peter's, melt it down into penitential tears, and cause me to go aside "and weep bitterly."

Christ's look caused Peter to remember and think upon Christ's words to him. It is in and by his word that he works upon sinners hearts. O if the Spirit would bring the word to my mind, set it powerfully home upon my conscience, and so give the happy turn to my soul. Lord, help me to lay up my words, and ponder them in my heart; and O bring them always seasonably to my view, that when I fall, I may not ly long under sin, nor continue in a state of backsliding from thee. May I have such a look from thee, as shall look all my idols out of countenance, and look my wandering heart into a right frame for the covenanting and communicating work: A look that shall put new life in all my drooping graces, and kindle such a flame of love to Christ in my heart, and of indignation against sin, as all the devils in hell shall never be able to quench. A look that shall make me weep while I live, for piercing Christ the Lamb.

Oh, shall others shed tears in plenty for sin, and my eyes remain dry? Shall others get their hearts broken, and mine continue hard! Lord, thy grace is free; O how easy were it for thee to melt my heart, and moisten my eyes: One touch of thy hand, nay, one look of thy countenance, one cast of thine eyes is sufficient to do it. O turn unto me, and give me one merciful look; for thy ordinance will be lifeless, and lost unto me, if thou look not on me. How can I go to thy table to behold Jesus, my Surety, all red with blood for my red and scarlet-coloured sins, while my heart doth not mourn, nor my eyes run down? Surely the streams of my Saviour's blood deserve to be lamented with tears of blood, and shall I not do it, at least with tears of water! Was he wounded for my transgressions, and shall not my heart bleed, and eyes weep for his wounds given him by my sins?

MEDITATION IX.

From MATTH. XV. 27.—*And she said, Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs.*

THIS woman was a Canaanite, and lived among heathens, yet she had greater knowledge and faith of the Messiah, than most of the Jews. Her faith, humility, patience, and resolution, amidst the greatest discouragements, are here recorded for a pattern and encouragement to desponding believers in all ages.

This woman was so sensible of her misery, that she ad-

dresses Christ with great earnestness for help: She doth not speak calmly or coldly to Christ, but she cried unto him, and followed him with her cries, verse 22, 23. Surely, if I were duly affected with my spiritual wants and miseries, I would speak to God in no other language than that of cries and tears. O what cause have I to bewail my coldness and indifferency in prayer, and the little sense I have of my dangers and necessities, which are great beyond expression.

This woman, notwithstanding of her great earnestness and strong faith, met with very great trials and discouragements in her addresses to Christ.

1. Her first trial is Christ's silence to her, when crying to him for mercy, verse 23. "He answered her not a word." Strange! not a word from a meek and merciful Saviour, that never put a poor sinner, seeking for mercy, away from him before; but still invited all to come to him for it. That is a sore temptation, Lam. iii 8. "When I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer." Believers are apt to think that God shuts out their prayers in wrath, when it is not so. Christ heard this woman, accepted her, was pleased with her, and strengthened her to hold on in prayer, though he did not immediately answer her. He entertained her with silence to draw her on to be more importunate, and to try her faith patience, and perseverance, and thereby to teach us to be *followers of those who through faith and patience* do now *inherit the promises.* Christ keeps the door bolted for a time, that we may knock the harder, Matth. vii. 7. *Ask, seek, knock* The choicest mercies come to us after the greatest wrestlings Likewise I see here, that there is love in Christ's heart to wrestling souls, even when frowns appear in his looks; wherefore let me take encouragement from him, *though he slay me, yet to trust in him.*

2. Another sore trial the woman met with, was the answer Christ gave his disciples when interceding for her, whereby he seems to exclude her out of his commission, verse 24. "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The Jews were called *sheep,* but the Gentiles, *dogs* The Jews were indeed to have the free offer of Christ's grace and purchase. Though the woman might have taken Christ's words as a plain repulse, yet she studies to put the best sense on them she can, and continues her importunity. Which teacheth us never to leave the throne of grace for any discouragement.

3. She gets a repulse yet more sharp than the two former, even after she had come close up to him, and fallen down at his feet, saying, *Lord, help me.* Then it is Christ ranks her among the dogs, those that were without the covenant, profane and unclean. Now, one might think, she is cut off by this word, and will insist no more after it. Nay, she takes hold of that word of reproach, and pleads upon it in the text, *Truth, Lord, I am a dog,* vile and unworthy; yet let me humbly ask the dogs room and privilege, even to creep beneath the childrens table, and gather some crumbs of mercy. O how much is contained here for our instruction and imitation!

1. What cause have we, O Lord, to bless thy goodness, that we Gentiles, of *dogs* are now become *children,* and allowed to come to thy table? And, at the same time to fear thy justice, since the Jews, of *children,* are now become *dogs,* and shut out as unclean! If they were cut off, who crucified thee in thy low estate, what may we expect, if, by our sins, we crucify thee in thy glory? Let us not be high-minded, but fear.

2. Christ puts the strongest faith of his people upon the sharpest trials: He thinks fit, for his own glory, where he gives much grace, to try grace much.

3. Those who are eminent in faith are most humble: this woman was so. O how humbly did she plead with Christ? She threw herself on the ground, lay low at his feet, and from the dust cried for help; she claimed nothing, only begged for mercy. And when Christ spurned her from his feet, calling her *a dog,* she doth not murmur nor complain of his harsh carriage, but humbly takes with the charge; *Truth, Lord,* thou dost not miscal me, nor call me so bad as I am, *I am a dog,* a most vile and unworthy creature, and have no right to the children's bread, and must starve, if thou hast not mercy on me. She can bear any thing, the worst frown or chastisement from Christ, only she cannot bear being excluded from his mercy and grace; she would have some token of it, though never so small: she claims not a Benjamin's meal, nor a child's portion, only let her have a dog's crumb. Lord, I take patiently the stripe from thee; give me but a crumb after it, and I'll go away satisfied. Surely the more humbly any supplicant is at the throne of grace, he comes still the better speed, for the "Lord resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

4. God's usual method of dispensing his mercy and grace to sinners, is, first to cast them down before he raise them up; he first humbles and lays them low in a sense of their unworthiness and vileness, before he advances them to his favour. We must first see ourselves to be as dogs, "less than the least of all God's mercies," before we are fit to be dignified with "the privileges of children."

5. When unbelief draws dismal conclusions from every thing, and tempts us to quit our grips and hopes, upon any dark dispensation, and to say with that wicked king, 2 Kings vi. 33. "This evil is of the Lord: Why should I wait for the Lord any longer?" Behold, faith is a valiant and importunate grace, it puts the best constructions upon all Christ's actions; it is sharp sighted, to see and take hold of all advantages to strengthen itself, and finds encouragement even in that which is discouraging. That which seemed to cut off this believing woman's hope, she improves it as a ground of hope, and an argument in prayer, "Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat," &c. *q. d* Even the worthless dogs belong to the family, and though they may not feast with children at the table, they may creep under it, and gather crumbs, those off-fallings that would be swept to the door, this will not wrong the children Let me stand in relation to Christ, though in the meanest station, even that of his dog; I'll be thankful for it, or for any thing, if he do not turn me out of the house.

6. When our discouragements are greatest, we should learn, from this woman, never to give over the exercise of faith and prayer; but to look on all our disappointments in the success of prayer, as excitements to greater earnestness in prayer. Faith will not set limits to the *Holy One;* though speedy answers be not given to our prayers, it becomes us to wait on God's time, who is the best judge of the fittest season: "He that believeth will not make haste:" Why? he knows his extremity is God's fit opportunity.

7. A resolute adhering to Christ by faith under trials is most pleasing and acceptable to him; as when we persevere in the use of means when success is small, when we depend upon his promise, and look to his power; when, under the darkest dispensations, we watch over our hearts and steps, that they do not decline from his ways, as those in Psalm xliv. 17, 18. And, glory to him that gives us such en-

couragement for this resolute adherence to him, as the mercifulness of his nature, and his faithfulness, which assure us there is more good will in his heart than is visible in his dealings; and that his providence will never give his word the lie. He gives secret strength to his people to adhere to him when he seems most opposite to them, as he did to this woman. He loves to bring about his people's mercies by means improbable and contrary, to glorify his wisdom. He delights to bring light out of darkness.

8. Great will the reward at last be of the believer's faith, humility, and perseverance in prayer; for, saith Christ at length, verse 28. "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

MEDITATION X.

From 1 Cor. xi. 24.—*This do in remembrance of me.*

O MY soul, here is a solemn ordinance instituted for keeping up the remembrance of a crucified Jesus; and behold it was appointed by himself, when he was just a going to do more for us than all the angels in heaven could have done, even to make atonement for our sins by his death and sufferings; and he twice repeats his dying charge to us, ver 24 and 25. "This do, this do ye." Men use to regard the command of their dying friends, and perform their wills religiously; and shall not I with pleasure obey the will and command of a dying Redeemer, when the thing he requires is so easy and agreeable, to eat and drink at his table in remembrance of him? If I forget thee, O Friend of sinners, let my right hand forget its cunning, &c.

Our loving Redeemer well knew the treachery of our memories, the worldliness of our hearts, and inconstancy of our affections, that we would be ready to let his death and love slip out of our thoughts, and therefore he would have the signs of his sufferings frequently presented to our eyes. Alas! for the cursed ingratitude of my heart. that is so apt to forget him that remembered me when there was none to pity me: but, glory to him that taketh such pains to cure my forgetfulness, by setting forth Christ crucified so evidently before my eyes in the broken bread and poured out wine in the sacrament. I look upon this ordinance as a visible representation and commemoration of my Saviour's death and sufferings for his people, which he will have continued till he come again to judgment. It is like a marble pillar set upon his grave, with an inscription bearing account of his glorious achievements and mighty deeds, his glorious sufferings, conflicts, and victories for his people. Wherefore, as oft as he calls me, I will go thither, and put all the honour and respect I can upon my kind Benefactor: I will remember his love, proclaim his worth, and publish his praises. I'll hereby own myself before the world to be one of his disciples, and a follower of the Lamb. I'll declare my abhorrence of sin that pierced him, and my gratitude to the Lamb for the atoning sacrifice he offered up for me upon the cross. I'll triumph in this as the only ground of my hope. I'll put the crown on his head, and cast all my crowns down at his feet, and cry, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and has redeemed me from my sins by his blood; worthy is he to receive all honour, power, glory, and dominion, for ever and ever."

Glory to my dear Saviour, that seeks no greater return for all his labours of love than a thankful remembrance of it at his table. Oh, shall I grudge to give such a small return to him that suffered the pains of death and hell for me! Had he bid me sacrifice my first-born, give all I have to the poor, or go in pilgrimage to the Holy Land to visit his sepulchre, or go to the top of mount Calvary where the cross stood, as a token of thankfulness for his love, could I have refused it! But he puts me to no such hard task. Lord, thou bidst me not go to a bloody scaffold to remember thee, but to a well-covered table to do it. Thou bidst me not go there to bleed or burn for thee, but to eat and drink; not the bread of affliction, or water of adversity, but bread that strengthens the heart, and wine that cheers the drooping spirit, bread and wine which thou hast sanctified and blessed for me. Surely, O dear Saviour, I owe my life to thee, nay, a thousand lives, if I had them; but it is not my life, but my memory and thoughts, thou art calling for; it is not to die for thee, but to remember thee. Didst thou drink a cup of wrath on the cross for me, and will not I drink a cup of blessing at the table for thee, nay for myself, and for my eternal salvation.

Let me go then to this holy table, with faith, love, and thankfulness, to remember Christ and his dying love, as he commands me. And while I remember him, let me also receive and embrace him, as my bleeding High Priest, in the arms of my faith, and at the same time throw my guilty soul into his wounded arms, for saving me from wrath. Let me go and remember the woundings and piercings of my Redeemer, with a pierced and wounded heart for these cursed sins which nailed and killed the Prince of Life. Let me henceforth be the death of sin, which was the death of my dear Saviour. O, shall I suffer sin to live any longer in me, that would not suffer my Redeemer to live in the world!

But let me consider my High Priest before hand, and what of his sufferings I should remember at his table. I'll remember how the glorious Heir of all things denuded himself of his riches and glory, how he left his throne of majesty to lodge in a virgin's womb; yea, to be born among beasts, and cradled in a manger, for such a worm as me. I'll remember how he was attacked by the devil, contradicted by sinners, and reproached by the world for my sake. I'll remember how sorrowful his soul was in the garden, when the bitter cup was put in his hand; and how he swate, how he prayed, how he fell to the ground, till he was quite overwhelmed with wrath, and covered with his own blood, for my sake! I'll remember how he was sold for a small price, and basely betrayed by Judas; how he was taken by the soldiers, tied as a malefactor with cords, denied by Peter, forsaken by all his disciples, and left alone among his cruel insulting enemies. I'll remember how he was blindfolded, mocked, spit upon, buffeted, and affronted by ruffians a whole night, and patiently suffered all for my sake! I'll remember how his lovely countenance was disfigured with blows, and the plucking the hair off his cheeks; and how the sweetest face ever the sun saw was all besmeared with blood and spitting for my sake. I'll remember how he that clothes the lilies of the field was himself stript naked, bound to a pillar and cruelly scourged, till the pavement of Pilate's judgment-hall was all bedewed with his precious blood. I'll remember how the crown of thorns was platted with the sharp points turned inward, put upon his head, and driven into his temples with a reed, till they pierced his skull in

many places, and a new shower of blood run down his blessed neck. I'll remember how the heavy cross-tree was laid upon his scourged and bleeding shoulders, and he made to carry it through the streets of Jerusalem, forth of the gates, and up mount Calvary, to the place of execution, until his strength was spent, and he foundered under the burden.—I'll remember how the cross-tree was laid down, and my Saviour stript naked and stretched out upon it as a rack; and how he was fastened to it with four big iron nails through his hands and feet, and the cross lifted up and let fall into a deep hole digged for the foot of it, to the violent rending and widening of his sacred wounds by which he hang, until his blood streamed forth at them, and he expired amidst the most exquisite tortures.

I'll remember also the sufferings of his soul at that time, when the Lord ran upon him as a giant, and made his soul the butt of his envenomed arrows, the poison whereof drank up his spirits, until his strength was dried up like a potsherd.—I'll remember how his soul was troubled and nonplussed at the distant prospect of this cup; and how sore amazed he was soon after, when it was put into his hand.—I'll remember how the tasting of it cast him into a bloody sweat and agony, which dyed his garments red, and bedewed the ground where he lay.—I'll remember how he was broken with breach upon breach, till all the sea-billows of divine vengeance went over him, and the Lion of the tribe of Judah was made to roar under the strokes and bruises of the flaming sword, Psal. xxii. 1.—I'll remember the dreadful hidings of God's face he lay under, until he was made to cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—I'll remember the inexorableness of divine justice, that would not spare him one stripe, bate him one farthing of the debt, nor one drop of the cup; so that he drank till he cried, "It is finished;" and gave up the ghost. Glory to him for his love in finishing the work.

MEDITATION XI.

From Phil. i. 23.—*For I am in a strait betwixt two*—

As the apostle was in a strait whether to chuse to die or live, so I am in a strait whether to go to the Lord's table, or to stay back. Now, thou callest me, Lord, to celebrate the memorials of thy death, yea, to feast with thee at thy holy table, and I know not what to chuse; I am in a strait betwixt two. My heart is so unholy, and my unworthiness so great, I tremble to go forward to feast with a God so holy, and whose purity is infinite; and yet my wants are so many, and my necessities so great, that my case is hopeless if I stay back! Lord, I can go to none else in all the world, to supply my needs, but to thyself alone. But oh, when I think of going forward, my guilt stops my mouth, and fills me with blushing. Lord, if the holy angels, those pure and unspotted seraphims, who burn in zeal for thy service, must even cover their faces before thee; how shall I venture into thy presence, I whose zeal is so languishing, whose love is so cold, whose mind is so earthly, and prayers so dull? Shall I approach so near a holy God in such a case? But what then shall I do! Shall I join with those worldlings who were bidden to the feast of the great King, refuse, and make my excuse? Then I fear the King will be angry, declare me unworthy to taste of his supper, yea, swear in his wrath that I shall never enter into his rest.

Lord, I abhor myself for my unworthiness and vileness, my guilt and pollution; but where shall I go to get help and remedy for it, but unto thee alone? Hast thou not bidden me come, though my sins be red as crimson? Have not many such come to thee, and found relief and help? Surely, O Lord, thy goodness is greater than my sinfulness, and thy mercy surpasseth my misery; for though my sins reach even to the clouds, yet thy mercy is above the heavens. O merciful Father, extend thy free, boundless mercy to a miserable, helpless sinner: Surely misery is the proper object of mercy. Holy God, if thou help me not for the sake of my miseries which I have deserved, yet help me for the sake of thy mercies which thou hast promised in Christ thy dear Son. Wherefore I plead for Christ's sake, that thou wilt hear the cry of my miseries, and not the cry of my sins. O doth not his precious blood cry louder for pardon, than my sins for punishment? Lord, hear the cry of that blood, and let it not be as water spilt upon the ground. For the sake of that prevalent blood, pity, pardon, and accept a poor unworthy creature, that desires to obey thy call, and prepare his heart to seek thee, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.

O Lord, though I may be ashamed to come to thee, my needs are so pressing and pinching, that I cannot stay away. "To whom shall I go but unto thee, for thou hast the words of eternal life?" The whole creation cannot supply my wants. Thou only art my Sun, from whose beams I must receive saving light: Thou art my Head, from whom I must get spiritual life: Thou art my Root, from which I must derive sap and growth: Thou art the Fountain from which I must draw living water: Thou art the Treasurer from which I must obtain the riches of grace. So that without thee I am nothing, I have nothing, I can do nothing.——To thee then I must go for all my supplies, and out of thy fulness receive grace for grace.——Lord, thou hast enough to supply many worlds of needy souls; for the sun is not so full of light, nor the sea so full of water, as thou art full of grace and mercy to needy creatures: and as thou art full, so, I am assured, thou art free, and willing to communicate thy fulness.—In spite then of all objections and difficulties, forward to thee I will go, and cast myself down at thy feet; *If I perish, I perish.* Oh! did ever any perish at mercy's door?

Lord, I have heard of thy mercy to the very chief of sinners, and cannot this mercy reach the like of me? Surely the viler sinner I am, thou hast the fairer opportunity to shew the riches of thy mercy, the freeness of thy love, and the efficacy of thy blood; and if I be allowed to share therein, the sweeter and louder will the eternal halelujahs be, that will be sung to the Lamb of God on my account. O that he would glorify his mercy, his love, and blood, in my relief O where shall a poor heavy laden sinner go, but to him than can free him of his burden? Where shall I go with a multitude of sins and miseries, but to thee who hast a multitude of tender mercies? Where shall I go with my deep and heinous guilt, but to thee who hast a deep fountain to wash it away? Behold one depth called to another, the depth of my misery to the depth of thy mercy? My wound is great, but thy balm is excellent! My sore is broad, but thy plaister is answerable! "O Lord, be merciful to me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee."

Lord, is not the gospel-feast I am invited to, a feast of charity, to which thou callest not the rich, but the poor, maimed, halt, and blind, who cannot make any return for thy bounty? And may not such a miserable object as I am, take encouragement from such a free extensive invitation? Luke xiv 21.——My blest Redeemer, while he was on earth, did not disdain to eat with publicans and sinners, nor to dine with Simon a leper. And though he is now exalted in the highest heavens, yet he still retains the bowels of a man, and all the pity and charity to perishing sinners he had, while here in his state of humiliation. Wherefore, sensible of my unworthiness, loathing myself for my vileness, and trusting to my Saviour's compassion to the miserable, I desire to go forward to his table: O that he would direct and strengthen me to go about such a weighty work! Let not that ordinance, which God hath instituted for a blessing, be made a curse to me, through my unworthy partaking. Lord, rebuke all unseasonable thoughts and wanderings that would mar the duty; excite and actuate in me every proper grace, and enable me to manage so, that I may not dishonour, but glorify thee; I may not increase my guilt, but augment my grace: I may not bring more hardness, but softness into my heart. Lord, descend thou into my heart, by the influences of thy Spirit, that I may ascend unto thee by the actings of grace; and when the King sits at his table, let my spikenard send forth the smell thereof. Lord, I look to thee for strength, conduct, and through-bearing, in every strait. I trust not in my preparation, but in thy free mercy for acceptance; I trust not in my faith, but in thy faithfulness, who hast promised to give power to the faint; I trust not in my repentance, but in thy free pardoning mercy; I trust not in my doings, but in Christ's doings O take away my filthy garments, and clothe me with the best robe,—"THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS"—I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.—Awake, O north wind, and come thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices may flow out.—If thy presence go not with me, carry me not up hence.

The Lord made a breach on the Israelites, for not seeking him after the due order, 1 Chron. xv. 13. He smote 50,000 of the Bethshemites for an irreverent look into the ark, which typified Christ, and what cause have I then to fear a stroke, should I rashly touch the symbols of his body and blood! Seeing this ordinance is intended for doing honour to the King of Zion, O save me from doing indignity to him, by betraying him with a kiss, or by throwing his picture, or great seal, into a puddle May I so separate for this feast, that the blessed Master of it may see I am watchful of his eye, tender of his honour, and fearful of his anger. Lord, awake my heart, stir up my graces, and prepare me for a meeting with my Saviour, and let not my soul, whose only hope is to be saved by Christ's blood, be sent away from his table with the guilt, instead of the benefit, of that blood upon it.

MEDITATION

MEDITATION XII.

From PHILIP. iv. 19.- *But my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus.*

HEAVENLY Father, out of thy rich bounty thou wast pleased once to lay up a great stock for me in my progenitors hands, but they very soon squandered it all away, so that I became extremely poor and needy. Oh! what can I do in this indigent condition, but come back to thee for pity and new supplies? For ever blessed be thy name, for the reviving news thou hast published in the gospel, that thou hast now laid up a new stock for bankrupt sinners in the hands of a Surety that cannot fail, and hast erected a throne of grace for such as I am to come to in time of need, where Christ Jesus my Surety sits, as commissioned by thee, with glorious riches to supply my wants. Many are the needs which thou thinks fit to leave upon me, that I might have the more errands unto his throne, and that thou mayst the oftener hear my voice. O pour out upon me a spirit of grace and supplication, and cause me delight in approaching to thee, and pouring out my wants before thee.

Behold, Lord, a needy creature, an object of pity, approaching to a liberal Saviour, whose fulness is infinite! O how suitable is it to my wants, which are great and innumerable! I am starving, and have no bread; I am naked, and have no cloathing; I am wounded, and have no cure; I am in debt, and have no money; I am polluted, and have no fountain; I am burdened, and have no rest; I have destroyed myself, and can find no help in myself. But yet there is help for me elsewhere; I have heard of the mercy of the King of Israel, and of the remedy he hath provided for those who are helpless, lost, and miserable. Wherefore, though I be poor I will not despair, for thou art the Lord of the whole world, and hast opened thy treasures to the needy: Though I be polluted, I will not despond, for thou hast the fountain of salvation: Though I be naked, I will not with Adam run from thee, and hide myself; nay, I will run to thee to cover me with the wool and fleece of the Lamb of God, even the spotless righteousness and innocence of my Saviour: Though I be hungry and starving, I will take encouragement from the glad tidings thou hast proclaimed in the gospel of a rich feast for the poor and needy. Lord, I come to thee as the hungry to be fed, as the naked to be clothed, as the wounded to be healed, as the cold starving creature to the fire, as the unclean to be washed in the fountain that is opened not to the house of David only, but even to the poorest inhabitant in Jerusalem. Glory to God, that it is so free and open to the poor and needy.

Lord, I come not to thy table, because I am worthy; but because thou art rich in mercy, and dost promise that "the needy shall not be forgotten, and the expectation of the poor shall not perish. And that when the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, thou the Lord wilt hear them, and open rivers in the wilderness, and fountains in midst of the vallies." O come, do as thou hast said, pity a poor needy perishing creature, and fill my narrow vessel out of the ocean of thy mercy, where it will not be missed. Come to the feast of thine own appointment, and display thy fulness

and liberality. Cast open the doors of thy treasures, and allow me access to Christ's unsearchable riches. Thy word, Lord, doth assure me, that in all ages thou hast bestowed these riches upon the poor and needy, without money, and without price. And this doth warrant me to plead with thee to come to thy house, where many needy beggars are gathered, and scatter thy bounty among them, and admit me to gather with them. O let not such a miserable object go from thy door without an alms, without a crumb of the childrens bread, seeing there is bread enough in thy house, and to spare. O let none return ashamed from the Fountain who come expecting water. Thou hast promised to pour water upon the thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. Oh, is there any more dry, more poor, more needy than I am! Lord, make me as thirsty as I am dry, as humble as I am poor, and as sensible as I am needy. Alas, that I have so little sense of my wants! Oh, deal not with me according to my sense of need, which is small, but deal with me according to my real need, and thy royal bounty, which is exceeding great.

O that I were poor and needy in my own eyes, and truly sensible of my own wants: that I am drowned in debt to the law and justice of God, owe many thousands, and have not one farthing to pay: That I am destitute of every thing that is good, can do nothing to please God, and am unworthy of the least of his mercies. O that I were made willing to quit all confidence in my own righteousness, duties, frames, or attainments; and well content to go entirely out of myself to Christ, for righteousness to justify me, and for his Spirit and grace to renew and sanctify my nature.

Lord, I am poor, but I see God has treasured up unsearchable riches, and infinite fulness in Jesus Christ, to answer all my needs: I am naked but I see in Christ a robe of righteousness, that is sufficient to cover me, and a whole elect world: I am a starving creature, but in Christ there is the bread of life, and the waters of life for my soul: I am foolish and ignorant, but Christ hath infinite wisdom to teach me and guide me: I am laden with guilt, but Christ's sacrifice is sufficient to atone for it: I have strong lusts and corruptions, but Christ hath a kingly power to subdue them: I am under much darkness, but Christ is "the light of the world:" I am under fears and discouragements, but Christ is "the Consolation of Israel:" I am wounded and sick, but Christ, my Physician, hath excellent balm for me: I am under a burden of debt, but Christ, my Surety, is rich, and fully able to pay it: I am in prison, and under bonds, but Christ opens prison doors, and looses them that are bound:—I am fatherless, by Adam's fall, but Christ is the everlasting Father, "in whom the fatherless find mercy:" I have many enemies to pursue and accuse me; as law, justice, satan, and conscience: but Christ my Advocate can answer them all: Therefore I flee to him for refuge, I close with him in all his offices, and put my whole confidence in him.

It gives great encouragement to my poor needy soul, that I have a Saviour so full of goodness and pity to look to, a mighty agent in heaven to plead my cause, and to present my bills, petitions, and supplications, to the Father. I put all my requests and concerns in his hand, and commit them to his care and management; He knows the fittest time to present them, and to send me an answer. In the sacrament I swear allegiance to thee, as my Sovereign Lord and King, over thy broken body and shed blood; I engage to be a true and faithful soldier in thy army, and to take the field against thy enemies. Many pieces of furniture do I need for this warfare; I need the girdle of sincerity, the shield of faith, the helmet of hope, the sword of the Spirit, the breast plate of righteousness, and to have my feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. But glory to thy name, my Redeemer and Captain of salvation hath provided a noble armoury and store-house to answer all these my necessities and wants. Lord, supply all my needs out of thy infinite fulness, and furnish me with every thing requisite and necessary for the work and warfare thou callest me unto. Oh, my enemies are lively, and they are strong: But I look to my glorious Captain, to gird me with strength for the battle, and to teach my hands to war.

MEDITATION XIII.

From Ephes. iii. 19.—*And to know the love of* Christ, *which passeth knowledge.*

WHERE shall I begin my thoughts upon the subject of the love of Christ to men? And when begun, how shall I make an end? It hath a breadth and length, a depth and heighth, that passeth knowledge. If the apostle Paul, that had the brightest discoveries of this love, owned this, much more may I. I may sooner find out the heighth of heaven, the breadth of the earth, or the depth of the sea, than measure Christ's love. It is an unfathomable ocean that hath neither bank nor bottom. O whither did his love carry him! From the height of glory to the depth of misery. How low and deep was our fall, that nothing could recover and raise us up, but the low abasement of the Son of God, the King of glory! How low was the step he made to help us up; even to put on our nature, and suffer himself to be pierced for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities! Blessed Lord, thou tookest not on thee the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham; these are fast bound up from thee with chains of darkness, whilst thou drawest us to thee with cords of love! How distinguishing was thy love to man, that brought thee from heaven to earth, from the throne to the manger, from the manger to the wilderness, from the wilderness to the garden, from the garden to the judgment-hall, from the judgment-hall to the cross, from the cross to the grave; yea, from the glory of heaven, to the very torments of hell, and all for creatures that were black and ugly as hell! How wonderful is the sight thou callest me to see at the Lord's table! even to see him suffering for sin, that never committed sin! To see "him made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we," who knew no righteousness, "might be made the righteousness of God in him!" An amazing sight indeed!

"Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him!" O what is he, that thou shouldst magnify and set thy heart on him! And what am I, the worst of men, and vilest of sinners, that thou shouldst stoop so low to exalt me! That thou should endure the poverty of this world, that I might enjoy the riches of heaven! Be content to live in the form of a servant, that I might have the adoption of sons! Be willing to bow thyself unto death, to raise me to eternal

life! Content to be numbered among transgressors, that I might have a room among the blessed! To be crowned with thorns, that I might be crowned with glory! To be condemned before men, that I might be justified before God! To drink the bitter cup of wrath, that I might drink the pure river of life! To cry out in sorrow upon the cross, that I might triumph with joy upon the throne! To stand before the mouth of hell-furnace, to keep its flames from breaking out on me! O Lord Jesus, thy love hath overflown all banks, and thy compassion knew no bounds! Can I think on it, and my heart not burn? Can I speak of it, and not be overcome, so as to seek, with Joseph, a secret place to weep in!

O love that passeth knowledge! How shall I think of it, and not stand amazed! That the General should die for the soldier, the Physician for the patient! That the righteous Judge of heaven should come to the bar, put himself in the malefactor's clothes, and be condemned for him! That the blessed Son of God should interpose his innocent breast to receive the mortal stroke for us! That God all-sufficient should be exposed to hunger and thirst, to grief and weariness, and the vilest reproaches and indignities, for worms like us! Behold the Creator of the world wounded, mangled, and killed, by ungrateful creatures whom he came to save! Behold his bowels yearning towards them who raked in them with their bloody hands! Behold his heart-burning with affection toward them that cruelly pierced it! Surely a believing view of this love of Christ is sufficient to mollify a heart more cold and frozen than ice itself! O love unfathomable! Who can measure its dimensions! It hath a height without a top, a depth without a bottom, breadth without a side, a length without end! Astonishing love! that my exalted Lord should stoop so low as to become a man; nay, a poor man, a man of sorrows, a deserted man, a dying man, and also a dead man, for such a wretch as me! Nay, more, that he should stoop to be made a curse, and underly a dreadful load of wrath upon his innocent soul, infinitely more heavy than what is laid upon any damned soul in hell!

O what a sea of wrath did my loving Jesus swim through, to save me from perishing! Behold how that raging sea wrought and was tempestuous, roared most terribly, and threatened to swallow me up with the rest of the elect world; till once my Redeemer stepped in, and undertook to be the Sacrifice for calming the sea! Take me up, (said he, like Jonah) and throw me into the sea, and ye shall be all safe. In this red sea our blessed Jonah was content to swim for thirty three years, without seeking deliverance, till once the sea was perfectly calm, and every elect soul out of danger. Marvellous loving-kindnesss! O that I could, with a suitable frame of heart, both remember and admire redeeming love and redeeming blood, when I go to sit down at my Redeemer's table. O that I may there get faith's sight of the various instances of his love, "that passeth knowledge." Let me there view Christ in the womb, and in the manger; in his weary steps and hungry bowels; in his prostrations in the garden, and clotted drops of bloody sweat. Let me view his head with a crown of thorns, and his face besmeared with the soldiers spit. Let me view him in his march to Calvary, and his elevation upon a painful cross, with his head bowed down, and his side streaming blood! O unparalleled love! It had been wonderful love to have sent one of the lofty seraphims to suffer for us; but to give him whom all the seraphims serve and adore, is "love that passeth knowedge!" Let me view the Scripture designations and titles of "him that loved us, and gave himself for us," that he might wash us in his blood.

He is our "Immanuel, the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of peace, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, the Prince of the kings of the earth, the Lord of glory, the Rose of Sharon, the Plant of Renown, the Brightness of his Father's glory, the express Image of his Person, the bright and Morning Star, the Sun of righteousness, the Light of the world, the Head of the Church, the Beginning and First-born from the dead, the appointed Heir of all things." This is "he that loved us, and gave himself" to die for the redemption of a crew of rebels, grace-abusing and gospel-slighting sinners! O what am I that thou shouldst spare, yea, ransom and feast me in such a manner! Long ago mightst thou have shaken off the hand of thy providence such a viper as I am into fire unquenchable; and there made me to know, to sad experience, what it is to abuse free grace, by the loss of eternal glory. But, instead of that, thou hast pitied me, loved me, become my Surety, to appease justice for my heinous sins by thy blood, when no other sacrifice would do. Lord, I welcome thy love-feast; I lay my hand on the head of the Sacrifice, and rest upon it; "I believe, Lord, help my unbelief." O that I may henceforth live under the continual sense of my infinite obligations to my glorious Surety, that could make "his soul an offering for my sin." O what return shall I give him for all his soul-travail and agonies for me? O that I could spend my whole life, and each day of it, in magnifying his love, and living to his praise. Now, "blessed be his glorious name for ever and ever; let the whole earth be filled with his glory." Amen and Amen.

MEDITATION XIV.

From Luke xxii. 44.—*And being in an agony,—his sweat was as it were great drops of blood.*

O MY soul, this text affords thee great subject of thoughts, when thou goest to remember thy dear Saviour at his table. Here I see him in a bloody agony! And, first, let me observe the place where his agony began, the garden of Gethsemane, which lay in the valley of Jehoshaphat, on the east side of Jerusalem, at the foot of the mount of Olives. Now, it was in the valley of Jehoshaphat that God did plead with the nations in Christ their Surety, Joel iii. 2. The word *Gethsemane* signifies a mill or press for olives, as being probably the place where they pressed the olives that grew on the mount, and there squeezed the oil out of them. In this place, it pleased the Lord to bruise Christ, our true Olive, that so out of his fulness the fresh oil of his merit and grace might flow abundantly to needy souls. Never was there such an olive pressed there before, since the first planting of that mount! Never was there such precious oil seen as Jesus' blood! O that I may partake of the root and fatness of that good Olive which was pressed here, and of that oil, which will make my grace to grow, and my face to shine!

As it was in a garden that man's sin and misery first began, so it was in a garden that our blessed Surety began his last expiatory sufferings for sin, which cast him into a

fearful agony. As the garden of Eden produced man's misery; so the garden of Gethsemane provided a remedy. O that when I walk and retire myself in a garden, I may have grace to think seriously, and with suitable affections, upon the sins of men, and the sufferings of my Saviour for them! and, at the same time, to send up my ejaculations to God for an interest in his agony and atonement, and for the comfortable intimation thereof to my soul. When my dear Redeemer was in his agony of soul, I read of his offering up "prayers and supplications (to God) with strong crying and tears," Heb. v. 7. And have I no prayers nor tears to offer up to God at the remembrance of his agony? especially when I consider how much my sins contributed to throw him into it. O how strong and bitter were my Surety's cries at this time, when God bruised his soul, and poured down a flood of his wrath upon him! He cried, till he was spent with crying: he grew hoarse with it, and his throat so dried, that he could cry no more, Psal. lxix. 3. Now was his soul in travail, and great cause had he for his strong crying and tears! He was silent under all the pains of his body, and under his sufferings from men; all that time he is dumb, "as a sheep before her shearers:" But, behold, when fierce wrath from God alighted on his soul, he cried vehemently; and he prayed most earnestly and importunately for support and through bearing under this terrible storm. O that, from my Saviour's example, I may learn, when under soul trouble and inward distress, to make my prayers to God more earnest and fervent, and to persevere without fainting; which I have great encouragement to do from this, that my Saviour's fervent prayers and tears have made way for mine.

I observe also, in this passage, that the agony of Christ's soul increased so much, that it produced a sweat of blood over his body; yea, great drops or clods of blood, which, by his violent agony, burst through his very clothes, and watered the ground where he lay. O what trouble and anguish, pangs and sorrows, desertions and strugglings must his soul have endured at this time, under the burden of God's wrath for his people's sins, which put his sacred body and blood into such a dreadful commotion and ferment! O what a prodigious and preternatural sweat was this! Never was the like heard of since the world began! According to the course of nature, Christ's lying in the open air, in a cold night, upon the cold ground, with the greatness of his consternation, should have drawn all his blood inward from the external parts of his body; but Christ's sweating and bleeding was altogether preternatural. He swate without external heat, he bled without external wound. The fire of divine wrath, now kindled in his soul, was so very hot and raging, that it made the blood about his heart to boil, and burst through both flesh and garments. He had received, at this time, no wound nor external violence from any hand; no Judas, no soldier, no tormentor, had yet attacked him; no spear, no nail, no thorn or scourge, had yet touched his sacred body, and yet he bleeds most plentifully! O but the sword of justice had reached him, and made a deep wound and wide gash in his soul; at which breach a sea of wrath brake in with such violence, that it overwhelmed him; made him fall first on his knees, and then flat on the ground, where he lay agonizing and crying, till all the waves and billows of divine vengeance went over him. Oh! what a dreadful pressure was my Saviour's soul under at this time! What squeezing anguish had he about his heart, that made his body to struggle and sweat in such a manner, so that every pore of his body became a bleeding wound! O how awfully should I be affected with this tragical sight! How thankfully should I remember my Redeemer's love, when he calls me to do it at his holy table!

In my Saviour's agony I may see, as in a glass, the malignant evil and cursed nature of sin, that no less could atone for it than the soul-travail and agony of the dear Son of God! Can I ever make light of sin, when I view the great drops of blood standing above his garments, while he lay groveling on the earth in the anguish of his soul! Shall I not henceforth abhor sin, and stand in awe of offending a just and holy God, seeing it is such a fearful thing to fall into his hands: "If such things were done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" Was the cup of wrath so terrible to the innocent human nature of Christ, when presented to him, that he shrinked and cried out? O what will it be to guilty sinners! Here I may see how costly the redemption of souls is; ere this could be compassed, God must become man, Eternity must suffer death, the Lord of angels must weep in a cradle, the Creator of the world must hang like a slave! He must lie in a manger at Bethlehem, cry in an agony at Gethsemane, die on a cross at Calvary! Unspotted Righteousness must be made sin, and unblemished Blessedness must be made a curse! O did Christ value souls at so high a rate! and shall men be so foolish as throw them away for a thing of nought?

Here I may see the great difficulty of making peace with God, when once his law is broken; no less could do it than the blood and soul-agony of the Son of God; even an infinite Ransom must be paid, ere God would be reconciled to man. O how much am I beholden to Christ that undertook the reconciliation, that prevented my ruin by taking the cup out of my hand! O the cup he drank for me was mingled with wrath and curses, a cup full of vengeance, pressed down, heaped up, shaken together, and running over; a cup, which, if men or angels had but tasted, they had reeled, staggered, and fallen headlong into hell: Yet, said Christ, ere any of my elect ones drink it, I will drink it for them; reach it hither to me bitter as it is. Oh how ready was Christ to engage for men! and how willing was he to perform! How ready, full and free, was the fountain of his blood to wash the defiled! Behold how freely it issued forth before a wound was opened; all his veins and pores poured it forth, without waiting for the tormentors. Lord, make me as willing and ready to apply to it. Did Christ wrestle in an agony to obtain the redemption of lost sinners; and shall not I wrestle as in an agony to get an interest in this redemption, and the evidence thereof cleared up to my soul! O for faith and fervency in prayer, that I may wrestle without ceasing for the assurance of his love, that I may go with joy to his table.

MEDITATION XV.

From Isa. liii. 7.—*He opened not his mouth; he is brought as a Lamb to the slaughter.*——

IT becomes me to read and consider these words with great attention, seeing they were the occasion of the Ethiopian eunuch's conversion; for it was while he read and thought

on these words, that God sent Philip to join him, Acts viii. 29. O that God would, in like manner, send his holy Spirit to join me while I am meditating on them.

1. I observe that Christ is the great Sacrifice provided by God to make atonement for our sins: He is the great Antitype and substance of all the lambs and beasts that were offered up in sacrifice under the law, and therefore he is often in the New Testament called "the Lamb, the Lamb of God, and the Lamb slain." The Spirit of God seems to have a peculiar delight in dwelling upon this type of *the Lamb*, more than in any other of the Old-Testament types; and should not I delight in it too, and often with pleasure make mention of *the Lamb, the worthy Lamb*, that will be the object of the praises of saints and angels through all eternity?

2. Christ is represented by a lamb, to point out the innocence of his person, the meekness of his nature, the usefulness of his benefits, and his patience under sufferings. How patient is the lamb under injuries! it is silent both before the shearer and the butcher; it parts with its fleece in shearing time, and with its life in slaughter time, without any noise or resistance. Dogs and swine howl and cry, when violence is offered to them, but the lamb is quite silent. So Christ, the Lamb of God, opened not his mouth, under the greatest revilings, mockings, buffetings, spittings, piercings, and the most cruel death, which be suffered from men, 1 Pet. ii. 23. and hence it is said in the text, when he was led to the slaughter, "he opened not his mouth:" He opened not his mouth, unless it was to bless, teach, or pray for, those who injured him; yea, he not only did pray, but also plead an excuse for them, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And, after his resurrection, how ready was this meek Lamb to forgive all that wronged him! When giving orders to preach remission of sins to a lost world, he bids *begin at* Jerusalem, Luke xxiv. 46. where they mocked and pierced him, because there they had greatest need of his blood to wash them from guilt. How meekly did our blessed Lamb carry to Peter, when he denied him in his own hearing? He did not turn and frown upon Peter, as he well deserved, though he might have frowned him into hell; it is said only, "He turned and looked on Peter," Luke xxii. 61. not with an angry look, but with an affectionate melting look, which recovered him to a penitent frame: Neither did he afterwards upbraid him with his carriage. O meek Lamb of God! can I remember thee at thy table, without being filled with remorse and grief for my impatience under injuries, and the proneness of my heart to resent them? Shall I not be ashamed of my unchristian temper, when I see my meek and loving Jesus, willing to be the sport and derision of men and devils, that he might be the author of salvation to perishing souls? Oh, how astonishing is it to see the Creator affronted by the creature, the Potter by his clay, the King of glory by worms of the earth, and yet hold his peace! Now, is the Head so meek and patient, and should not the members be so too! O how unseemly is it, to see a company of fierce lions following a meek Lamb! O that I could learn more of him that is meek and lowly in heart.

3. Here I see the greatest instance of divine love that ever the world saw. Behold an offended God willing to spare wretched criminals, and take satisfaction from a Surety in their room; and he himself finds out the Lamb to be the sacrifice, even his eternal Son, who willingly undertook to assume a body for that end. How astonishing are the Lamb's words, Heb. x. 5. "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared me;" as if he had said, "Father, since all the legal sacrifices are insufficient to satisfy thy justice, atone for sin, and ransom precious souls; even take the body thou hast prepared for me, let that be the sacrifice to justice; it is more valuable than any other, being the tabernacle of my divine Person; it will bring glory to thy offended justice, and satisfy it to the full. I yield myself willingly to be the prisoner of justice, and go quietly as a lamb to the slaughter; not dragged to it, as an ox or a bullock, but meekly and pleasantly, like a lamb." When, according to this agreement, justice required the Lamb to be sacrificed, O how patient and silent was he under all the accusations laid against him, though he was wholly innocent; he would say nothing in his own defence; at which Pilate (not knowing the cause of his silence) marvelled greatly, having never seen the like before. But our Lamb considered that he stood not only at Pilate's bar, but also at the bar of God's justice as our Surety, bearing our guilt; and though man had nothing to lay to his charge, yet he knew what divine justice had to charge upon him, and therefore he is silent and answers nothing, that he might not hinder our redemption, nor stop the payment of our debt. When justice charged him with our sins, our *unbelief, pride, covetousness*, &c. he might have said, "O Father, these transgressions are not mine, I never offended thee;" but he will do nothing to rescue himself. Therefore, when the fearful charge of the whole sins of an elect world was exhibited against him, and the sword of justice drawn, ready to strike, he opened not his mouth, but takes with the charge, as if he had been guilty of all. Glory to the silent Lamb for ever, that would not hinder our release from punishment, but meekly took the stroke for us.

4. Behold this meek Lamb, before he was brought to the slaughter, led up and down from place to place; from the garden to the high-priest, from the high-priest to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, from Herod back to Pilate, from Pilate to Calvary. Behold him mocked, abused, and disgraced by them, buffeted and spit upon, crowned, scourged, and pierced, and yet never resists nor complains. He willingly "gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that pluckt off the hair, and hid not his face from spitting. Now the meek Lamb is content to be, as the ram caught in the thicket, to be slaughtered and sacrificed in our room, who were lying bound, like Isaac, to have been the sacrifice. Oh, it was our sins that platted the thorns; they also were the reed that drove them into his temples, yet he opened not his mouth.

5. Now this slaughtered Lamb is set before my eyes in the sacrament, and God's call to me is, "Behold the Lamb of God," John i 29. Now let me behold him with an earnest and steady look, with faith and expectation, that I may get healing to all my diseases. As no stung Israelite got healing from the brazen serpent, unless they looked to it, so none can get benefit from Christ, unless they behold him. May I never look away from this Lamb, to my tears, convictions, prayers, reformations, or any thing else; seeing the best of duties will make bad saviours. If I expect salvation from other things, I am undone, for there is no other name given under heaven whereby men can be saved:' But if I look to the Lamb of God, my salvation is secured by his promise, Isa xlv. 22.

6. There was no house in Egypt safe from the destroying angel, but those who had their doors sprinkled with the

blood of the paschal lamb: So there is no soul safe from the sword of revenging justice, but those who by faith put themselves under the protection of the blood of this slain Lamb: Let me therefore take the bunch of hyssop, *faith*, and dip it in the bason of the new covenant, and sprinkle this blood on my guilty soul, and so I shall be safe.

7. How blessed is their characters who follow the Lamb, Rev. xiv. 4 May I follow him as my Physician to cure me, my Righteousness to justify me, my Life to quicken me, my Husband to supply my wants, my Guide to conduct me, my Pattern to direct me in my steps. Let me learn, from his example, to be patient without murmuring, when I am under affliction. Let me learn meekness towards men, when I meet with reproaches or injuries from them. Let me learn a readiness to obey God's call to every duty. O did Christ go willingly to the slaughter for us; and shall I be backward to pray, communicate, part with sin, or do any thing he requires of me? Let me, in all duties and ordinances, seek after the Lamb's presence, seeing my eternal happiness lies in being ever with the Lamb, and to be fed and led by him, Rev. vii. 16.

MEDITATION XVI.

From EPH. i. 7. – *In whom we have redemption through his blood.*

HOW dismal is our case by nature! We are slaves to sin and satan, and prisoners to the justice of God, being sentenced to die, doomed to wrath, and reserved to public judgment and execution In this miserable condition were all mankind, until Christ came to ransom us: And O how difficult and costly was our redemption to Christ! no less could be the price of it, than his precious blood The glorious Son of God, who created heaven and earth, must become a creature, be born of a woman, and pour out his blood on an ignominious cross, before we could be redeemed from sin and wrath. O how valuable must the blood of this infinite Person be! What is the blood of earthly kings and princes to this blood! Surely one drop of it is of more value than an ocean of theirs! and yet every drop of this blood was poured out upon the ground for our redemption. In this blood I see sundry things:

1. The amazing love of Christ, in shedding his blood for the redemption of such creatures as I am; creatures most ugly, that had lost the image of God, and got satan's image pictured in its room, and were thereby become black as hell. Creatures, loathsome as dead carcases, being dead in trespasses; and yet those he loved so as to shed his blood, and bleed to death for them For as lovely as Sarah was, while alive, yet when dead, Abraham could look on her no more, but would have her buried out of his sight. But Christ said not so of his elect spouse when dead; no, said he, let me bleed and die for her to bring her to life; though at the same time she was more loathsome than Job with his boils, Lazarus with his sores, or any dead carcase with vermin. O what cause could be given for the love of a bleeding Jesus? Well might he say, " I loved you, because I loved you; and I loved you freely." And O with what sorrow, pain and agony, was his bleeding love attended, while his dear soul was overwhelmed with the terrible billows of his Father's wrath! Christ knew well before hand all these sufferings, and all the ingredients in the cup, yet he would needs drink it for us: He foresaw the poison of God's arrows that would drink up his spirits; the burning thirst that the heat of divine wrath would create in him; yet willingly did he go to bleed and die, like a lamb to the slaughter. "O love that passeth knowledge!"

2. In Christ's blood I see the glory of infinite wisdom displayed: Who could have found out a way to reconcile justice and mercy, and satisfy both their demands about Adam's fallen race? A general council of angels could never have thought of the Son of God his being made flesh and shedding his blood! How shocking would the suggestion have been, if God had not made it? But, behold hereby *infinite wisdom* hath discovered a way to gratify both justice and mercy; to punish sin, and yet pardon the sinner; to maintain the honour of the *law-giver*, and yet preserve the life of the *law-breaker*: Hereby *mercy* is satisfied in sparing the rebel; and yet *justice* more glorified, and *sin* rendered more odious, than if the sinner himself had been eternally damned for it. Nay, though all the men on earth had been cast into hell-fire for sin, and the angels with them, it had been no such instance of justice, as Christ's bleeding and dying for sin: For what is the punishing of creatures, to the suffering of the Creator!

3. This blood being the blood of God, hath infinite virtue and efficacy; it hath purchased the church of God, and all grace and glory to her. Acts xx. 28. it protects all who come under the covert of it from the wrath of God, Exod xii. 13. " When I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt." This blood, which is the price of our redemption, hath marvellous effects; it pleads for the guilty, and obtains pardon of sin, peace with God, nearness to and communion with him. It cleanses, heals, satisfies and beautifies perishing souls; it seals the New Testament, overcomes our enemies, liberates the prisoners, opens heaven's gates, and gives boldness to enter in: The Person of our Redeemer being preferable to a million of worlds full of men and angels, his blood alone might well serve for an elect world.—What sins can be so heinous or so numerous, but the blood of God can wash away? This was famous Cranmer's support that day he suffered martyrdom; when his heinous sin of renouncing the truth stared him in the face, and he was greatly dejected for it; he brake out, " Surely God was made flesh, and shed his blood, not for lesser sins only, but for great sins also:" This relieved him, and made him die with courage. This blood can help in all straits, deliver from all fears, and is able to save to the uttermost. It hath saved many who have condemned themselves, and thought their salvation impossible. It hath eased many consciences, when the terrors of the Almighty have surrounded them, and his arrows have stuck fast in them. It hath unstinged death, and carried many safe through its darkest vallies. This blood hath cleansed many whose hearts were filthy as the mire, and whose lives swarmed with the most abominable lusts; such as the Corinthians, 1 Cor. v. 11 and three thousand of those who had imbrued their hands in shedding of it, Acts ii. 36. Nay, it is able to take away the sins of a world, John i. 29. and much more the sins of any one soul, though like a mountain for weight, or the sand for number.

4. I see this redeeming blood to be a suitable remedy for all my maladies; O that I could look to it by faith, apply it

to my sores, and plead it with God: "Lord, I am an unrighteous creature, but here is justifying blood; my heart is unholy, but here is sanctifying blood; my soul is wounded, but here is healing blood; my lusts are strong, but here is mortifying blood; my heart is hard, but here is softening blood; my affections are dead, but here is quickening blood; my love is cold, but here is heart-warming blood When I am at the holy table, I am near this blessed remedy; O let me not miss a cure, when the balm of Gilead is among my hands; let me not perish in my guilt beside the open Fountain. Oh, this blood hath healed thousands, and shall I remain under my plagues Lord, let that innocent blood, which ran from thy hands, heart, and side, drop on my guilty soul, and cleanse me from all sin. O my glorious bleeding Lamb, "if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." O say to me, as thou didst to the leper, "I will, be thou clean." Surely thy blood is more able to save me, than my sins are to destroy me."

5. How just is it, that I should commemorate the shedding of this blood in the way that Christ appoints? Lord help me to go to thy table, and realize the shedding of this blood to myself, as much as if I had stood by the cross, and seen it with my eyes flowing from his wounds. Let my faith be the evidence of things not seen, and let it realize the shedding of Christ's blood as evidently to me, as if I had actually seen it. Ah, I cannot say it is so, while my eyes are so dry, and my heart so hard; alas for my stupid unconcerned heart, that doth not burst into love and tears at the sacramental view of this blood-shedding! How can I see these hands, that sway the sceptre of the heavens, nailed to the tree of reproach, and not mourn? How can I see those feet, that trample on the powers of hell, nailed to a tree, and not weep! Did the earth tremble, rocks rend, sun hide, and heavens darken, and will not my rocky heart rend for sin, that caused all?—Since thou, Lord, comes to me in streams of blood, let me go forth and meet thee with streams of tears. Oh, shall I be more sparing of my tears for Christ, than he was of his blood for me? Can I see this precious blood run down in streams, and my eyes not pour out some drops? Can I refuse drops of water for streams of blood? Can I see the blood of the King of kings spilt like water on the ground, and the earth drinking it up, and my heart not rend for shedding it? Oh, that "my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night" for the slain Lamb of God!

6. How dreadful must the crime be, to tread this blood under foot by unbelief, or unworthy communicating! "Had Zimri peace, that slew his master?" And can I have peace, if I be guilty of the blood of him that is my Master and Redeemer both? How sad will my case be, if that blood, which alone can procure my pardon, shall cry for my eternal punishment? "Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God." O that I could value and esteem, plead, and apply this precious blood more! Lord, accept of it as a full satisfaction for all my sins, and an all-sufficient price for my soul's redemption. Is not one drop of thy Son's blood of more value than a sea of mine? My sins, alas, have shut me out of paradise, but O let this blood open paradise to me again; and let me, through this Red-sea, enter into the heavenly Canaan; I know I can have no other passage to it. Lord, impute not the guilt, but the merit of this blood to me.

MEDITATION

MEDITATION XVII.

From Psalm lxxii. 6 —*He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth.*

THIS is spoken and promised of Christ, and serves to teach us, that Christ coming to his church and people, by the gracious influences of his holy Spirit, is most useful and refreshing to their souls, like showers of rain to the dry ground, or a meadow newly cut, to make it spring again.—Christless souls are like the dry ground, without the moisture of saving grace, their hearts are hard; neither rods, mercies, nor sermons, make impression upon them: Why? they are without Christ, the Fountain of grace and spiritual influences. Before the fall, man's soul was like a well-watered garden, beautiful, green, and fragrant; but by his apostacy from God, in Adam our first head, the springs of grace and holiness are quite dried up in his soul; and there is no curing of this drought, but by the soul's union with a new Head, to wit, *Christ, our second Adam,* who has the Spirit given him without measure, for the use of his members.—Now, when we are united by faith to Christ, our Head of influences, "the dry land is turned into water-springs;" Christ comes down as the rain by his Spirit of regeneration, and brings the springs of grace into the soul He is the first and immediate receptacle of the holy Spirit, and all the regenerating and sanctifying influences, and out of his fulness we must by faith receive them. And when at any time the springs of grace are interrupted in the soul by sin or unbelief, so as the ground turns dry, the plants wither, and the things which remain are ready to die; the soul hath need to look up to Jesus Christ, to come down with new showers upon the thirsty ground, and decayed plants.

1. As the rain is the free gift of God to the dry ground, it comes free and cheap to poor and rich, small and great, and costs them nothing: So Christ, with his blessings, is God's free gift to a dry perishing world, for which we should continually be thankful. 2. As nothing can stop the falling of *rain;* so nothing can hinder Christ's gracious influences, when he designs to awake, convince, or soften a hard heart. When those showers do fall on sinners, the most obstinate will, must yield, and cry, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" 3. As the *rain* is most necessary and suitable to the dry ground, and to the various plants it produceth, and also to the different parts of every plant or tree; such as the root, trunk, branches, leaves, flowers, and fruit; so Christ is absolutely necessary, and his influences most suitable, to all his peoples souls, and to every faculty of them, the understanding, will, memory, and affections; and to all their different graces, faith love, repentance, &c. to root and stablish them, strengthen and confirm them, quicken and increase them, cherish and preserve them. 4. As the *rain* comes down in divers ways and manners to the earth, sometimes with cold winds and tempests, thunders and lightnings; and at other times with calmness and warmth: So Christ comes to sinners, sometimes with sharp convictions and legal terrors, and sometimes with alluring invitations and promises. 5. O how pleasant are the effects of *rain* to languishing plants, to make them green and beautiful, lively and strong, fragrant and fruitful? So the effects of Christ's influences are most desirable to drooping souls, for enlightening and enlivening them, for confirming and strengthen-

ing them, for comforting and enlarging them, for appetizing and satisfying them, transforming and beautifying them.—A shower from Christ would soon make the church, though withered, turn green and beautiful, and to send forth a smell as of a field that the Lord hath blessed; and likewise some drops of this shower, falling down upon the languishing graces of communicants, would soon make them vigorous and lively in shewing forth their Saviour's death at his table.

Here I may see the reason why many souls continue as dry ground in their parched natural condition, while others near them are flourishing and fruitful; Christ's shower hath come down upon the one, and not upon the other; one piece is rained upon, and another piece is dry and withered, according to that word in Amos iv 7. Oh, what cause is there to bewail the evident symptoms of this continuing natural drought in multitudes of souls! Why? their hearts are hard, impenetrable and unaffected with the miserable state they are in by nature, and with the woful plagues of their hearts. They have no sense or feeling of the evil nature of sin, notwithstanding of all the reproofs and threatenings of the word, or the rods and strokes it brings upon them; or of the sufferings of Christ for sin. And though God assures them, that the end of dry ground is *cursing* and *burning*, they are impenitent and unconcerned under all. O if parched souls in their natural estate were made sensible of their misery, and brought to bewail their case, and say, "O I am as the heath in the desart, that sees no rain; I am a dry tree; If I continue in this state, I will be cut down as cumbering the ground, and made fuel to hell-fire. I see the ax of justice laid to my root, every hour I am in danger of the blow. O if Christ would interpose to spare me, and come down upon me as the rain, and bring the moisture of grace into my soul."

How lamentable also is the case of those who once seemed to be watered by this heavenly rain, and now are parched by a long consuming drought and withering wind! They have lost their former greenness and moisture, their spirituality and liveliness, and their duties are quite dwindled away into a lifeless carcase and dead formality. They have lost their wonted freedom and enlargement in prayer, and are fallen under sad bonds and straitenings of spirit, which makes them count holy things a weariness, and frequently neglect secret prayer. Surely such have great need of Christ's coming down upon them as the rain, to make them spring up as the grass, and revive as the corn. Alas, we have a sinful hand in bringing on such a spiritual drought, by quenching the motions of the Spirit, indulging fleshly lusts, giving the world Christ's room in the heart, and neglecting to live by faith on the Son of God, who is the Rain and Dew of Israel.

How happy are those who live under the droppings of this rain! They are like trees planted by the waters, their roots spread forth, and their leaves are green, Jer xvii. 8. "Have I the signs of such persons? Is my heart ready to melt at the sight of a crucified Jesus set before me in the sacrament? Do I mourn for my sins that pierced him? Am I ready to think worse of myself than any other person can? Is my heart soft and pliable to the will of God, both in his precepts and providences? Do the world's good things bulk but little in my eye? Is it my desire to meet with Christ in every duty and ordinance? Do I still look on sin as Christ's enemy? Am I afraid of provoking him by sin to withhold the showers, and make the heavens as brass to me? Am I desirous to bring forth fruit answerable to the waterings he graciously allows me." O may I find these marks in my soul.

O that I could earnestly plead for the fulfilling of this promise in the text, that Christ would come down as the rain, that he would send the showers he hath merited and promised, send them to myself, to the church, and to the whole land; to the present age and to the rising generation. O what glorious effects would these showers produce! They would beautify the church and her assemblies, make both ministers and professors to shine in holiness, and congregations to be lively in worship. They would open prison-doors, loose bonds, enlarge hearts, revive drooping souls, turn their water into wine, their sorrow into joy, their complaints into praises, and make them sing in the ways of the Lord. By these showers God would be glorified, the church cemented, and her distempers healed. Ordinances would be successful, communions more pleasant, the godly more valued, religion more esteemed, and the way to heaven more delightful. Lord, look on the dry ground and present droughty season with pity, open the windows of heaven, and send down showers as in former times, as in other parts of the world. Send a shower to young communicants, and to those who have not seen thy goings in the sanctuary: A shower to stony hearts and withered hands; a shower to soften the clods, loose the roots, and open the springs. O how much good would one of Christ's showers do to a poor dry land! what wonders would it work! what prisoners would it loose! what cloudy minds would it brighten, and what doubting souls would it resolve! Come down, Lord Jesus. Amen.

MEDITATION XVIII.

From Mat. viii. 8.—*Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof.*

FAITH and repentance do still go together; every believer is a true penitent: he that puts on the Lord Jesus, is also clothed with humility. The higher thoughts a man hath of Christ, the lower thoughts will he have of himself. When the man's eyes are open to see the holiness and excellency of Christ, he is made to own his own nothingness before him, and his infinite distance from him, and to say, like the centurion in the text, "I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof." *q. d.* It is too great an honour for such a guilty and filthy creature to entertain a Saviour of infinite purity; my heart is more unworthy than my house, I have nothing to commend me to thee. The lowly soul abhors himself, as vile in the sight of a holy God: he says, I am all as an unclean thing, and all my righteousness is as filthy rags; in me dwells no good thing; I am insufficient of myself to do any thing that is good, or even to think a good thought; it is God that must work in me, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure. He is under no obligation to pity or help me, it will be absolute free mercy in him, if he do it. The lowly man hath undervaluing thoughts of himself, and of all his own doings and attainments: he renounceth all confidence in his own righteousness, and humbly submits to the righteousness of God by faith: he is content to be stript of all his own garments, that Christ may be his cloathing: he looks not to his own per-

formances to recommend him to God, but only to Christ his Surety: he is willing to go out of himself, and live wholly upon borrowed righteousness and borrowed strength, even to live upon Christ crucified, and to derive, daily and hourly, from him, strength both for duty and difficulty, for work and warfare. The man that is lowly in heart, submits to the will of God in all his dispensations, is content with every condition he thinks best for him; he is patient in affliction, and silent under God's rod, without answering again. He is sensible that he justly deserveth hell, and therefore is very thankful for the least mercy; like the woman of Canaan, he owns himself unworthy as a dog, and will be thankful for the crumbs that fall from the childrens table. He will be thankful for a word from Christ, for a look, for a smile, for the least token of his favour, or the smallest influence of his Spirit.

Wherever faith is in exercise, it is a soul-humbling and self-emptying grace, and lays the soul very low before God; and God always hath respect to such faith and to such lowliness. Psal. cxxxviii. 6. Christ put great respect upon the lowly *centurion,* Mat viii. 10, 13. "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel; go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." He also put great respect on the humble *publican,* Luke xviii. 13, 14. and declared him justified; for (saith he) "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." He put great honour on the humble woman of Canaan, that owned herself vile as a dog, Mat. xv. 27. "O woman, great is thy faith, (said he) be it unto thee even as thou wilt." And he saith of himself, Isa. lviii. 15. though he be "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, yet he dwells with the humble spirit." And thus he sets himself before us, as the great pattern of *humility,* and bids us learn it of him. When he appeared unto Moses, it was not on a *lofty cedar,* but in a low, mean, *humble bush.* And when he would appear in our nature, it was not a *great exalted woman* he takes up with, but a *low humble virgin,* as Mary herself observes, Luke i. 48, 52. May I be helped then to appear before him at his holy table, with a humble spirit, and lowly frame, that he may vouchsafe to dwell and hold communion with me.

O that I had the marks of a lowly heart, and could say, that I blush, and am ashamed before God in prayer, because of my sinfulness and pollution! that I am made to wonder at free grace in sparing such a vile unthankful wretch, in keeping me out of hell, in offering me Christ and pardon through his blood, and calling me to his holy table. That I disclaim all righteousness by the law, and expect nothing but wrath and ruin from that airth; that I look only to Christ, and have admiring thoughts of him and his law-biding righteousness. That I have a deep sense of indwelling sin, and of the corruptions of my heart, and think more meanly of myself than any other person can.—That I am jealous of my wicked heart, and afraid lest I betray or wound the Son of God, and contract blood guiltiness; and therefore I adventure to his table with much fear and trembling. Lord, bestow upon me such a humble heart.

O can such an ill-deserving creature appear before God, and expect mercy; who have so long abused mercy! Lord, instead of stretching forth a sceptre of mercy to invite me to thy table, thou mightest, with the rod of thy justice, justly dash me in pieces as a potter's vessel. Instead of entertaining me with the bread of life, and the cup of blessing, thou mightest give me the bread and water of affliction; yea, cast me into that pit, where I should cry in vain for a drop of water to cool my thirsty tongue. O shall such a wretched dog as I presume to come to thy table, and eat of the childrens bread, who am not worthy to eat of the crumbs that fall from it! But I have heard of the mercy of the King of Israel; that he delights to show it to the unworthy, that humble themselves before him. Oh, I am vile, and unfit to appear before thee; but surely, they are undone who keep away from thee. I am come to thee, not because I am fit or worthy, but because thou art rich in mercy; and hast contrived a way for saving the like of me. Lord, I am not worthy to come within sight of thee, but far less that thou shouldest come under my roof to lodge with me! "Will God in very deed come and dwell with men!" This is a wonder, though all men were as innocent and righteous as once Adam was!—But will he lodge or feast with me that am a leper? Will he come under the roof of my soul, a house so ruinous, smoaky and defiled, where he has not a fit place to lay his head? But, O my humble, condescending Saviour did not disdain to ly in a manger among beasts, nor to dine with Simon a leper! O Lord Jesus, come in thyself and furnish the house, prepare an upper room in my soul, large, swept, and garnished, and there abide, and keep the passover with me.

Lord, I am not worthy to eat the crumbs that fall from my own table, much less those that fall from thine. I deserve not a room to stand among thy servants far less to sit down with thy children. I am not worthy of my daily bread from thee, and shall I be allowed to eat of the bread of life? Shall I, who deserve not the bread of *men,* be admitted to eat the bread of *angels?* Shall I sit down with him, at whose feet they fall? If John the Baptist (one of the greatest that was born of women, who was filled with the Holy Ghost from the womb,) thought himself not worthy to loose Christ's shoes, how unworthy am I, the meanest of creatures, a transgressor from the womb, to be admitted to touch, nay, feed upon Christ's broken body and shed blood! If Peter, after seeing Christ's glory, and his own vileness, judged himself unworthy to be in the same ship with Christ, and cried, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man:" How shall I, the chief of sinners, adventure to sit down at the same table with him in a familiar way! If the woman with the bloody issue was afraid to come and touch the hem of Christ's garment, how much more may I, who am full of the running issues of sin, fear to touch the symbols of his body and blood, or put my hand into his side? If the purest angels must cover their faces when before him, how shall I, who am so impure, appear openly in his presence? But glory to God, for the blessed covering provided for my guilty soul, under which I may appear and be accepted. I come to thee wrapt in it, Lord, accept of me.

O how distinguishing are thy favours to me an unworthy creature! Thou mightest justly have put in my hand a cup of tremblieg and unmixed wrath, a cup filled with horror of conscience and fearful despair: But, instead thereof, thou givest me the cup of blessing, filled with the hope of pardon and eternal life. I might have been in hell drinking the damned's cup of wrath, into which justice is still pouring in as fast as they drink out: But glory to free grace, thou callest me to drink the cup of salvation, which my Saviour hath purchased with his blood, and sweetened with his blessing. Thanks be to God for it for ever.

MEDITATION XIX.

From 2 Cor. xi. 15.—*Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.*

MANY give thanks to God for meat and drink to their bodies, which indeed is the duty of all; but alas, few give thanks to God for Jesus Christ, the only food of precious souls, and God's unspeakable gift to men! Many are fond of temporal gifts and earthly riches, which are nothing but vanity; but ah, they are easy about this Pearl of great price, this matchless gift, whose value no tongue can express, nor open up what is contained in it. The apostle tells us a great truth, Eph i 3 that "God blesses us with all spiritual blessings in Christ." In this *gift of God*, we have innumerable gifts bestowed on those who believe on him; such as the gift of spiritual illumination, pardon of sin, a law biding righteousness, reconciliation with God, adoption into his family restoring of his image, sanctifying influences, spiritual strength for work and warfare, loosing of bonds, witnessing of the Spirit, unstinging of death, conduct through the dark valley, and a title to the mansions of glory, and the eternal enjoyment of God Christ is the most necessary and most enriching gift ever was given to the world. God gave him to be a *Plank of mercy*, to save our souls when shipwrecked. He gave him to be our Physician and balm, to heal us when our wounds seemed incurable He gave him to be "the Lord our righteousness," when we had no righteousness. He gave him to be our Advocate to plead for us, when we had many accusers, and none to take our part. He gave him to us to be "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption" In this gift there is *infinite fulness* and *unsearchable riches*. Well may the spouse call Christ a "bundle of myrrh, and a cluster of camphire," Cant. i. 13, 14. because so many gifts and blessings are bundled up in this one gift. Oh, what can I conceive, or what can I express of this gift! He that would describe, or speak of this gift, would need to have his tongue dipt in heaven. Should an angel come down from it to tell us of this gift, he would outspeak all the men on earth; yet, when he had said all he could, the gift would be far above his expression; Why? because he is *unspeakable*.

Thanks be unto God that gave us not a servant, not an angel, not a friend, but *his Son*. Not an adopted Son, but his own Son by eternal generation: "A Son, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his Person." Yea, he gave us his only Son, to die as a sacrifice in our room! How bitterly did Jacob bewail the parting with one son, when he had eleven behind! But God gave his only begotten Son and the Son of his love, for us! It is recorded, as an admirable instance of Abraham's obedience, that he was willing to part with his only son at God's command, Gen. xxii. 12. "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me"— But what was Abraham's son to God's eternal Son, the second Person of the glorious Trinity! a Son that was his equal! a Son in whom his soul delighted! a Son that never displeased him at any time! How bitterly did David mourn at parting with a rebellious son! "O Absalom, my son, my son, would to God I had died for thee," &c. But what are all the sons of men, or ten thousand worlds full of men, or as many heavens full of angels, to the beloved Son of God, whom all the angels worship and adore! And yet this is the gift which God gives us. In giving this gift, divine bounty hath stretched itself to the uttermost: He could have created a million of heavens more bright, and millions of angels more glorious, for us; but a more glorious Son he had not, nor could have; a greater gift he had not in all his treasures, than his own co-eternal and consubstantial Son, yet he makes a free gift of him to us! O who would not give thanks unto God for this his unspeakable gift! And who would not part with all the world, to have an interest in this gift sealed to him at the Lord's table! This is the gift that sweetens all other gifts, and without which nothing in a world hath any sweetness in it.

This gift of God is most free; it was impossible that the world could have Christ any other way, than as a free gift. A man like old Jacob may be bereaved of his children, but it was not possible that God could be bereaved of his dear Son. Neither could we have him by purchase; we were so poor, we had nothing wherewith to purchase the least blessing. And what though all the riches of the world had been ours, though all its mountains had been gold, pearls, or diamonds they would not have been sufficient to purchase one sight of this gift, far less a right to it. Nor could ever any motive be found out for bestowing this gift, but the mere free love of God, John iii. 19. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son:" As if he had said, since the world hath no merit, nor price, worth nor motive, to obtain this blessing, I just make a free gift of him to the world: Take him freely, poor beggars of Adam's family; take him, and he will enrich you all! And O how seasonable and unexpectedly was this gift given! Adam, when he came trembling before God after his fall, looking for his final doom, did little expect such a gift, until God himself, to the astonishment of angels and men, promised the seed of the woman. Who could have thought, that the great God would have gifted his dear Son to such vile wretches, sinners that were not seeking him! Nay, who of mankind could have desired such a gift? Indeed, when we had been perishing, we might have looked up, and cried, O God, have mercy upon us: But who would have said, O give the Son of thy love to bear the wrath due to us! We neither deserved, nor desired this gift, but God gave it most freely and surprisingly! When Adam broke God's covenant, he was pursued with a cry, "Adam, where art thou"— Doubtless, Adam expected a terrible blow from the sword of justice; but, behold, he is pursued with a cry, and the unspeakable gift in the Crier's hand! O how surprising was this to poor, trembling, guilty Adam! What cause had he to cry, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!"— *What shall I render to the Lord for such a Gift!*—And the same cause have we.

O wonderful love! this free gift is offered freely to the poorest creature of Adam's family; so that such an one as I, am warranted to accept and embrace it, and make sure my interest in it; "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief" Many covet other gifts, but I covet this best Gift, this enriching Gift; this is a lawful covetousness: I receive this Gift of God into my bosom, into my very heart. O that I had the marks of those who possess this Gift, and are truly thankful for it! Can I say, that this Gift is truly precious in my eyes, and that I esteem it far above all temporal gifts whatsoever: That I am oft thinking upon his matchless excellency, his low stoop and condescending love; and do I frequently break out with the Psalmist, "Whom have

I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee." Have I low thoughts of myself, as unworthy that Christ should come under my roof, reckoning myself, with Paul, "the least of all saints, and chief of sinners?" Do I renounce all Christ's rivals and competitors, such as my beloved lusts, and beloved righteousness? Do I count all my doings and duties, "but loss and dung" for the righteousness of Christ? Do I take the crown off every head, and put it upon Christ's head, and give him all the glory of my salvation, and say, that "in the Lord Jesus only I have righteousness and strength?" Am I careful to avoid every thing that would dishonour Christ? and do I say to every temptation that offers, "How shall I do this wickedness, and sin against God," or bring a reproach upon Christ and his ways! Do I rejoice when Christ is honoured, his throne raised, his glory advanced, and his subjects increased; and when strangers and young ones are drawn to love and admire him? Am I often saying, "What shall I render unto the Lord for his unspeakable Gift?" I am at a loss how to express my thankfulness: I have nothing to give him; but I'll render all I have to him, my soul, my body, my love, my praises, my time, my talents, my walk and conversation. Lord, accept of my two poor mites, soul and body, in token of my gratitude, for God's redeeming love and free Gift; and make me fit for giving thee thanks eternally for this unspeakable Gift: O that I could apply these blessed marks to myself.

And O what thanks do I owe to my dear Saviour, that willingly submitted to be Heaven's Gift to the children of men, yea frankly offered, and gave himself to be a Sacrifice for them, to drink of the brook in the way, even the cup of God's wrath, that we might drink the cup of God's blessing! O how low was our fall, that nothing could raise us up again, but the low abasement of the Son of God! And O how low was the step that he behoved to make to recover us! The Son of God must be tread upon as a worm! The almighty Physician must come from heaven, and let his heart be pierced, to prepare a medicine to cure our disease! He that "thought it no robbery to be equal with God," must be made equal to robbers and murderers! He must not only suffer death, but desertion also, from God, from man, and the whole creation! He gave himself not only to suffer the pangs of death, but the pains of hell; not only the sorrows of dying men, but the sorrows of damned souls! O unspeakable Gift!

MEDITATION XX.

From LUKE ix. 22.—*The Son of Man must suffer many things.*

OUR Lord oft spoke of his sufferings to his disciples, because he would have them deeply imprinted upon the hearts of all his people, that they might always think upon them, and carry about with them the dying of the Lord Jesus. As Christ foretold his sufferings before hand, so they came exactly to pass. He said he must *suffer many things* for his people, and accordingly he did so: Let me view his sufferings before I go to commemorate them at his table.

1. I must consider him that suffered many things for us; the Spirit of God requires us to consider the High-Priest, who he is, Heb. ii. 1. Though he calls himself in the text the Son of man, as to his human nature; yet he is also the Son of God as to his divine nature; yea, God equal with the Father, the great God our Saviour: This God-man, the WONDERFUL, is our High-Priest, that suffered many things for us. He is our glorious Immanuel, the innocent and immaculate Lamb of God, that had not the least spot or crime of his own to suffer for. He is the brightness of his Father's glory, the express image of his Person; he is the King of kings, and Lord of lords. He that suffered, is he that went always about doing good to persons of all sorts, and deserved well of those who persecuted and crucified him. He is the great lover of mankind, and Friend of sinners, our glorious Benefactor, who remembered us in our low estate; one that comes under the most endearing characters to us, as that of our Father, our Husband, our Brother, Master, Physician, Ransomer, &c. Now will not a son be sensible of the sufferings of his father, or a wife of the sufferings of her husband? Or one brother be touched with the sufferings of another? This is the great High-Priest that suffered *many things* for us.

2. I am to consider the many things he suffered. Ah, they are so great, so various and manifold, I cannot recount nor comprehend them! I may say, he suffered in both natures: though his Godhead could not properly suffer grief or pain, yet it suffered an eclipse for thirty-three years, except a short time it shone forth on mount Tabor. He suffered many things in his human nature, both in soul and body; he was persecuted, tempted, calumniated, betrayed, bound, mocked, spit on, buffeted, scourged, wounded, crowned with thorns, and crucified. He suffered in all his offices; he was mocked as a Prophet, and bid prophesy who smote him; and as a Priest, he was bid save himself, seeing he pretended to save others; as a King, he was mocked with an old purple robe and thorny crown: he suffered in his honour and reputation; being disgraced and reproached by men, called a Samaritan, one possessed of the devil, a blasphemer, a glutton, a drunkard, a seducer, &c. he was even overwhelmed with calumny: he suffered as a blasphemer against God, as a traitor to Cæsar, and an enemy to Moses' law, though he was entirely free of them all: he was wounded and pierced in all parts of his body, in his head, hands, and feet; in his cheeks, back and side: He suffered in his outward goods, being spoiled of all things, and even stript of his clothes to his very skin, and nailed to the cross naked: he suffered in all his five senses; his *sight*, with the spiteful carriage of those that passed by wagging their heads; his *hearing*, with their blasphemous talk; his *smell*, with the noisom savour of the skulls of the dead; his *taste*, with vinegar and gall; his *feeling*, with thorns and nails piercing his head, hands, and feet. He suffered in the most tender and sinewy parts of his body by the tormenting nails, especially being violently stretched out, and probably disjointed, to make them reach to the holes; therefore he saith, Psalm xxii. 16, 17. "They have digged my hands and my feet, I may tell all my bones; they look and stare upon me." He suffered most of all in his soul, and its noble faculties: How great was the agony and travail of his soul, when he swate blood in the garden through all the pores of his body! O how great was the anguish of his mind upon his heavenly Father's deserting him, which made him send forth a dreadful cry to heaven for relief, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—Then it was he cried and groaned under the pressure, but no relief appeared; there was none to answer, every door was shut against him: for at this time his own Sun, his own Heaven, his own Father, his own Godhead, did all hide

their faces and consolations from him! O the many things he suffered for us, they cannot be numbered.

3. I am to consider from whom the Son of Man suffered. He suffered from all hands; from earth, from hell, from heaven; from men, from devils, from infinite justice. He suffered from all sorts of men; from king Herod and his men of war, who mocked him and set him at nought; from the Jewish priests and rulers, who cruelly used and persecuted him to death; from governor Pilate, who scourged and condemned him to be crucified: He suffered from the Jews and from the Romans, from the clergy and from the lawyers, from soldiers and servants, from great ones and commons, and even from those he had done much good un to: He suffered from those whom he came to save and wash by his blood; for there were three thousand of those who crucified him, or were active in his sufferings, that were converted to him by Peter's sermon, Acts ii. He suffered not only from enemies, but from professed friends and disciples; one of these betrayed and sold him, another of them denied and abjured him, and all the rest forsook him, and left him alone to suffer in the midst of devils and ruffians insulting over him: he suffered from the devils, and all the powers of hell; those dogs and bulls of Bashan were all let loose to tear and gore him in his last sufferings; "for this (he said) was their hour and power of darkness." But, which was worst of all, he suffered also from heaven; for he being substituted in the room of sinners, a just and a holy God acted as an inexorable Judge towards him, he frowned terribly upon him, smote him with the sword of justice, and withdrew all the feeling of his loving-kindness from him, and all those divine influences which might any way refresh his troubled soul in the hour of his greatest need: and thus he fell a sacrifice to incensed justice for our heinous guilt and provocations. At this time a fearful black cloud was spread over the glorious Sun of righteousness, never was there any such eclipse seen or heard of as this! For a candle to be put out is no great matter, but for the sun to be darkened, is very uncommon: But though sun, moon, and stars had all been blown out at once, it would be nowise so amazing as the darkening of the eternal Sun of righteousness upon the cross! A strange and marvellous sight! What meant the heat of this great anger? Must even the Creator himself suffer for the creature's sins? Must he suffer such a load of wrath as to make him cry out to the astonishment of angels and men!

4. I am to consider the High Priest, and for whom it was he suffered these great and *many things*. He suffered not for himself, for he never offended either against God or man, and deserved no punishment: he suffered none for fallen angels, they must all suffer for themselves: it was only for men of Adam's race, that were debtors to justice and prisoners of wrath; he suffered for creatures most undeserving, for rebels, and for many that were his greatest enemies; and even for those who were his murderers and executioners, for he both prayed and was heard for them, when they were pouring out his blood.

5. Let me consider with what affection he suffered all these things for us. It was with ardent love to perishing souls, which many waters could not quench; with fervent wishings and longings for the hour of his passion, "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!" with great liberality. It is not the blood of his finger, or a part of his blood, that he would shed for us; no, he would needs pour out all his blood, and even his heart-blood too, and with that he poured out his soul also, Isa. liii. Why would he be so liberal? that with him there might be *plenteous redemption*, Psalm cxxx. 7. He suffered with great meekness, patience, and resignation; when he suffered, he threatened not, but was led as a sheep to the slaughter, dumb, not opening his mouth: with great humility and self-denial, content to be as a "worm and no man," to bring glory to his Father: with a thirsty zeal for the salvation of souls, and for completing the work of our redemption; and hence it was he cried on the cross, "I thirst," and glad when he could say, "It is finished."

O what cause have I to obey his dying charge, to go to this memorial-feast, and to think upon and wonder at the matchless love of Christ, that made him willing to suffer so many things for such wretched creatures as I am. He knew well enough before-hand what our salvation would cost him, yet he willingly undertook it, saying, upon the first motion of it, "Lo I come" But, saith God to him, if you will engage in this work, you must underly my wrath, and be handled as if you were the sinner in law:—Well, saith Christ, "I come to do thy will, O God:" I am satisfied with the terms: let the cup be never so bitter, I will drink it ere these miserable creatures do it. O loving High Priest! how shall I think of thy sufferings without raptures of love and admiration! I had been in hell, if thou hadst not been in an agony here; I had for ever been scorched there, if thou hadst not swate here; yea, not only I, but all the posterity of Adam had perished, if thou hadst not suffered these *many things* for them: Surely the weight of wrath, which made thee heavy, and caused thee fall to the ground, sweat, groan, and cry, would have sunk all mankind into hell for ever. O what ingratitude must it be to refuse Christ's offers and terms of salvation, after what he has suffered to purchase it! Was he at so much pains to obtain redemption for us, and will we be at no pains to get an interest in it! Did he shed blood, and will not I drop tears? Lord, pity this heart of mine.

MEDITATION XXI.

From John xviii. 4.—*Jesus, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, &c.*

CHRIST foreknew all his sufferings, with all their ingredients, before they came upon him, yet he willingly and resolutely went forth to meet them He will not flee, nor hide himself from his persecutors, but cast himself in their way. He saw the cup of wrath mixed and ready for him, and now, as it were, he reaches forth his hand to take it. When the people would have forced him to a crown, he hid himself from them, John vi. 15. But when they would force him to a cross, he offered himself to them, knowing that his hour was come to fulfil his suretyship for us, and complete our redemption Upon this account he made his sufferings welcome, and the passover that introduced them, Luke xxii. 15. "With desire have I desired to eat this passover." He abhorred all counsels that tended to hinder him; and rebuked Peter as smartly for dissuading him from suffering, as he would have done satan himself, Matth. xvi. 23. And though all his disciples would have dissuaded him, John xi. 8 he marched with great forwardness to Je-

rusalem, where he foretold the bloody tragedy was to be acted; he hastened to the field of battle, and place of suffering: Yea, he went so fast to it, that his disciples were amazed at it, and afraid to follow him, Matth. xx. 18. Mark x. 32. They were behind him, and would have fallen behind altogether, had it not been for shame, and let him go alone; they were amazed to see a man hasten so fast to a bloody death: But he would not stop, though they had all left him, as they did afterwards. And when his time was come to be apprehended, he will neither let Peter defend him, nor angels rescue him, though there were twelve legions at his call: One angel would have been sufficient to do it, or one word from his own mouth; but, saith he, "The cup my Father hath given me to drink, shall I not drink it?" Wherefore when they accused him of blasphemy against God, and of enmity to Cæsar and Moses's law, and things he was perfectly innocent of, he would make no legal defence to save his life before Pilate, but held his peace, in so much that Pilate marvelled greatly. He might think it was easy for him to answer all they said, but he knew not the reason of our Lord's silence; viz. that he would do nothing to hinder the elect's redemption, which he had undertaken. And, as he was silent before Pilate, so was he before divine justice, and would do nothing to divert the stroke: Soon might he have rescued himself when justice drew the sword, by saying, "Father, these sins are not mine:" No, he is silent, and takes with the charge, as if he had committed them all. On me, saith he, be the curse; I will be the sacrifice for these lost sheep. O love, unspeakable!

The reasons of my Saviour's willingness to suffer are obvious; he knew it was his Father's will he should suffer, and therefore he said, Psal. xl. "I delight to do thy will, O my God" He knew it would greatly display the glory of the divine atrributes, that was sullied by our sins; it would highly magnify his love to his sheep, John x. "I lay down my life for my sheep:" I do it of myself, freely, without compulsion: It was necessary to make his sacrifice acceptable and well pleasing unto God. The Heathens would not offer a sacrifice to their Gods that came struggling to the altar; so every sacrifice offered to the true God must be a free will offering, as we would have it of a sweet smelling savour unto him. This Christ hath taught us by his example, and upon this account God hath twice proclaimed from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

O was Christ's willingness to suffer for sinners so well-pleasing to the Father, and shall it not render him most aimable and lovely to us? Surely the Mediator's frank and cheerful undertaking to suffer so much for us, when unrequired by us, is a favour infinitely kind and obliging, and doth command raptures of love and praise from us when we celebrate his holy supper. What a moving sight is it to the eye of faith, to behold our glorious Immanuel voluntarily stating himself in our law-room without the soliciting of any creature, and engaging cheerfully to go through satan's buffetings, death's pangs, and hell's flames for us! With what elevated thoughts, and raised affections, should we admire, love and praise a crucified Jesus, who did all this willingly and unrequired for us! Oh, he never had so good will to eat when hungry, as he had to suffer and satisfy justice for us! Hence it is said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work," John iv. 34. Here is food, most delicious for faith to feed upon at the Redeemer's table. Again, from this willingness of Christ to suffer for us, I have good ground to conclude his willingness to receive us, when we come to him by faith to partake of the fruits of his sufferings. O how can any believer, or sensible sinner, question or doubt of Christ's willingness to help and save them, who was so willing to offer himself a sacrifice to justice for them? Surely he is far more willing to save, than any sinner is to repent or believe. And from this I'll take my encouragement to come to him: Since my loving Jesus came willingly as a lamb to the slaughter for sinners, I'll venture, with humble confidence, to go to this meek, passionate, sweet-natured Lamb, for pity and help in the time of my need, trusting he will not reject me, nor any that comes to him upon his call in the gospel. "I believe, Lord, help my unbelief."

O did Christ suffer the pains of death and hell so willingly for us, and shall not we be willing to suffer the reproachings and revilings of men, or any other persecution, for him? And when any such injuries are done us, shall not we bear them with meekness and patience after Christ's example, who submitted cheerfully to every thing he knew to be his Father's will? Though he was perfectly innocent, and met with the greatest provocation from wicked men, yet he patiently bore them; taking all as out of his Father's hand, who had mingled the cup for him. Therefore, when he was reviled, he reviled not again; he could have told Pilate, Caiaphas, and his other persecutors, what sort of men they were, yet he opened not his mouth, but went willingly as a lamb to the slaughter. O that we could imitate the meekness, patience and willingness of the Lamb of God, in all the sufferings he calls us to.

O did Christ delight to do his Father's will, and go willingly through the most hard and difficult task of sweating, bleeding and dying for us; and shall we find so little delight in doing his will, and performing the duties which lead to communion and fellowship with him, as prayer, praise, reading, hearing, or communicating? Did Christ come so cheerfully to die for us, and shall we go so backwardly and unwillingly to this table, to enjoy fellowship with him, when he invites us to it? O what a shameful requital is this! may not Christ say, "Is this thy kindness to thy Friend?" When the Father called me to suffer, and drink the cup of trembling for thee, how readily did I echo back, "I come, lo I come, to do thy will I take delight!" but when I call thee to pray or communicate, how backward and dead-hearted are you in that work! I did not weary so soon in the garden, as thou dost in the church! I did not so soon weary on the cross, as thou dost in thy closet! I was longer in my agony, wrestling under the wrath of God for thee, than ever thou wast in wrestling in prayer for thy soul

Did Christ offer his sacrafice so willingly for us; O then let me go to God my Saviour, with the sacrafice of myself and my duties, and with a ready and a cheerful heart: "God loveth a cheerful giver." As "Amaziah offered himself willingly unto the Lord," 2 Chron. xvii. 16. and David saith, "Accept of the free-will offerings of my mouth," Psal. cxix. 108. O that with like willingness I could offer myself, my heart, and my sacrifices of prayer and praises unto the Lord: And when I feel any reluctancy and backwardness of spirit to duty, let me still call to mind how willingly Christ offered himself a sacrifice to God for us, and chide my heart for its unwillingness. Surely it is much for the honour of God, and the credit of religion, as it

is most just and reasonable in itself, to serve God with joyfulness, who has so willingly given us the unspeakable gift of his dear Son to die for us. The wicked and profane are ready to reproach religion as a sour and melancholy thing, when we serve God in a dead-hearted manner; and God himself is highly displeased with us for it, as is evident from that long and terrible chapter the 28th of Deuteronomy, that is full of curses and threatened judgments, verse 47. where the cause of all is given, "Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and gladness of heart." Since the sacrament is called the Eucharist or thanksgiving, let me go to it with a joyful and thankful heart, blessing God for Christ. "O thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift." Amen.

MEDITATION XXII.

From JOHN xvi. 7.—*It is expedient for you that I go away.*

NO wonder that sorrow filled the disciples hearts at the intimation of Christ's departure from them. They had enjoyed a sweet time with him at the communion-table; his presence with them was their heaven, and they cannot think of parting with them. They are greatly troubled, that he will neither stay with them, nor take them away with him: "Nevertheless, (saith he) it is expedient for you that go away" Lord, saith the soul, how is it expedient for me to be left behind thee in a state of corruption, with indwelling sin that darkens my mind, deadens my heart, disorders my affections, and indisposes me for spiritual work? How shall I stay behind thee, amidst satan's temptations and fiery darts, flying thick about me? Must I abide in the place where that enemy hath his circuit, and still rangeth about devouring many thousands? Could I win away with Christ, I would be quite out of the reach of his shot. Lord, either stay with me, or take me up to thee. O must I stay behind thee amidst the infectious defilements and ensnaring examples of an ungodly world? When I open my eyes here, what will meet them but multitudes wallowing in pride, sensuality, covetousness, injustice, malice, envy, drunkenness, gluttony, uncleanness, contempt of God and religion? Must I stay to see this horrible sight, the whole world lying in wickedness? Must I stay to hear God daily dishonoured by the tongues of the ungodly? Must I stay to see Christ slighted, wounded, and crucified afresh by wicked men? O what danger will I be in of being infected by their examples! But, Lord, if I could win away with thee, I would be quite out of hazard, and out of the world. How shall I stay behind thee in such an earthly tabernacle, to be burdened with bodily distresses, sickness, pains, and manifold complaints; and amidst innumerable losses, crosses and disappointments from the creature? How shall I stay to see such melancholy divisions, contentions, debates, and separations, as fall out among the people of God in Christ's absence? Must I stay behind thee to suffer injuries, reproaches, cruel mockings, bad usage and persecutions, both from the tongues and hands of men; and sometimes to be torn as with the teeth of wild beasts?—Hence this world is called "a den of lions and mountain of leopards," Cant. iv. 8. O could I win away to heaven with Christ, I would see no lion nor leopard there. There is none to hurt or destroy in all God'sholy mountain above.

Have I seen the King in his beauty, and must I be left behind him? Hath the communion-table been like mount Tabor, where he was transfigured before my eyes, with his countenance shining, and his raiment white as light? and must I go down from the mount again to a land of darkness, of drought, and of perplexing doubts and fears, where I shall sometimes go mourning without the Sun; yea, neither sun nor stars appearing to me for many days? Must I be put to walk without the light of God's countenance, and without the food of my soul, communion with my God? After I have been lifted up, must I lay my account with being cast down again, perhaps into depths like these of Asaph, Psal. lxxvii. or like those of Heman, Psal. lxxxviii. with fears of sinking in them, and of falling short of heaven for ever? Could I win away with Christ, I would be at once delivered from all these fears. Here my knowledge of God is small, and often obscured with darkness, my faith is weak, and often in hazard of being overwhelmed with unbelief: here my love is cold, and often like to be chilled with frost-winds, from satan and the world; my prayers often are formal and wandering, my praises low and flat; here my best wishes are attended with many short-comings and defects. But, O if I could win to heaven with Christ, where grace and holiness are in perfection, I would praise him without wandering, and serve him without sin for ever! Here sin still cleaves to my nature, mixes itself with my services, and defiles my best duties. Here I still carry about with me a deceitful and treacherous heart, whereby I am in hazard of backsliding from God, and miscarrying for ever, should I be left to it. But, O were I with Christ, I would be free of all these anxious thoughts and fears. Lord, stay here with me, or take me up to thee.

But thou sayest, it is expedient for me to stay behind for a time. Why Lord? Must I stay that my travelling graces—my faith, hope, and patience,—may be tried and exercised here below, and thereby gradually strengthened and ripened for the perfect state? Must I stay that I may be conformed to my Head, both in serving and suffering; that thy wisdom, power, and mercy, may be glorified in conducting and preserving me through all difficulties and dangers of this wilderness: "Thy will, Lord, be done," only leave me not alone; but, "for thy name's sake, lead me and guide me." Or, is it thy pleasure to suspend my heaven for a while, that I may promote thy glory on earth, be useful to the souls of others, and recommend my dear Redeemer to those who knew him not, which is a work I cannot do in heaven? O fit me for it by thy grace, and fill me with zeal for thy glory. O let thy kingdom come upon earth, that the kingdom of glory may be hastened.

Thou sayest, it is expedient for thee to go away. Why, Lord? Must thou thyself be thy people's Forerunner, to carry tidings to heaven of their complete redemption, and of their coming after thee in their several generations? Must thou go to open the passage, and pave the way for access to their persons and duties, and prepare rooms and lodgings for them against the time they come home? Must thou go away to be a public agent and intercessor for thy people, under all their trials and tossings here below, and likewise to provide and furnish a rich and glorious communion-table for them in thy Father's house above? Lord, send thy Holy Spirit to fit and prepare me and many others, for that blessed entertainment. Lord, when thou saidst, "It is expedient for you that I go away," thou didst add, "For if

I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." Why? it was so agreed in the council of the Trinity, that the sending of the Spirit, in his plentiful effusion, which was to be the purchase of Christ's death, should be given in an answer to his intercession, when he entered within the vail, John xiv. 16. And the Spirit was to make use of it as an argument for convincing the world of the perfection and acceptableness of Christ's sacrifice, that Christ was now received and welcomed into heaven. Likewise, the Spirit was to be given only upon Christ's ascension, to supply the want of his bodily presence to the church, as being far better for them, seeing Christ's bodily presence could be in one place only at once, but the Spirit is in every place, to animate and put life in ordinances. May the church have this fruit of Christ's ascension still more and more.

Lord, though thou hast gone away for necessary ends, yet thy marriage-contract with thy people, and the love-tokens thou givest them in the sacrament, are sure pledges of thy returning to pay them a comfortable visit at last, according to that sweet word, John xiv. 3. "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also." O that I may be one of those to whom Christ's visit at his second coming will be joyful and comfortable. Let me examine myself after the sacrament, if I have the marks of such. Am I espoused to Christ? Have I a high esteem of the Bridegroom? Have I subscribed the marriage contract, and gone into Christ's terms? Do I heartily approve the whole contrivance of redemption, through the suretyship and righteousness of Christ? Have I renounced my own righteousness, my beloved sins, and all Christ's enemies? Do I mourn for the injuries done to Christ by myself and others, and rejoice when his interest and kingdom prosper in the world? Do I mourn for Christ's departure, and the withdrawing of his Spirit from ordinances, or from my own soul? Do I thirst for more holiness in heart and life, and for greater conformity and likeness to the glorious Bridegroom? Then I may expect his visit and return will be comfortable to me, and I may rejoice in the view and expectation of it, and answer Christ, when he saith, Rev. xxii. 20. "Surely I come quickly; Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus." Is my Forerunner now gone away? Let me follow him as closely and speedily as I can: Let me follow him in the way of faith, in the way of obedience, in the way of suffering, in the way of patience, prayer, resignation, deniedness to the world, heavenly-mindedness, &c.

MEDITATION XXIII.

From Hos. ii. 19.—*I will betroth thee unto me for ever.*

ABIGAIL thought herself highly honoured, by David's proposing to match with her: But much more honoured are we, apostate sinners of Adam's family, by the eternal Son of God his proposing to match with us, and courting us so earnestly; when he neglected angels, that seemed to be a fitter match for him, in respect of the superior dignity of their nature. Yet all these he would pass by, and match with worms! O how amazing is this step! that the heavenly Bridegroom, whose kingdom is mighty, his riches infinite, and his beauty surpassing; that he should chuse a bride naturally polluted, deformed, uncomely, and black as hell! and that he should seek her through a sea of blood, through the pains of death, the horrors of the grave, and the torments of hell! And, after many slights and refusals, that he should follow her in her wanderings through the wilderness of sin, with his charming invitations, and alluring offers in the gospel, presenting her with the rings and bracelets of his precious promises and Spirit's consolations; and all to win her heart, and gain her consent to him! How astonishing is it, to see this glorious Person coming over all objections from the blackness, guilt, poverty, and unworthiness of the bride, saying, Though she be black, I'll make her comely through my comeliness put upon her! Though she be mean, I'll make her noble! Though a slave, I'll make her free! Though a fool, I'll make her wise! Though a bankrupt, I'll pay all her debt! Come here, law, justice, and all her creditors, here full satisfaction of all that is due to you, take it, and write her discharge? Now, "who can lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" Christ's bride! Behold God displaying his free love here to the uttermost! He never displayed his other attributes to the utmost; *infinite wisdom* could have contrived ten thousand worlds more beautiful than this, and *infinite power* could have produced them. But here *infinite love* and *mercy* hath gone to the utmost; a greater demonstration of his love Christ could not give, than by leaving heaven, assuming a body, and giving his life for the bride; nay, wading through hell for her, and, in face of all discouragements, courting and betrothing her to himself for ever!

After many meetings, treaties, and broken trysts with some, the Bridegroom is come again to court a bride, and has sent his friends in his name to demand her consent, saying, as they did to Rebekah, Gen. xxiv. 58. "Wilt thou go with this man?" Poor woman, lad, lass, wilt thou yield to this glorious Immanuel; many former treaties have been broke off by the devil, the world, unbelief, and an ill heart! Oh, will not the long spoken of match hold at length! Ministers, the Bridegroom's friends, are doing their best to draw on another meeting between the parties. Christ, I see, is content to hold another, and it may be the last tryst he will set with many. To shew his earnestness, he hath convened his friends, angels, saints, and ambassadors, to witness the sincerity of parties; he hath put on his scarlet robes, his garments dipt in blood, to win sinners hearts; he hath brought the marriage-contract and spread it before them, saying, "What think ye of its articles and terms? Are ye pleased with them? Are ye content to break with sin and all my enemies? To renounce the world, self-righteousness, and all other lovers? to fall in with the self-denying way of salvation through a borrowed righteousness? to accept of me in all my offices? to live wholly upon your Husband, borrow all of him, and be an eternal debtor to him? to make a surrender of your soul and body to him, and seal a covenant with him at his table? Are you resolved to be faithful to your Husband, cleave to him all the days of your life, and be oft looking out for his second coming? And, in the meantime, to be oft commemorating his sufferings, conflicts, conquests, and atchievements, and for that end to be frequently looking on his picture in the sacrament, with a believing, penitent, and thankful heart? Now, what is your answer? Lay your hand to your heart."

Lord, unworthy as I am, I desire to go forward through all difficulties, impediments, and discouragement, and say

with Rebekah, when called to answer, "I will go with the man;" And with Esther, "I will go in to the king." Though I be not worthy of him, yet he is worthy to be obeyed that calls me: Though he hath no need of me, yet I have great need of him: Though my distance be great, he allows me to creep nearer to him: Though I cannot move of myself, yet he is able to draw me, be my clogs ever so great: Though my motion be small, yet I will not turn back, but keep my face toward him, and fix my eye on him. As a look hath brought healing, so a look hath brought strength; yea, though he should seem to frown on me, and chide me away from him; yet, like Jonah, "I will look again towards his holy temple:" Though I have no worthiness in myself, yet he hath worthiness enough for me: Though I be a black and uncomely bride, my glorious Husband can beautify me with his perfect comeliness put upon me. Therefore I do, with all my heart, accept of him as my Lord and Husband: Lord, I make choice of thee, and all that is thine; for richer, for poorer, for better, for worse; for well, for woe; for presperity, for adversity: I make choice of thee for all times and conditions, to love, honour, and obey thee, above all. I renounce all other lords or lovers, and will have none but Christ: I renounce my own will, and take thy will for my law. I esteem thy precepts concerning all things to be right, and will hate every false way: I submit to all thy providences and dealings with me, and am content to take up thy cross and follow thee, whithersoever thou goest: I take thy Spirit for my guide, thy word for my rule, thy glory for my scope, thy testimonies for my counsellors, thy promises for my encouragement, thy sabbaths for my delight, thy people for my companions: Lord Jesus, I take thee for my life, holiness for my way, and heaven for my home. And as I accept of thee, and all that is thine; so I give up myself to thee, and all that is mine, soul and body, with all my faculties and affections, senses, and members, to be thy agents and instruments; with all my enjoyments to be employed for thy use and service.

"I will go with the man," though I see him all over wounded, mangled, and bleeding, and his visage marred with the wounds, stripes, and blows, which he got from men and devils. Nay, I see him even in this mangled condition, to be fairer than all the sons men, and all the sons of God too; for I see him "wounded for my transgressions, and bruised for my iniquities, that by his stripes I might be healed." I see him a match every way suitable for me, that can supply all my needs: I am a poor dying worm, but he is a living head that can make me live for ever: I am a needy creature all made up of wants, but in him doth all manner of fulness dwell: I want grace, but he hath all fulness of grace suitable for me: I want grace to believe, but he is the Author of faith: I want grace to repent, but he is a Prince and Saviour, exalted to give repentance. I want grace to pray, to hear, to communicate, to mortify sin, bear the cross, resist temptation, &c but my Husband hath all grace to bestow. O let me be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

O that I had the true marks of those who are divorced from the law, and married to Christ as their Husband; that I could say, I look upon all my doings, in point of acceptance with God, as old rags: I live wholly and freely upon my Husband, and take all I want from him for nothing: I clothe myself with his righteousness, and essay the performance of every duty in his strength: I would desire to live entirely upon his cost. I have a heart-love to my Husband, and every thing that belongs to him, and a heart-hatred to sin, and aversion to every thing that is injurious to him: I am desirous to please him in all things; and, out of regard to his dying command, I go to his table, to remember his dying love, and renew my marriage-vows: I delight in my Husband's company, and press for communion with him in all ordinances. His honour is always dear to me, and I am easy about my own honour and interest in respect of his. "Let me decrease, but let him increase." And in regard the devils reign here, sin abounds, error and corruption prevail; I am well pleased with the thoughts of Christ's second coming to pull down satan's kingdom, and to consummate the marriage with me, and all that are espoused to him, and say, "Why tarry the wheels of his chariot? Make haste, my beloved; even so come, Lord Jesus." O that all the world would love him, exalt him, and submit to him. Many in different places admire him, and see matchless charms in him, his name to them is as ointment poured forth, his garments smell of aloes, myrrh, and cassia; they have beheld his stately goings in the sanctuary: O that all the world might so admire him, and submit to him also.

MEDITATION XXIV.

From Isaiah liii. 8.—*For the transgression of my people was he stricken.*

OUR sins and transgressions are great and various, and therefore our Surety's sufferings for them were heavy and manifold: he endured many wounds, bruises, chastisements and stripes, which would still endear him the more unto us: "For he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed," ver. 5. O who can think of that verse without sorrow, or speak of it without tears? He was wounded and bruised to death, to save us from deadly wounds and bruises. And, when dying, he left us his portraiture, with the marks of his wounds, that we might look upon it at his table, and mourn for our sins which gave him these wounds. Oh, can I see my dear Saviour all wounded and mangled by my sins, and not be deeply affected for the transgressions for which my dear Jesus was stricken! Stricken he was many ways, by many hands, by many rods, by many stripes. He was stricken by the hand of God, by the hand of men, by the hand of devils: stricken by the rod of Moses, the rod of justice, the rod of the Jews, &c. O how early was he stricken by the ill usage he met with from men; being thrust out, to be born in a foul stable and laid in a manger; and soon after was he stricken by the rod of persecution and banishment, being made to flee his native country for safety from Herod. All this he suffered for us, because we deserved to be deprived of all earthly accommodations and comforts, and to be banished from God and heaven for ever.

He was stricken by the rod of poverty and pinching straits. Though he was the King of the universe, and possessed all the riches in it, yet, "for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich," 2 Cor. viii. 5. He was not born of a rich empress, but of a poor virgin; not in his own house, but in another man's: He had no house

nor foot of ground of his own, to live or lodge in: Though the "foxes had holes, and the birds nests," yet he that created them, "had not where to lay his head." His diet was oft a-seeking, and commonly very mean, barley-bread and small fishes. He had no money to pay his tax, but must borrow it from a fish of the sea: He travelled still on foot, except once he rode to Jerusalem to fulfil a prophecy; and then he had neither horse nor ass of his own, but must borrow another man's ass: He had no fine mounting, but the clothes of them that followed him: He had no burial-place of his own, but was laid in another man's; and all this he submitted to for our sakes. He was also stricken by the rod of sore labour and toil, by working at a mechanic trade, until he was thirty years of age; therefore they said, Mark vi. 3. "Is not this the Carpenter?" Man, having eaten the forbidden fruit, was doomed to sore labour, that he should eat his bread with the sweat of his brow, Gen iii 19. and to this doom our Surety submitted for us. Man broke God's covenant by eating of the tree, therefore his Surety must die on a tree. Man idolized a tree, and preferred its fruit to God's favour; therefore his Surety must labour in cutting and hewing trees most of his time Man lived a life of sinning, and therefore Christ must live a life of labour and sorrow; he even became a man of sorrows, Isaiah liii. 3. that we might obtain everlasting joy and consolation.

He was stricken by mens reproachful tongues, scoffs, and mockeries, being called a glutton, wine-biber, deceiver, Samaritan, blasphemer, a devil; and one in compact with Beelzebub, the prince of devils. They derided him in all his offices; as a Prophet, by bidding him prophesy who smote him; as a Priest, bidding him save himself, since he pretended to save others; as a King, by putting on him a purple robe, a crown of thorns, and giving him a mock sceptre. Yea, he endured the most cruel mockings, and that in the midst of his sharpest sufferings and soul-agonies when he cried out on the bloody cross, *Eli, Eli,* &c. O, say they, this man calls for Elias, playing on the word *Eli*. It was not out of ignorance or mistake they said so, but out of malice and derision; for they understood the Hebrew language well enough, and knew he called on God, and that *Eli* signified, *My God*. But, in their spite, they would represent him as an idolater; and, when dying, that he prayed not to God, but to saints for help. He was stricken by the most open affronts and indignities from men; by spitting in his face, condemning him to die for blasphemy against God, and treason against Cæsar: By preferring Barrabbas, a murderer, before him, and posting him between two thieves. Thus the King of glory was despised and rejected of men for us, Isa. liii. 3.

He was stricken by the scourges of platted cords on his back, and with the thorns they drove into his head: That thorny crown was designed for torture, as well as derision; for, if it had been only to mock him, a crown of straw would have served the purpose as well as one of thorns. He was stricken by the pincers that pluckt the hair off his cheeks; and by the heavy cross-tree laid on his bleeding shoulders, which he must carry to Calvary. He was stricken with four big iron nails through his hands and feet, on which his whole weight must hang. He was stricken with a burning heat and thirst, which the wrath of God, for our sins, created in him, and dried him up like a potsherd: This made him cry out, *I thirst;* yet no wine, no fountain, no creature that he made, must relieve him at this time. He was stricken by a spear thrust into his side, to let out his heart-blood, to be sure that no life remained. Well, (said our dying Lamb), let my dearest blood, my heart-blood, go for these lost sinners, that their souls may live and sing for ever.

He was stricken by the ungrateful behaviour of his own disciples to him: By Judas his betraying and selling him for a small sum, the price of a slave: By Peter's denying him, and swearing he knew him not, at the temptation of a poor damsel: By all of them forsaking him, and leaving him in the midst of his enemies. Besides all this, he was stricken in his soul by the terrible glittering sword of justice, by the curses of the law, by desertion from God, by the vials of his wrath poured out on him, which made fearful bruises, deep wounds, and wide gashes in his soul. Oh, our dear Surety was stricken till he fell to the ground; was overwhelmed with wrath, and covered with blood. With these strokes our mighty Redeemer was thrown down, and broken with breach upon breach, till all the sea-billows of divine vengeance went over him. Oh, never was there any sorrow like my dear Saviour's sorrow, which he suffered when stricken for my sins!

Lord, I am ashamed at the hardness and unconcernedness of my heart at this moving spectacle! Oh, did the dead earth tremble, the hard rocks rend, the graves open the heavens turn black, at the sight of a dying Jesus, stricken by the sword of justice? And shall not my rocky heart tremble and quake, rend and melt for my sins, that were the cause of it? Shall the history of Joseph in the pit move me more than that of Christ upon the cross? Shall the news of the tragical death of a friend, or the sufferings of an acquaintance among the Turks, move me more than the death and sufferings of the innocent Son of God on my account? Alas my heart of stone will neither break nor melt, till Christ turn and look on me, as he did on backsliding Peter. Lord, one look from thee can turn "the rock into a standing water, and the flint into a fountain of water." One blink of the Sun of righteousness can melt the most frozen and icy heart in the world.

O how lovely is my stricken and bleeding Jesus! Even when bleeding and mangled by my sins I see him to be *white and ruddy,* and "the chiefest among ten thousand"—Every wound and stroke he got, doth still beautify him the more to me, and make my soul to cry, O my loving and lovely Jesus! O how can I see him substituting himself in my room, and making himself the butt of the envenomed arrows of justice, and not be ravished with his love to me, and with the warmest affection to him! And, at the same time, filled with sorrow for my sins, which brought on all his strokes and wounds? Oh my sins were the thorns that pierced his head, the nails that pierced his hands, and the spear that pierced his heart. My sins pressed him down, and made him sweat blood in the garden. My soul being exceeding sinful, made his soul exceeding sorrowful. May I always hate sin, and sorrow for it.

MEDITATION XXV.

From Gal. ii. 20. *I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

O HOW desirable an attainment is the exercise of true faith upon the great Saviour Jesus Christ, with an ap-

propriating persuasion, or special application to a man himself, so as to say, "I believe and admire his love to the elect in general, and to me in particular: I trust him with my soul, and my eternal salvation: I embrace him, and put my whole confidence in him, "who loved me, and gave himself for me!" Surely, this is the faith that every one that desires to obey that great commandment, 1 John iii. 23. should aim at, and press for, as a thing of the last moment and consequence; "O Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief."

Lord, I will not rest in a general belief and persuasion of the mercy of God in Christ, and of Christ's ability and willingness to save all that come unto him; but I will apply his blood and righteousness to myself in particular, and rest on him as one that "loved me, and gave himself for me."—This appropriating faith is necessary to my justification; for every justified person applies Christ's righteousness to himself, saying, as in Isa. xlv. 24. "Surely in the Lord have I righteousness." As the church in general calls him, "the Lord our righteousness;" so I, in particular, call him, "the Lord my righteousness." I make it my daily practice to wrap up my naked soul in this robe, and live by faith upon it. I make personal and particular application of the remedy to my soul's maladies, and draw virtue from it. This particular appropriation in the actings of faith, is most needful for clearing up a believer's evidences, and for filling the soul with joy and peace in believing; for overcoming the fears of death, and giving comfort at a dying hour. And, particularly, it contributes greatly to the soul's comfortable approach to the holy table of the Lord, when it can say, "I receive a crucified Christ as my Saviour. I go to him as one *who loved me, and gave himself for me*; I take the symbols, and feed upon his body as broken for me, and on his blood as shed for me; and I accept of these as an earnest and pledge of my living and feasting with my Saviour for ever."

A crucified Christ, with all his purchase, is offered to all the hearers of the gospel: For Christ in the word, and by his ministers in the gospel-offer, speaks to all and every one of them; yea, speaks to every sinner, man and woman, in particular, as though he called them by name and sirname. And every man is bound to take the call and offer home to himself, as if he were so named, and believe that Christ stands at his door and knocks, saying, If you, or any man, will open to me, I will come in. "The promise is to you, and to all that are afar off," even to all the ends of the earth, and to the stout-hearted: to all the sons of men, to every creature, to them that have no money, to the poor, maimed, blind, naked, wretched, and miserable, and to whosoever will come: "To you is the word of this salvation sent." Christ doth beseech you to be reconciled, and to beware of coming short of the promise, by unbelief; such a promise as that, "Whosoever believeth on the Son shall not perish, but have eternal life:" And that, "him that cometh to me, I will in no ways cast out:" Besides many others; John iii. 16.—vi. 37. Rev. iii. 17, 18, 20.—xxii. 17. Prov. viii. 4. Isa. xlv. 22.—xlvi. 12.—lv. 1. Mark xvi. 15. Luke xiv. 21, 22, 23. Acts ii. 39.—iii. 26.—xiii. 26, 47. 2 Cor. v. 20. Heb. iv. 1.

Now, seeing the gospel-call and offer is given to every one, faith, which is the echo of the gospel-call, must needs receive an offered Christ, and salvation through him, with particular application to the soul that believes. As Christ offers himself, and his purchase, to every soul in particular; so faith appropriates Christ to the soul itself in particular. And indeed, the life and sweetness of faith lies in this appropriation and applicatory act, when the soul is helped to say, with Thomas, "Thou art my Lord, and my God;" and, with the spouse, "My beloved is mine, and I am his;" and, with David, "Thou art my Rock, and the God of my salvation." Unbelief would tempt me to put away the gospel-offer from me, saying, It doth not belong to me, I am not elected, nor designed to share of Christ's purchase; he did not love, nor die for me. But in regard secret things belong to God, my salvation is at the stake, my need of a Saviour is unspeakable, and the offer is made to me; I have no time to lose in disputing with the devil and unbelief, but I will go to Christ on the ground I have. He tells me, he came to save sinners, I am sure that is my name; he loved enemies, that is my name; he received gifts for the rebellious, that is my name; and now I hear the Master calling and inviting me in particular: Therefore, in spite of the devil and unbelief, and all my guilt, I'll go forward, and accept of Christ as "my Saviour and my King;" I'll trust him with my salvation, and believe "he loved me, and gave himself for me, vile and guilty as I am." This essay to believe, Lord, I make in thy strength, and in obedience to thy command: But, Oh, my mints are weak and feckless! it is only thy Spirit enlightning my mind, and opening up the gospel-call and promise to me, saying, "To you is the word of this salvation sent;" that determines me to make particular application of thy love-offer, by an acceptable appropriating faith: Let my help come from thee.

Oh, Lord, my sins are great and numerous; but should I add to them the sin of refusing the Remedy, and putting away Christ's love and blood offered to me in the gospel, this would be greater than all the rest; for so I would bring not only my own blood, but the guilt of the blood of God upon my head. This I dare not do; now my soul is at the stake; now the Remedy is in my offer; my need of it is great; I cannot delay closing with it; yet a little while, and my opportunity is gone; and I must change my dwelling for ever; and how can I go any where without my Saviour? Christ I must have to teach me, to justify and sanctify me, none else can do it, on him all my help is laid. How shall I go to a communion-table without him? How will I go to death without him? How will I go to a judgment-seat without him? Lord, my case is desperate without thee; wherefore I accept of thy offer, I believe thy love, I trust in thy merits, I apply thy blood, I appropriate thy purchase, and cry, "My Lord, and my God." I confide in a sin-pardoning God, and rest on his promise to me, through Christ's blood and merits, for life and salvation; and though clouds arise, and he should threaten even to slay me, yet will I trust in him, as one "that loved me, and gave himself for me."

Object. But doth not the calling sinners to such appropriating acts of faith, encourage the presumptuous confidence of hypocrites to call God their God, like Balaam, Num. xxii. 18. and to continue in sin? *Ans.* No: these gospel-calls do encourage sinners to love God, to repent and leave their sins; for, till we believe, and taste something of God's love to us, we cannot love him, nor turn to him, 1 John iv. 19. "We love him, because he first loved us." And the abuse or presumption of hypocrites must not hinder the publishing of free gospel-offers and promises. Again, the appropriating faith of believers humbles the creature, destroys self-confidence, purifies the heart, draws forth the

soul in love to God, and hatred to sin; whereas the presumption of hypocrites hath no such effects.

It is the duty, then, of every man that hath Christ's love-offers tendered to him, to repent and believe the gospel, to see his lost state in Adam, and his need of Christ, to be well-pleased with the gospel-device, receive Christ in all his offices, to trust in him as his Saviour, and thereupon believe that his sins are forgiven through Christ's blood; and so persuade and assure himself that Christ is his, that he died for him, and that he shall have life and salvation through him. This persuasion and assurance being most necessary to the spiritual life, it is the great duty of every one to press forward, in the acts of faith, until they attain it, faith being still weak and lame without it. But seeing many believers have it not always, through prevailing doubts and unbelief, it must surely belong more to the perfection of faith, than to the essence of it. Their case is like that of a shipwrecked man that hath got hold of a plank; he believes the plank is sufficient to bear him up, and keep him from sinking; but the blowing storm, and his own weakness, make him doubt if his grip be fast enough to hold by it. Indeed, Lord, if thou didst not take faster grips of me than I do of thee, my weak and slippery fingered faith would soon let thee go; but I trust not in my faith, but in thy faithfulness; I trust not in my promises to thee, but in thine to me; that thou "wilt never leave me, nor forsake me." Lord, do as thou hast said; be it to me according to thy word.

MEDITATION XXVI.

From 1 John iv. 19.—*We love him, because he first loved us.*

No reason can be given why God loved any of Adam's race, but only because he loved us. But good reasons can be given why we love God, both because he is infinitely lovely in himself, and because he first loved us, and before we had any thoughts of love to him. O what is our love, but a small stream that flows from and returns again to the ocean of his love! God's love to us is the source, the incentive, the motive, and moral cause of our love to him. We can never love God, until some rays of his everlasting love break out to us; for, consciousness of guilt, and fears of wrath, do rather incline us to hate him, and flee from him as an enemy, than to love him, and draw near to him: But the breaking out of the beams of God's ancient and preventing love to us in Jesus Christ, makes way for breaking the enmity of our hearts, and bringing in the heavenly fire of love to him. The serious consideration of God's eternal free love to us, poor, wretched, and unlovely creatures, and his loving us at such a rate, as to seek and court our love at the expence of his Son's blood, is the most powerful motive in the world, to engage and draw out our love to him; and the more we have of the faith or feeling of this love, the warmer still will our love to him be. God's redeeming love, displayed to men, doth obscure all the seeming glories of this world, as much as the meridian sun doth darken candles or smaller fires; and soon convinces us, that there is nothing that deserves our affections but God and Christ. No man, that ever tasted the sweetness of God's love, but finds his heart warmed with love to him again. A forgiven soul cannot read his pardon but with tears of love and joy, and still there is much love where much is forgiven. "We love him, because he first loved us."

Lord, at thy call I go to thy table, to admire and give thanks for God's preventing love vented to man in the council of peace, the covenant of redemption, in the incarnation, the death, the blood, and righteousness of our God-Redeemer. O amazing love! I admire it in the *antiquity* of it; God's love is from all eternity; his thoughts were long set upon man before he had a being. I admire the *freeness* and undeservedness of love; there was nothing in man to engage his love; he saw nothing in him but poverty, debt, impotency, and deformity; yea, man was so far from deserving any love from God, that he deserved all hatred, as being loathsome and full of enmity; having razed out the image of God, and got satan's set up in its room! yet even then, God loved him so, as to give his dearly beloved Son to die for him. Oh, did God love man, when utterly unworthy of his love! and shall we not love God, who infinitely deserves all our affection, as being in himself entirely amiable, and altogether lovely; and likewise as affectionate to us, as he is lovely in himself! Lord Jesus, I admire the strength and ardency of thy love! Many waters of affliction did not quench it; and the floods of wrath, that went over thee, could not drown it! strong was that love that made thee engage, and carried thee through in suffering the pains both of the first and second death in our stead! Oh, I am ashamed and afflicted for my little love to thee! I marvel at the constancy and stedfastness of thy love; that it continues firm to thy people from everlasting to everlasting; and that it is never altered by all the unkind returns, provocations, and ingratitude thou meetst with from them! I wonder at the fruits and effects of thy love! O how great! how sweet! how numerous! Who can value or set them forth? Such as, "Quenching the fire of justice, disarming the law of its curses, bruising the serpent's head, paying believers debts, obtaining for them regeneration, pardon of sin, peace with God, peace with conscience, peace with angels, adoption into God's family, justification, sanctification, all the graces of the Spirit, audience of prayer, growth in grace, comfort in affliction, a blessing on all providences, perseverance in holiness, the ministry of angels, victory over death, a happy resurrection, acquittance at the tribunal, the beatific vision, and everlasting life!" Who can declare the loving-kindness of the Lord? Who can utter his mighty acts? Who can shew forth all his praise? I may sooner fathom the depth of the sea, the breadth of the earth, or the height of heaven, than measure the love of God in Christ; for it passeth knowledge?

Oh, how little do we love him, that loved us first, and loved us at such a rate! Nay, how unthankful are we for the instances and fruits of his matchless love! How unkind are the returns we make to him for it? "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid" at the ingratitude of men! How little do we think on redeeming love, and upon the propitiation provided by God for our sins! How little do we speak of this love, or recommend it to those who know it not! How do the small trifles, and little nothings of this world, get more room in our hearts, than Christ's glorious purchase! How little pains are we at to secure an interest in the blessed fruits of his love! How unwilling are we to go into the terms of redeeming love, to renounce a covenant of works, self-righteousness, darling sins, beloved idols! &c. How averse are we to renounce

the world, deny self, and to be debtors wholly to free-grace! How inclinable are we to satisfy conscience after the commission of sin, by our own doings, confessions, mournings, resolutions, &c. without going to the propitiation provided by the love of God! How great is the liking we have to sin, that killed the Lamb of God! How can we say, we love God that loved us first, when we hug his enemy in our bosom! "O that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears," that I might weep and mourn day and night for the ungrateful requitals of the sons of men, for the preventing love of God in Christ, and the amazing instances of it!

O that I could say on good ground, and from the bottom of my heart, I love him that first loved me. Surely a sincere love to God and Christ would be a sure evidence of God's eternal love to me: O that I had the marks of this love, and could say, "My meditations of him are sweet:" I place my happiness in his favour, and the comfort of all ordinances in his presence: I rejoice in the flourishing of his kingdom, and abhor every thing that is injurious to him: I esteem Christ the Mediator, and gift of God, as most precious, with every thing that belongs to him: I fall heartily in with the device of redeeming love for saving sinners, and study the life of faith on the Son of God. I renounce my own righteousness and strength, and desire always to say, "In the Lord Jesus have I my righteousness and strength." Were this the language of my heart, I might appeal to himself, and say, "Thou that knowest all things, knowest that I love thee," and desire to render thee love for love.

It would be a great shame for believers, if they did not love him that first loved them, when they were enemies to him! Surely they cannot be believers without love to him. O for greater and warmer love to him that first loved us! Love is the great qualification of the saints above; the more love we have, the liker heaven we are, and the meeter to dwell in it. Were it possible there could be a man in heaven without love, he would reckon the place a hell, and the work a torment to him. It is love that makes spiritual and heavenly work delightful; hence love is said to be the fulfilling of the law. If the love of God be in the heart, the law of God is there also, and the soul is inclined to all holy obedience. O may the love of God in Christ constrain me to live to him that died for me. Have I seen the astonishing love of God in parting with his dear Son to save me? O let that love constrain me to part with all my sins and idols for him. Have I seen the dear Son's amazing love in bleeding to death on the cursed tree, to save me from lying in hell for ever? O let me never again wittingly walk in the road that leads to it. Have I seen him struggling in an agony to open heaven's gates for me? O let me never turn my back on heaven, and tell him thereby he might have saved his labour. O let his boundless love warm my heart more and more with love to him! May the charms of his love triumph over all the charms of sin's pleasures and satan's devices, and kindle such a fire of love in my heart, as will burn up all my lusts like stubble. Amen.

MEDITATION

MEDITATION XXVII.

From PSAL. cxxvi. 5.—*They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy.*

THE sowing time of God's people is all here, but their reaping time is but partly here, and far more fully hereafter. Here they sow very much in tears, there is need for it; this seed-time is the most promising of any. Men love a dry seed-time, but God loves wet seed-times best: A wet sowing time doth promise a harvest of joy, whereas a dry one portends a harvest of sorrow "Woe to them that laugh now, they shall weep." If men do not begin with tears, they shall end with them; if they weep not now, they shall weep and wail and gnash their teeth hereafter. Godly weeping is a good sign of spiritual life. If a child, when born, was heard cry, it is reckoned a legal proof of its living; but if not, it is accounted still-born or dead. Alas, the number of still-born children in the church is great! few are heard cry, or seen weep, in a godly sort, if compared with those who do not. There be many who pour out tears on worldly occasions, but few on spiritual accounts. If a child die, we can mourn and weep over him, but who mourns for Christ as for an only son? Who weeps for sin that pierced him? Oh, how little are we affected with the sufferings of our dear Redeemer! Our ears are so accustomed to the hearing of Christ's love, his agonies, his wounds, his blood, his death, that they are become words of a common sound, and make little impression on us, though they be the most awful and moving things that ever the world heard of. Thou, Lord, art present at sacraments, thou observest our tears, and comest with thy bottle to receive and preserve them; but, Oh, how empty is it of tears, for the most part, of gospel-hearers! and how few are the tears which are dropt into it by communicants themselves!

Lord, I am ashamed of the hardness and unconcernedness of my heart, and the woful dryness of my eyes! Shall the rocks about Jerusalem rend sooner at Christ's sufferings than my rocky heart? Shall others weep and sow in tears, when Christ's wounds and blood are set before them, and I continue stupid and hardened? Shall the history of Joseph in the pit move my heart more than that of Christ upon the cross! Lord, look upon my stony heart with pity, look it into streams of penitential tears, give me such a look as thou gavest Peter when he denied thee, a look that may cause me weep, and weep bitterly at the remembrance of my sins that pierced thee. If I have not openly denied my Saviour, surely I have shamefully forgot him, and forsaken him in my heart: I have had a deep hand in all his sufferings. When my dear Lord was in the garden sweating blood, neither Jew nor Gentile, Judas nor Pilate, were there to cause it; but Oh, my unbelief, my pride, my carnality, my hypocrisy, my sinful words and actions were there, and with their weight pressed him to the ground, and brought that fearful agony and sweat upon him. My dissimulation was the traitor's kiss, my ambition the thorny crown, my drinking up iniquity like water the portion of gall and vinegar; my want of tears caused him shed both tears and blood, my forsaking God made him to be forsaken of God, my soul's being exceeding guilty made his soul exceeding heavy! Oh, what means then the hardness of my heart,

and dryness of my eyes, when these things are set before me! Is it that weeping is designed for me hereafter, where tears shall never be dried up! Lord save me, for Christ's sake, from hell's tears, and give grace to prevent them, by sowing in tears now in the proper season.

So long as I am in the valley of tears, there are many reasons for sowing the seed of tears. I see many grounds for them, may a glance of them be the means of melting my heart, and filling my eyes with tears. *Tears* for my woful apostasy from God in Adam, whereby I am banished from God, have lost his image and countenance, and am fallen under his wrath and curse. *Tears* for the woful corruption of my nature, my enmity against God, and the manifold plagues of my heart; as *atheism, ignorance, pride, unbelief, hardness, hypocrisy, formality,* &c. *Tears* for the sins of my life, open and secret, of omission and commission, of light and ignorance, which are more in number than the hairs of my head, and many of them very heinous, because of several aggravations; of all which I may have an affecting view, by reading our larger Catechism upon the ten commandments. *Tears* upon the remembrance of Christ's love, in suffering and dying in my room, to wash away my sins, and save me from hell. Surely the thoughts of this love may inflame the coldest breast, melt the hardest heart, and make the driest constitution run down with tears. It was this that made Mary Magdalene's eyes gush out so plentifully with tears of love and joy as were enough to wash her Saviour's feet. *Tears* for the abuse of God's fatherly goodness, mercy, and patience towards me a sinful hell-deserving creature: This consideration melted the prodigal's heart, and made him cry, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." David's undeserved kindness made even the hard-hearted Saul to lift up his voice and weep, and will not God's kindness, which is infinitely greater and freer, make me drop some silent tears at his holy table? *Tears*, because of the frowns of my heavenly Father, the tokens of his displeasure, his chastisements, and even his chidings and shaking the rod at me: These will melt the heart of a child whose nature is kindly and ingenuous, while the stubborn will stand it against many strokes. David, though a man of the greatest valour against his enemies, yet when he saw God was angry with him in Absalom's rebellion, he wept like a child before the enemy while going up Olivet, 2 Sam. xv. 30. and seemed to have no courage at all. Again, I ought to sow in *tears* for the dishonours done to God by the sins of others; and especially when damnable heresies and blasphemies are vented against God. And likewise *tears* for the miseries and perishing condition of others. And especially *tears* of sympathy with God's people in affliction. For I read of Christ himself, David, Hezekiah, Josiah, Jeremiah, and other saints sowing such tears. Well then may this world be called a valley of tears.

Besides all these, it is well pleasing to God when Christians sow tears of tenderness in renewing covenant with him, in prayer, in hearing the word, in communicating and commemorating the death and sufferings of Christ for their sins. This last is a special season for sowing tears, according to Zech. xii. 10. O shall Christians be more sparing of their tears for Christ, than Christ was of his blood for them? We cry out against the Jews and Romans as hard-hearted men for piercing Christ, and being unconcerned at his sufferings. [illegible]what softer are our hearts, if we can see how our sins [illegible]m to death, and not be grieved nor weep. Lord, send thy Spirit to touch my heart, and then it will melt into a stream of tears for sin, that cursed thing that butchered the Lamb of God. O let this be my weeping time, and seed-time of tears, that hereafter I may reap in joy. Alas, my seed-time is scrimp and insignificant, O let not my harvest be proportioned to it. Lord, though I have not tears enough with Mary to wash thy feet, yet thou hast blood enough to wash my feet, my heart, my hands, my tears, and all my duties, and to make me and them acceptable and savoury to God, so that I may reap in joy with his people above, and stand there as a monument of free grace for ever.

Many, after sowing the precious seed of tears at communion-seasons, have even had their reaping times here below, as an earnest and first-fruits of the full harvest above. Lord, make me acquaint both with the sowing and reaping of penitent believers in this world, that I may have good hope through grace, of sharing with them in the harvest of glory hereafter, even the full enjoyment of God in heaven, eternal communion with the glorious Trinity, with the saints and holy angels. Let me know what it is, after a seed-time of tears, to reap even in ordinances here below, the clearing of my evidences of grace, and the evidences of my interest in Christ, and in the well-ordered covenant. Let me reap the lifting up of the light of thy countenance upon me, which will put more joy in my heart than worldlings have when they reap corn and wine in the greatest plenty. Let me see my name written in heaven before I go thither, that my passage may be joyful in the midst of tears. Let me reap even here new supplies of grace, strength to bear crosses, and resist temptations; give me gracious returns of prayer, and victory over my corruptions, that I may sing with the Psalmist, Psal. cxxxviii. 3. "In the day when I cried, thou answeredst me; and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul."

MEDITATION XXVIII.

From Rev. i. 5.—*Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.*

THE love of Christ in becoming man, and shedding his blood to ransom and save sinners of mankind, will be the eternal song of the redeemed above, and why should not they begin this song here below? Never was there such matter for songs of praise as the unfathomable love of Jesus; his name is love; and therefore it is to me as ointment poured forth. I'll remember his love more than wine. His nature is love; his words and actions were love; he preached and practised love; he lived in love, was sick of love, and died for love. O what thoughts should I have of this free and undeserved love of the glorious Son of God, who was intreated by no man, and even hated of all men; yet in his free love intreats and undertakes for man, saying, Though he be my enemy, I'll be both his Surety and Sacrifice, I'll drink the cup of wrath, be made sin and a curse for him, I'll pour out all my blood and die for him. O how shall I speak of this astonishing love to thy enemies? To have spared our lives had been great mercy, but to give thy life for ours, is love unspeakable. Oh! Lord, thou hast found me in my enmity, and yet loved me! When my hand was lifted up against thee, thy arms were open to em-

brace me! Nay, thou hast opened thy loving heart to shelter rebels, who trod thee under foot! Thy heart burned with love to them who cruelly pierced it! Thy bowels yearned toward those that raked in them with bloody hands! Surely eternity itself will be short enough to celebrate the praises of our glorious Immanuel, who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. Worthy is our slain bleeding Lamb, of eternal hallelujahs from men and angels. Lord, fit my heart for these new songs.

O never was there such a miracle of condescending love to the sons of men, as this of the eternal Son of God, his becoming man to suffer hell for them, and pour out his blood to wash them from sin that kindles hell-fire against them. Glory to the Lamb for his fire-quenching blood, and for his preventing love, that kept me from feeling of this fire! O how would this love have affected me, if justice had sent me to hell, and kept me there one year, or one month, or but one day! Surely, one day in hell would have made me prize and praise redeeming love and redeeming blood at another rate than now I do. Or had I seen the damned in their misery, despairing and without hope! Or, had I seen my agonizing Saviour in the garden sweating blood for me; or seen him dying on the cross pouring it out at five big wounds to the very last drop, to wash away sin! O would not I then have valued the great remedy and salvation he now tenders to me! And is not all this which now I hear in the word, and see represented in the sacrament, as true, as real and certain, as if I had seen it with my eyes?

And now when I go to behold Christ dying and bleeding in this holy representation, even the Lamb of God sacrificed and slaughtered for my sins; Lord, touch my heart that it may be suitably affected with the sight, so as intensely to love my blessed Saviour, and to hate my cursed sins. O how should I, at this occasion, be covered with shame and loathe myself, who have both procured the death of Christ by sin, and sinned against his death, by slighting his blood and neglecting his great salvation! Oh! I am chargeable both with the guilt of Christ's blood, and of murdering my own soul. O pardon and "deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation."

My sins have indeed shed the blood of Christ, but, Lord, impute not the guilt, but the merit of this blood to me. Lord, what profit is there in my blood? Surely the least drop of thy dear Son's blood is of more value than a sea of mine. A whole sea of it cannot wash away one sin, but Lord thou callest me to look unto the Lamb's blood that takes away the sins of the world. Oh, is not this blood more powerful to wash me, than my sins are to defile me! Is not its virtue as fresh still as when it dropped from his wounds on the tree, or in the day when it cleansed three thousand at once? Is not thy Son's blood a sufficient satisfaction for all my sins, a full price for my redemption! O my soul, thou art now near the blessed remedy for thy guilt and pollution, this is the only well of salvation and fountain of life! O canst thou see Christ's blood running, and not desire to be bathed in it! Now the cleansing and healing streams run on both sides of the table, now let me apply and live, let me bring all my plagues and sores to the streams, my blind eyes, my deaf ears, my weak hands, my feeble knees, my hard heart, my cold affections, my unbelieving and doubting mind, my leprous and unclean soul. Lord, this blood has washed away the plagues, spots and stains of many thousands, who are now praising the Lamb for it: O let me be joined to the number, that I may also sing to him that loved and washed me.

O bleeding Lamb, "if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." O let that blood, which gushed from thy heart and side, but drop on my soul, and it will cleanse me from all sin. And when thou art pleased to come to me in the sacrament in streams of blood, O raise me up, that I may meet thee with streams of tears, tears of repentance, love and gratitude. O let me not be more sparing of my tears for Christ, than he was of his blood for me. David's kindness made even a hard-hearted Saul lift up his voice and weep, and will not Christ's kindness, which is infinitely greater, make me drop at least some silent tears?

O how dreadful a thing must it be to reject this remedy! Surely justice will not spare them that trample under foot the blood of the Son of God. If justice was inexorable, when he himself prayed, "If it be possible let this cup pass:—how will he spare me, or hear the cry of those who reject his blood and sacrifice? How is it possible that the cup of wrath can pass from them who do it! No: they must drink it for ever themselves! Lord, save me from rejecting this blood. "I believe, Lord, help my unbelief."

MEDITATION XXIX.

From Luke xv. 18, 19.—*Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one,* &c.

FATHER:—Ah! I may be ashamed to call thee so, considering what a disobedient and unthankful child I have been. I am a most wretched prodigal: I left thy house and presence, and went into a far country; far from thee, my bliss and happiness. But now, Father, behold me, desiring to come back, as a poor penitent, mourning, and returning prodigal. I come from a far country indeed; I come from the land of sin and darkness; I come from the frontiers of hell, from the very borders of the burning lake! Ah, foolish creature that I am! how have I forsaken thee, the Fountain of living waters! How fond have I been of broken cisterns, and in love with filthy puddles. O the baseness, the disingenuity, the ingratitude that I have been guilty of! I have resisted thy power, despised thy wisdom, undervalued thy goodness! Father of mercies, I now see what an evil thing and bitter it is to forsake the Lord. Holy Lord Jesus, I now see what indignities I have done against thee! Thy blessed body was dreadfully torn with nails upon the cross, and thy precious blood inhumanly spilt by thy crucifiers! But O have not I occasioned more grief and sorrow to thee by my manifold sins against light and love? They crucified thee but once, but I have crucified thee day by day! They crucified thee, because they knew thee not; but I have known thee, what thou art in thyself, the Lord of glory; and what thou art to me, a tender and merciful Father:—Yet I have continued to crucify thee afresh. O Holy Spirit, I have resisted thy strivings, quenched thy motions, demolished thy work, and put thee away grieved. But, Lord, I condemn my folly, and see my misery. O what have I gained by offending thee? Nothing but shame and confusion, fear, trembling and horror! O what fruit have I in these things whereof I am now ashamed!

But, Father, I have heard of thy compassions to the guilty, when they confess and forsake, and turn to thee:

wherefore, though I am ashamed like the publican to lift up my eyes to heaven; yet let me, with humble Magdalane, come behind thee weeping, and wash thy feet with my tears, and kiss them. And let me hear the news of pardon from thy mouth. Thou camest, Lord, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance; and of these I am chief. Lord, I am full of diseases, full of wounds, full of plague sores, full of weakness and infirmities, full of sins and pollutions. Here, Lord, is work for thy strong hand, work for thy wonder-working blood: O stretch forth thy hand, and save. Father, "I am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants." And thou knowest no hire, no wages will satisfy me but thyself; Lord, give me thyself, be thou my exceeding great reward.

Lord, I am so vile a creature, that I may fear to come and present a petition to thee upon the knee, and far more to come and sit down with thee at thy holy table: If John Baptist, a saint of the first magnitude, thought himself not worthy to stoop down and loose the latchet of thy shoes, shall I, who am laden with sins, adventure to that holy feast, where angels wait as ministering spirits? But, Lord, in thy compassion receive me, that comes not to excuse, but to accuse myself, with eyes cast down, smiting on my breast, with the publican, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner." Thou didst graciously accept of the publican's prayer, of Mary Magdalane's tears, the faith of the thief on the cross, the repentance of Peter, and of those that crucified thee. By these instances of thy mercy, I am encouraged to draw near to thee: O send me not away empty, lest I faint by the way; but satisfy my needy soul with the food of thy heavenly banquet, that I may receive spiritual strength and nourishment to eternal life.

Lord, hear my cry, and hide not thy face from me: When Manasseh cried to thee, thou hadst respect to his prayer: When the Ninevites humbled themselves before thee, thou wast intreated; yea, thou invitest the most crimson and scarlet-coloured sinners, to come and reason with thee, and assures them, thou wilt cast out none that come. Many thousands, who have experienced the truth of thy word, are, at this hour, singing thy praises, and exalting thy free grace. Lord, do thou make me also a monument of thy free grace to all eternity.

Ah, I may be ashamed to speak of mercy and grace, who have so long abused thy grace, and trampled on the blood that should save me. O that I could mourn and weep all my life for it. O what shall I do with my stony heart, that will not break and melt for abusing God's mercy, and trampling Christ's blood! O shall I mourn and weep for a dead corpse, or a departed friend, and not mourn for a dead heart, or for God's departing from me! Shall the dear Son of God weep, sweat, and bleed for us; and we not weep for ourselves, or for our sins that pierced his head with thorns, his hands with nails, and his side with a spear, and his heart with sorrows. Lord Jesus, I look to thee for a penitent heart, seeing thou tells me, thou art exalted for this very end, to give repentance to Israel.

"Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him?" And what am I, the unworthiest of men, that thou shouldst call me to sit with thy children at thy table, who am unworthy as a dog to creep under it; yea, callest me to eat the bread of angels, who am not worthy to eat the bread of men. Amazing love! that God should court those to obedience, whom he can peremptorily command to it; and, in case of disobedience, punish instantly in hell; that he should take poor slaves, condemned to the prison of hell, and make them crowned kings in heaven; that he should not only be willing to dwell in flesh, but also to give us his flesh for our food; that he should not only save us from hell, but even leave his throne in heaven, and lose his life on earth, to enthrone us in his kingdom! these are prodigies of love, which should engage us to love our Saviour, and mourn for sin while we live. Lord Jesus, pity a relenting, returning prodigal, take him home, and make him thy servant for ever. It is highly just, that I should offer up myself a living sacrifice to my Redeemer, who offered up himself a dying Sacrifice for my redemption.

MEDITATION XXX.

From Song. i. 4.—*We will remember thy love*—

I GO, blessed Jesus, at thy call, to remember thy love at thy holy table; thy words have an awful sound in my ears, "Do this in remembrance of me." I see much in them: In obedience to them I'll *do this* in remembrance of thy dwelling in flesh; in memory of thy love that carried thee to the manger, to the garden, and to the cross for me; in memory of the infinite price of thy blood which thou didst shed; in memory of the victory obtained by it over the enemies of my soul; in memory of the deliverance from wrath, and the immortal glory thou hast purchased by it for me: Though thou didst die and ly in the grave, yet thy love shall ever live in my heart. Glory to thee, thou art now alive in heaven; O come and live with me; let never thy love be one moment out of my view. I bless thee for this lasting memorial of thy love.

I look on this sacrament as no real or proper sacrifice, as many do, but only as a representation or commemoration of the real sacrifice Christ offered on the cross. I do no more at the Lord's table, than what Christ did at it: Since he offered no sacrifice at the table, neither do I: He only did commemorate that sacrifice he was going to offer; and the same, and not more do I. If any should say that Christ offered a real sacrifice when he instituted this sacrament, then the oblation on the cross would have been superfluous, because sinners would have been redeemed by that of the supper which went before.

Now is the time for a solemn commemoration of thy love: Oh, shall I be unmindful of thy love at this feast, when thou wast so mindful of me at it, made thy testament, put me in it, and left me precious legacies to cause me remember thee; such as life and light, pardon and peace, righteousness and strength, grace and glory. O how heroic, how generous and free is thy love to sinful worms! we had done nothing to oblige thee; nothing sawest thou in us to engage thy love to us; but much didst thou see in us to incense thee against us. When we were without strength, ungodly, sinners, and enemies, thou lovedst us, and diedst for us. "Greater love hath no man than this, to lay down his life for his friends;" but far greater love hath God-man, who laid down his life for his enemies! O what shall I think of this love! it had been wonderful love in an angel to have stooped to be united to a lump of earth, and therein suffer for us, though it could not have paid our debt. But, O my

soul, here is one more valuable than all the angels in heaven, that has stooped to do it! "The word was made flesh and dwelt among us; when I was like Isaac bound on the altar, he freely offered himself to be made a sacrifice to satisfy justice for me, "Father, (said he,) lo I come, to do thy will I take delight!"

Remember this love, O my soul, the Son of God is become the Son of man for thee, that thou mightest be raised to the dignity of a son of God? he that was infinitely rich, for my sake became poor, that I, a poor naked creature, might become rich and well clothed. How can I look on the incarnation and birth of my Redeemer, and not remember his love with wonder? Can I behold the manger his bed, and not adore the love that brought him to ly in it? O how low were the circumstances of the Heir of heaven, when he came to sojourn on earth; who had neither a house to live in, nor an estate to live upon, but must be subsisted by the hospitality of others; and frequently his fare was very mean! Amazing prodigy of divine love! God stoops to dwell in flesh, and gives us his flesh to feed upon in the sacrament! He not only pardons our sins, and saves us from hell; but leaves his throne in heaven, loses his life on earth, and wades through hell, to enthrone us in his kingdom, and make us crowned kings for ever. Blessed be the Lord that gives me a communion-sabbath to remember this love! what shall I render to thee for it? A day of gladtidings! thou hast often on such a day visited the earth, and watered it, and made it rich with thy showers! May thy grace and Spirit drop on us this day, like rain on the mown grass.

Lord, I am not worthy to touch the threshold of thy house, and yet thou callest me to thy table! Not worthy to stand among thy servants, and yet thou wouldst have me sit with my Redeemer! Not worthy to ly at thy footstool, and yet thou wouldst make my heart thy throne! Not worthy to eat the bread of men, and yet thou callest me to eat the bread of angels! O love worthy to be remembered to all generations! Lord enlighten my eyes, and give me a clearer view of thy love, than ever I got; and while I am musing on it, let the fire burn; O make my heart burn within me with love to him that loved us.

O my soul, consider the greatness of Christ's love in the cup he drank for thee! how legible is it in his tears and prayers, his groans and cries, his agony and sweat, his wounds and blood, and all for us. O let this matchless love beget in me the warmest love and affection to him that loved us! O let the fire of Christ's love burn up my lusts and worldly love like stubble; and remove the coldness of my heart to him! O that I could weep bitterly that I cannot bring this vile heart of mine to love the Lord Jesus more! O shall I throw away my affections upon every worthless object, and yet have none for the loveliest object in the whole creation of God; and yet one that would needs die for me, to become my Ransom, Sacrifice and Atonement! Is it the character of these who are Christ's spouse? Is it the character of the whole army of martyrs, and of every believer, to love Christ? and shall not I love him too? O the virgins love thee, the upright love thee; and every one of them cry, "O thou whom my soul loveth;" and shall not I join these chaste lovers? Or shall I be exposed to the terrible fate of those who want love to Christ? 1 Cor. xvi. 22. "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be an anathema, maranatha." O that I could express my love to him in adorations and praises, in desiring his presence, loving his members, promoting his kingdom on earth, and longing to be with him for ever.

MEDITATION XXXI.

From Isa. liii. 5.—*He was wounded for our transgressions.*

HOW amazing is the love of God to fallen man, in taking a body to be pierced and wounded for him!—Man did cast off the image of his Maker, and became a rebel to and run-away from God: and, behold, his Maker takes on him man's image to restore him again to favour: yea, assumes our nature, when at the lowest, that so he might sigh, groan, grieve, weep, sorrow, sweat, bleed and die for undone man; and he did this, to raise him from his miserable state, to a happier condition than he was in before his fall. Had not God become man, we could not have enjoyed him so nearly, so familiarly as we may do now. The enjoyment of God as a Redeemer, a Husband, a Brother, is another manner of enjoyment of him than of God as a Creator. Though we ruined ourselves, and fell under wrath, yet God, by the incarnation, has recovered us, and made us up far above all we had to lose. But ere this be done, he must not only be man, but he must be wounded for and by man's sins; yea, wounded to death, and crucified, before man could be raised up to live with God.

Many, yea, innumerable were the wounds my God-Redeemer received for me; as, by the thorns that pricked his head, by the pincers that plucked his hair, by the scourge that tore and furrowed his back; besides the five big wounds made in his hands and feet by the four nails, and in his side by the spear; and the many wounds given his soul by the curses of the law. Now, all these wounds are opened as so many mouths, to call us to flee into them for safety from the sword of justice. Now those wounds were unspeakably painful, being envenomed by our sins. Crucifying, in itself, was an exceeding painful death; the four big nails whereon the body hung, pierced the most sinewy and nervous parts of the body, and consequently most sensible of pain: And hence the Romans expressed torment by a word borrowed from the cross; and make *cruciate* signify to *torment*. Thus was our innocent Saviour wounded on the cross, cruciate or tormented, and all to save us from eternal torments.

Astonishing sight! The eternal Son of God, whom all the angels worship, wounded to death, hung by nails on a cross, tortured and racked for several hours; and in the meantime, loaded with reproach and scorn from those he died for! Never such a sight as this! It struck terror in the whole creation. The sun hid its face, and could not behold it, the vail of the temple rent in twain, the earth quaked, the rocks rent, the dead were moved, and their graves opened: And even his enemies were struck with amazement, and made to shrink, and say, "Truly this was a righteous person, this was the Son of God." O my soul, employ all thy faculties, all thy thoughts, to study, pore, and penetrate into this awful subject, it deserves the profoundest regard and closest attention: Hence the great apostle determined to study and and know nothing but it.

This amazing tragedy ought to create in me the greatest abhorrence of sin, the cause of it. Never can sin appear more exceeding sinful, and hateful, than in the wounding and crucifying of the Son of God. Our transgressions were the nails and spear that wounded his sacred body, and the sword that pierced his soul. These were the Judas that betrayed him, the soldiers that bound him, blindfolded and mocked him, the Pilate that condemned him, the executioners that nailed him to the cursed tree: It was our sins that put the sword in his enemies hands. He became a curse for us. All the derision, mockery, and contempt; all the pain, suffering and sorrow he endured, did proceed from our sins; these brought him to the cross and to the grave. Let us then turn our hatred, and discharge our fiercest indignation against our sins, let them be our aversion and dread for ever; let me always look on sin, that crucified Christ, with horror and trembling. Never such an instance of the strictness and severity of God's justice, and of his abhorrence of sin, as here! He would not spare his own Son, when he stood in the room of sinners, nor spare him one stripe or wound, when he cried; but let him bleed, and die, till sin was fully atoned for! Can I see this, and not cry, O cursed sin! Murderer of the Son of God; away with it, away with it; crucify it, crucify it.

Oh my soul, see the evil of sin in the glass of Christ's wounds and sufferings, in his body and soul! Say, O sin, what hast thou done! Thou hast provoked the God of heaven to fiery indignation! Thou hast killed the Prince of life, turned angels into devils, filled the earth with troubles, and hell with precious souls! If any body had killed my father, would I embrace the murderer, or love the dagger that was besmeared with his blood? But what are all my relations to *my Lord, my love, that was crucified!* O that my eyes were fountains of tears, that I might weep day and night for my sins that slew my Saviour! Oh, stony heart, for shame, become now like wax, and be melted in the midst of my bowels! Wo's me that I can grieve no more for my sins. Let me, at least, revenge my Saviour's death upon my sins, and suffer them no longer to live in me.

How dreadful must the guilt of those be who willingly harbour sin, and delight in the murder of our Lord! It is no less than to kiss the nails, or to hug the spear that pierced him. They make that their joy, which made Christ a man of sorrow! They make light of that which made his soul heavy unto death. Oh, have I seen my Saviour bleeding to death by sin, and shall I live any longer in sin that wounded him: When a temptation to sin is presented, shall I ever dispute any more, whether Christ or Barabbas shall be preferred? my lusts denied, or my Lord crucified; Whether those sins shall be forsaken by me, that made Christ to be forsaken of God? Whether that shall be sweet to me, that was so bitter and deadly to him? Oh, was my lovely Jesus a man of sorrows all his life, and sometimes made to say, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful;" and shall not I be sorry for, and abhor those sins that caused all his sorrows?

O may the believing views of Christ's wounds and sufferings, which he endured for my sins, and to save me from that wrath which they deserved, kindle the fire of love in my soul to Christ. Lord, thou art the God that was wont to answer thy people by fire; O pity me, and answer my meditations and prayers, by kindling the holy fire of love in my heart, and let that fire put out the impure fire of my lusts and corruptions, and inspire me with holy zeal and activity in thy service. O did Christ freely give himself to be a sin-offering for me; and shall not I give myself a thank-offering to him? Surely, it is highly reasonable that I should offer up myself a living sacrifice to my Redeemer, who offered up himself a dying sacrifice for my redemption.

MEDITATION XXXII.

From JOHN vi. 51.—*I am the living Bread that came down from heaven: If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.*

CHRIST crucified is our Manna, or heavenly bread, that preserves the life of the soul, and it is only by faith it must be received and eaten. Bread is a comprehensive word, including all things necessary for this life; so Christ, our spiritual bread, is a most comprehensive blessing, including all we want, seeing "he is made of God to us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." Again, bread is the most necessary thing for our life, and the want of it brings the greatest misery; so Christ is the most necessary blessing to the soul, and the want of him makes a man miserable in time, and through eternity. It is a greater misery to have no Saviour for the soul, than to have no bread for the body. Christ alone is the bread that preserves us from soul-famine, and nourisheth us to eternal life; he is the bread of life, the living bread. "Lord, give us evermore this bread."

Bread is called the staff and stay of man's life: so Christ is the staff and stay of our spiritual life, he upholds our souls in life. He is the staff that faint and weary souls must lean to, in going up through this wilderness: Yea Christ, our living bread, is a staff to defend us, and to beat off our enemies, and to put all the hellish hosts to flight. That was a strange dream of one of the Midianites, Judg. vii. 13. "Behold a cake of barley bread came tumbling into the host of Midian, and smote a tent." Strange! a piece of bread to overturn a tent! Behold this dream made good in the sacrament. The bread there which represents Christ, when received with faith upon him, will tumble into the host of satan and his lusts; those Midianites who vex us with their wiles; strike down their tents, and put them all to flight.

Christ is the bread that came down from heaven, of which the Israelites manna, that God sent miraculously from heaven, was an eminent type. That manna was God's free gift to the murmuring and rebellious Israelites, to preserve them from starving in the deserts where bread could not be had: This manna was a curious grain, that made fine bread, with which God furnished them plentifully every morning from the clouds, sufficient to satisfy six hundred thousand men. But Christ, our spiritual Manna, doth far excel theirs, though he was resembled by theirs in some things. Manna was first grinded and beaten, and baken in ovens, before it was made bread for them; and so the grain which makes our ordinary bread must be threshed, and grinded betwixt two millstones, and baken by the force of fire before we eat it: So Christ, the Antitype, was threshed and bruised, and grinded betwixt the millstones of divine justice and our sins, and also roasted by the fire of wrath, that he might be fit

bread for saving the lives of our souls, and all this we should call to mind, when we see and make use of the bread in the holy supper.

The Israelites manna came down to them with the dew; so Christ, with the benefits of his purchase, comes to us by the dews and influences of the Holy Spirit.—Their manna fell round about their tents, and every man was free to gather it; so every man is at freedom to gather our heavenly Manna. The Israelites behoved to go out of their tents to gather theirs; so God will have us go forth, and be at pains to get our spiritual food. God, who rained manna about their tents, could have rained it into their mouths; but he loves not to encourage sloth in his people, but would have them at all pains to make sure of Christ for their portion. As the Israelites gathered daily; so we must be daily going to Christ, and making use of him As they gathered early in the morning; so God would have us seeking after Christ in the morning of our lives.

O how far doth our heavenly Manna excel that of the Israelites! Theirs but fed the body, and could not preserve them from death at last; but our Manna feeds the soul, and nourishes to eternal life, and preserves all that eat of it from eternal death. Theirs fell not on the sabbath-day; nor durst they go to seek it on that day; but ours fall every day, and double on the sabbath; and thererore God calls us to double our diligence, in gathering it on the sabbath. Their manna continued only in the wilderness, and ceased when they came to Canaan; but ours continueth for ever, and our fullest enjoyment of it is in the heavenly Canaan; therefore all the true Israelites long to be there

O how lamentable is their folly, who spend all their time and thoughts in seeking bread to their bodies, and are careless and indifferent about the bread of life to their souls! All their care is to support the clay house, but let the soul starve that inhabits it. Oh, it is but short time they can enjoy the bread they are so concerned for; the bodies they mind so much, must soon be meat for worms, and the souls they neglect, a prey for devils!

But, whatever others do, may I be wise to provide the living bread for my soul, and learn to eat it, and make use of it by faith, and especially when I go to the Lord's table: for without faith we can get no nourishment, no life, nor strength from this heavenly bread: Faith is the mouth that eats the bread of life, and sucks honey out of this Rock. Now, the Spirit of God calls faith or believing, an eating, because by it we taste the sweetness and excellency of Christ, and have great satisfaction in partaking of Christ and his benefits. As by eating, onr bodies increase in strength and stature; so by believing, our souls grow in grace and spiritual strength, to run in God's ways. As by eating, the bread incorporates and becomes one with us; so, by our receiving and applying Christ's broken body by faith, he is made one with us, and we one with him. As by eating bread, men live upon it, and get support and strength for working or journeying; so believers, by looking to, and trusting wholly in the righteousness of Christ, and the merit of his blood, they feed and receive spiritual nourishment, and strength for their work and warfare, and so make progress in their journey to Canaan.

O that I had a spiritual hunger and sharp appetite for this bread of life, and were desiring and longing for it, for the support and nourishment of my soul, more than a hungry man doth for bread to his body. A hungry man, perishing for want of bread, would prefer a piece of bread before many bags of gold, if both were set before him, and he allowed to make his choice; so the awakened soul, that sees his need of Christ, prefers him to a whole world; give him never so much of the world's comforts, he is still dissatisfied without Christ, and says, What will all these things avail me, if my starving soul perish without Christ the bread of life?

I have many arguments to plead with God for this bread: Lord, do not thy free calls and promises bind thee to give it me? Thou hast said, "The needy shall not be forgotten." Is not Christ, the bread from heaven, the free gift of God to perishing souls? And dost not thou invite those to come and eat of it, that have no money or price to give for it? Lord, thou hadst compassion upon the bodies of men when they had no bread to eat, and didst provide bread for five thousand of them by a miracle; and hast thou not as much compassion to starving souls, that are more precious? Lord, thou givest natural affections to earthly parents, and makest them pitiful to their children, when they cry for bread, so that they cannot shut up their bowels against them when hungry, nor will they give them a stone instead of bread. And will my heavenly Father, who is infinitely more compassionate than the most tender parents, refuse the bread of life to starving souls who cry earnestly for it? Lord, I trust in thy mercy, and depend on thy promise, I believe thou wilt not let a poor hungry beggar starve and fall down at thy door, when there is bread enough in thy house, and to spare. O cause me sing with the Psalmist, Psal. xiii. 5. "But I have trusted in thy mercy, my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation."

SACRAMENTAL ADVICES FROM VARIOUS *SCRIPTURE-TEXTS.*

ADVICE I.

From Gen. vii. 1.—*Come thou and all thine house unto the Ark.*

As God in his mercy called Noah to come into the ark prepared for him and his houshold, to save him from drowning in the great deluge; so God by the gospel calls you, O man, to come into the Ark. Christ crucified, which he hath provided for perishing sinners, to save them from the deluge of wrath that is coming. God hath long forewarned you of it; nay, the flood is beginning to rise, it is time for thee to flee to this Ark; believe it, there is no other way for thy safety The ark of thy prayers, or of thy tears, convictions, or reformations, will not save thee from it; nothing will do it but the Ark Christ.

As all who were out of Noah's ark perished in the flood; so will all perish who are out of Christ. Those of the old world, who only came near to the ark, or touched the outside of it, they perished if they did not enter into it; so in like manner will those perish, who only come near Christ by an outward profession, and are not found in him by a true faith.

As the ark gave a good account of all that entered into it, not one of them was lost in the flood; so will Christ give a good account at the last day of all that fly to him by faith: None shall pluck them out of his hand, not one of them shall perish in the deluge of wrath; Christ will present them all safe to his Father, "Behold here am I, and the children thou hast given me."

As Noah's ark was accessible, and had a door in it for people to enter; so in a crucified Jesus there is a door of access opened, even a *door of faith*, whereby poor sinners of the Gentiles may have access to Christ, and to God in him, Acts xiv. 17. As Paul and Barnabas rehearsed it as glad tidings to the church, that "God had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles;" so we Gentile sinners should gladly receive the news. Glory to God in the highest, for opening this door of faith, and keeping it still open to perishing sinners.

Come, then, O Gentile sinner, enter in by this door to the Ark, and lodge thy soul within it, that thou mayst be safe from the flood of wrath that is coming upon the ungodly world. God forbid you be found hovering without the Ark, until the flood come and wash you off from the very sides of it. O how dismal and cutting will the thought be to you through all eternity, that you was so near Christ, and within a step of the Ark, and sometimes touching it, and yet never entered it! How sad will it be to perish, like the thief, upon the cross, with a Saviour at your side! and to sink into hell betwixt the arms of mercy stretched forth to save you! Now, poor soul, the Ark is near you, flee to it with speed; behold, for your encouragement, there is a window opened in the side of the Ark, and mercy's hand is put forth to take in shelterless doves who come to it. Now is the time to bestir yourself, to come into the Ark without delay, and so prevent your perishing, in the flood for ever.

2. What shall I do to get into the Ark; to wit, a crucified Jesus?

A. 1. Be like Noah's dove which he sent forth, see that you find no rest for the sole of your foot any where else; turn your back upon all other arks of mens devising, they are all insufficient to save you from the flood: Make not an ark of the absolute mercy of God out of Christ, seeing he declares a crucified Jesus to be the only channel of his mercy. Make not an ark of church-privileges, as your good education, admission to sealing ordinances, &c. for the ark did not save Shiloh, nor the altar's horns save Joab, nor the temple save Jerusalem. Make not an ark of your gifts, knowledge, prayers, duties, moral honesty, or self-righteousness; for the flood, when it comes, will dash all these in pieces. Suppose those of the old world had built other ships as like the ark as possible, or had fled to high towers of their own contriving, the deluge would have destroyed them all; there was no safety for them but in Noah's ark alone. So whatever arks you devise to save you from wrath, if a crucified Christ, the Ark of God's building, be slighted, the flood will sweep away all your own arks, as the *refuge of lies*, Isa. xxviii. 17.

2. Labour to be thoroughly convinced of your misery while out of the Ark; and, in a deep sense of your necessity of getting into it, break presently over all the bars and hindrances which the devil casts in your way to stop your entry into the Ark; as unbelief, sinful pleasures, worldly cares, presumptuous hopes, carnal company, diversions, &c. break resolutely through all these to the Ark, as David's three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines to the well of Bethlehem; surely your arguments for doing it are far stronger than theirs.

3. Approve heartily the whole contrivance of God's Ark in all its rooms and stories: Approve Christ crucified in his Person, nature, offices and relations; in his states of humiliation and exaltation: Accept of him in them all, subscribe to the whole new covenant scheme, as a device worthy of God, and of infinite wisdom; consent to the great end and design of it; namely, that *self* be debased, and *free grace* eternally magnified.

4. Be frequently essaying faith's flight unto the Ark, and to the window in the side of it; make earnest mints like Noah's restless dove, to get in; say oft like David, Psal. lv. 6. "O that I had wings like a dove, for then I would fly away and be at rest." I would hasten my escape from the flood, and lodge my soul this minute in one of the rooms of the Ark. Believing is a work you should be often essaying, and though you cannot believe with saving faith, yet believe as you can, looking to God for more strength. You cannot pray, praise, or sanctify the sabbath aright, yet you aim at these duties as you can; so, in like manner, make honest mints at believing and flying to Christ; and aim in his strength, to apply his blood, every man to his own soul in particular, by an appropriating faith (corresponding to the free gospel offer) and taking home the remedy as his own; depending still upon the Spirit's grace, who will not fail those who trust in him, but assist them in making saving application.

5. Be willing to part with every thing that would compete with God's ark, however specious or plausible a shew it may have. Renounce the old covenant, and all lurking places about Sinai, for in none of these you can find safety. Abhor your own righteousness for an ark, whatever shape it appear in; and embrace him alone for it, who is "the Lord our righteousness" His righteousness only is spotless, perfect, and law-biding.

6. Make a surrender of yourself, and all you have, to Jesus Christ, to be disposed of by him as he pleaseth: Be willing to suffer the loss of all things for him; yea, count all things loss and dung, that you may win to the Ark, and be found therein when the flood cometh.

ADVICE II.

From Rev. iii. 20.—*Behold I stand at the door and knock.*

LOST sinner, I bring you good tidings; the eternal Son of God hath undertaken a long journey, and endured great sufferings to purchase salvation for thee! A dear purchase it is, dear hath it cost him to obtain it! and now he hath brought it the length of thy door, and there, O man, Christ is standing, knocking, and saying, "This day salvation is come to this door," open and take it in. Now, can you refuse, O sinner, to take in Christ's purchased sal-

vation, when Christ hath come with it to thy very door, even the door of thy heart. Behold he stands at it, and knocks for entrance! Open, open, &c.

The arguments for your opening are strong and many:—

1 Consider at whose door Christ doth stand, even at the door of a creature infinitely below him. Oh! it is a beggar's door, that hath nothing to entertain Christ with when he enters! yet saith he, Open to me, and I will bring in provision with me, and make thee a rich feast. It is at the door of a poor Lazarus, that is all full of ulcers and sores; yet, saith Christ, Open, and I will bring in the balm of Gilead, a plaister of my blood for healing all your sores, and, for as costly as it is, it shall cost you nothing. It is even at the door of an enemy, a mortal enemy, that Christ stands; you have spoke ill of him, thought ill of him, and done ill to him; you have affronted him, wounded him, and lodged his traitors and murderers; yet, saith Christ, Open, and hearken to the offers and terms of reconciliation which I have purchased for you with my blood; they are most surprising and safe.—It is at the door of satan's slaves that Christ stands, those who have been long drudging at his work and feeding upon his husks; yet, saith Christ, open to me, and I will set you at liberty, and make you God's freemen and children. Why then will you not open and receive him joyfully? O sinner, stand amazed at Christ's condescending goodness, in standing at the door of such a smoaky-cottage, so ill swept, and out of order! Good reason have you to cry out, "Lord, I am not worthy thou shouldst come under my roof." But seeing thou humblest thyself to visit the unworthy in such a manner, come in, and but speak the word; and the house shall be cleansed, diseases healed, grievances redressed, and the soul made happy. It is highly your interest then to open the door, and welcome in your Saviour, who stands and knocks for access.

2. Again, consider who it is that stands at your door: It is even the king of glory, a King of infinite power and majesty! And will you not lift up the gates of your souls to this King? Were it but an earthly king that knocked at your door, you would soon open and receive him; yea, count it a great honour that you had such a person in your house. But what are clay kings to the "King of glory? To the Prince of the kings of the earth? To our great Immanuel, the glorious Plant of renown, the Head of the elect world?" Who then would not cast the gates wide open to such a glorious King? Again, he is "the everlasting Father," and the Father of all believers, that stands and knocks! A Father full of pity, that follows after his prodigal children, and invites them to return to him!—And will not a child open the door to his father? Can you find in your heart to keep your compassionate Father standing at your door? Nay, further, it is your Husband that knocks, a loving Husband, that hath suffered much for your cause: And will not an affectionate spouse open and let in her husband? Moreover, it is your Physician that knocks, who brings healing medicines for all your diseases, by which he hath cured many thousands before now! And will not a sick and dying man let in such a Physician? Open, O sinner, why will you die?

3. Consider Christ's *patience* and long suffering at your door; he doth not knock and then go away as one indifferent whether you open or not; no, he knocks and stands still; he stands and knocks again, and that after many repulses! No beggar, wanting an alms, would stand so long at our doors, as Christ stands at a beggar's door, not seeking to take from him, but wanting to give unto him. O wonder at his goodness and long patience! Behold, he that hath a throne of glory to sit on, and ten thousand times ten thousand to bow before him, is willing, O sinner, to stand at thy door! Yes, he stands, whilst thou dost ly in the bosom of thy lusts. He stands without, whilst his enemies are let in, and allowed to possess the best seats! He stands at the door while satan is let in, and gets the easy chair! O wonderful patience! that Christ, after so many affronts and repulses, and after seeing enemies preferred before him, should continue to stand at your door and knock! But, O sinner, do not try his patience too much, nor provoke him too long; for, observe the text, he now stands, he is on his feet ready to go away; the knock will be given that will prove the last, and thou knowest not but the present knock may be it; do not then delay to open one moment longer.

4. Consider Christ's *earnest desire* to be let into your heart; he not only stands at the door, but he knocks; yea, knocks loud, and knocks often, to convince you of his earnestness. Many a loud knock doth he give, by his calls and invitations in his word, "Come unto me,—open unto me,—look unto me." Many a knock gives he by his promises to you, "I will come in,—I will sup with you,—I will ease you,—heal you—enlighten you,—manifest myself to you," &c. Many a knock gives he by his threatenings of wrath and vengeance against those who shut their doors against him. Many a knock gives he by your own conscience, and by his own Spirit raising convictions, inclinations, desires and purposes, within your heart, to bring you to a Saviour. And many a rap and knock doth he give at your door on sacramental occasions. Then it is he knocks aloud with his nailed hands and pierced feet, and stands at your door with his wounds open, his blood streaming, and his garments dyed with blood: and all this to show his earnestness to be let into your heart. Open then to Christ, O sinner, while he is knocking, be assured he will not knock always, this may possibly be the last day of the Spirit's knocks and strivings with thee; so that, if you refuse to open at this present knock, God may strike you dead and senseless all your life, clap a seal on the door that it shall never open; you may hear ministers knock after this, but never hear God's Spirit knock again; and "wo unto you if he depart from you." Remember, O man, for as many knocks God gives at your door, he keeps an exact account of them all, and will reckon them all up to you at the judgment-seat. And can you think he will open heaven to you then, who will not open your heart to him now! No, no; his ear will be as deaf to you hereafter, as yours is to him now. Read and believe that terrible word, Prov. i. 24, &c.

ADVICE III.

From Rev. iii. 20.—*If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in and sup with him.*

GREAT and precious are the promises which Christ makes to them who hearken to his voice in the gospel-offers, and open their hearts to receive him as offered to them in all his offices; I come in, and bring all the benefits

of my purchase with me, to entertain and feast that soul, even pardon, peace, light, life, grace and glory.

I. Observe the duty called for, is to hear Christ's voice and open the door to him; that is, to accept and embrace the free gospel-offers, and heartily to acquiesce in the gospel-method of a sinner's reconciliation and sanctification through the righteousness of our glorious Immanuel, and willingly receive and submit to him as our Prophet, Priest, and King. What is the preaching of the gospel, but Christ's charming voice calling lost sinners home to himself? What is it, but Christ's following them with invitations and intreaties to come to him and live? This is Christ's voice which he would have sinners to hear, come and live; though they generally refuse to do it! O what condemned malefactor would refuse to hear the voice of his sovereign offering him his life, as condemned sinners do? John v. 40. "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." Yet behold, after many refusals, he follows his offers with arguments, strong arguments, to prevail with sinners, and after the greatest obstinacy he is loth to break off his treaty with them, Hos. xi. 8. "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?—Why will ye die?" What reason can you give "for refusing life? or for choosing death?"

II. Observe who it is that Christ calls to hear his voice, and open their doors to him: It is not this or that man only, or any particular sort of men, it is any *man*, every man that sits under the gospel. "If any man will hear my voice and open the door, (saith Christ) I will come in." "If any man will open, (be he old man or young man) I will come in." If the greatest sinner, the most crimson-coloured sinner, will open, I will come in. "Any man," if the swearer will open, if the sabbath-breaker, if the murderer, if the drunkard, if the unclean, if the thief, if the cheat, if the liar, if the mocker, if the prayerless man, if the man that hates God and godliness, will open to me, "I will come in and sup with him." O what encouragement doth this word, "If any man," give to every sinner to flee to Christ? If any man, whoever he be, whatever he hath done, if he will welcome me, receive me in the gospel-offers, I will come in to him.

III. Observe, Christ requires sinners to open the door that he may come in, to teach them; however unable they be, this is their duty; they must mint, and use all means to do it, and look up to him for strength. He will have the sinner's consent, and the soul made willing to receive him. O then cast open the door, open it wide, receive Christ wholly, receive him without reserve, open before him "the two-leaved gates," not the wicket, or one leaf only, but both leaves of the door. Let Christ have full and free consent of the soul, an abundant entrance into it. There are some resolving to open the door to Christ, others perhaps are beginning to open it: O let them not halt in doing it. With some the door is half open, and there they stop. They are almost, but not altogether Christians. O almost Christian, why do you halt? Why would you lose all the pains you have been at? A little more would cast the door wide open, and make you an altogether Christian. Go then a little further, O sinner, to save your soul. Open to Christ all the powers and faculties of your soul. Open to him fully here, as you would have him to open freely to you hereafter. Oh, what mean you to open to Christ by halves? Alas, the half open door will be ready to go to again, and if so, it may never open for the future. Let it be your concern to go a little further than the almost Christian, and rest not in fair beginnings.

IV. Observe, how great the advantage is of opening the door to Christ: Why? I will come into the house, saith he, even the friend of sinners, the King of glory will come in, the best guest that ever came into a poor man's house: How honourable, how profitable, how happy and blessed, must such a visit be! 2. For what end will Christ come in? *A.* He will come in to enlighten the house; for the soul is a dark dungeon while Christ is shut out: He will come in to adorn and enrich the soul with the ornaments and treasures of his grace: He will come in to reign in the soul, and pull down the tyrant that hath long opprest you: He will come in and sup with you, and cause you to sup with him: And, because you have no fitting provision in the house, he will bring it with him. And O how rare are Christ's dainties, his hidden manna, the fruits of the tree of life, the grapes of Canaan; the bread that comes down from heaven! How excellent is the water of life! One drop of it would be an everlasting spring in thy soul, that would keep thee from thirsting after the creature any more. What a rich feast are the graces of the Spirit quickened to a lively exercise! What a blest feast is pardon of sin, peace with justice, peace with the law, an interest in Christ's purchase, intimations of Christ's love, gospel-promises applied, communion with God, views of eternal life, well grounded hopes of immortal glory! &c. O how precious and delicate are those gospel rarities which are set before you on the communion table, and freely tendered to every one that opens the door to Christ! Who would not welcome such a Guest that brings such glorious provision with him? Had poor sinners spiritual appetites sharpened for Christ's feast, there would not be so many shut doors against him.

V. Observe, how solemnly Christ offers these gospel-blessings to you, with a *behold I stand*, &c. Christ takes witnesses upon it, witnesses against the refusers: Behold, ye angels, and witness for me, how kind and bountiful my offers are to Adam's rebellious children! Behold ye ministers, and witness against those who shut me out! Behold, ye stones and timber of the house, ye elements and communion-tables, bear witness for me and against them! Behold, ye fellow communicants and hearers, bear witness one against another, that I knocked, I called, I knocked loud, I knocked long, but ye kept your doors bolted against me. It is a melancholy thought for those who are ministers to entertain, that they will one day be brought in as witnesses against those who shut out their Saviour; but when called, they must witness against such, though never so dear to them now, that Christ called, but they refused; he made kind and large offers, but they regarded them not. O then let every soul set about sweeping and washing all the rooms, and cast open all the doors, as wide as they can, to the King of glory, and receive him with acclamation and praise. Take the crown off the head of self, and put it on the head of Christ, ascribing all the glory of your salvation to him, and nothing to free-will, or your own doings.

ADVICE

ADVICE IV.

From Prov. ix. 5.—*Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine*, &c.

CHRIST is the "Wisdom of God," who hath made rich provision for entertaining his people, and hath set it before them in the ordinance of the Lord's supper; even Christ crucified, with all the fruits of his purchase. "His flesh is meat, indeed, and his blood is drink, indeed." The fruits we feast upon are, "pardon and peace, righteousness and grace, the assurance of God's love, the consolations of his Spirit, the promises of the gospel," and all the earnests and pledges of eternal life. To this feast starving souls are invited, to feed by faith upon those promises Christ hath prepared for them, applying them to themselves, and taking the comfort of them.

Bread and wine are chosen as fit resemblances of this spiritual feast. As bread and wine serve to preserve our natural life, and to strengthen and chear us, when weak or fainting; so Christ crucified, apprehended by faith, preserves our spiritual life, and procures eternal life, strengthens weak believers, and chears drooping souls. As bread and wine incorporate with our bodies; so Christ by his Spirit dwells in us, and we by faith and love dwell in him. As bread and wine satisfy our hunger and thirst; so those, who by faith lay hold and partake of Christ's flesh and blood, shall no more hunger or thirst after earthly things. Bread is the most necess..ry thing in the world, hence called the *staff of bread*, it upholds our lives; so Christ is the mercy of mercies, the most useful and necessary blessing to preserve our starving souls. Christ is the *Staff of bread*, indeed, to believing communicants, a Staff that supports you, a Staff that will beat off all your enemies: If you take hold of this Staff by faith, it will rout and put all your foes to flight. There is no bread like this! "I am the Bread of life," saith Christ.

We read, Judges viii. 13. of a dream of one of the Midianitish host; he dreamed when Gideon was coming upon them, that a cake of barley bread came tumbling into the host of Midian, and smote a tent that it fell to the ground. Strange! A piece of bread overturn a tent! Behold the interpretation of that dream, in the holy sacrament! Here a piece of bread, if eaten by faith, that will invade the Midianitish host of the devil, and the lusts of the flesh, strike down all their tents, and put them to flight. Come then, eat of this bread believingly, and take faith's view of Christ's body represented by it, as bruised and broken by your sins; this will weaken their power, and turn your heart against them, and make you resolve that those enemies of Christ shall not live in your soul. If the sight of Cæsar's bloody robe incensed the Romans against the murderers who slew him; much more a sight of Christ's wounds and bruises in the sacrament, should excite you to hate and kill sin, and revenge Christ's death upon this cruel murderer.

Again, would you have strength for your wilderness journey, and for the temptations and trials you meet with, before you have occasion of another sacrament? Come eat of this bread that strengtheneth the hearts of men. Here is food more substantial, durable and nourishing, than Elijah's cake baken on the coals, and the cruse of water provided for him by the angel; and yet it is said, he "went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights, until he came to Horeb the mount of God," 1 Kings xix. 7, 8. There we find Elijah twice wakened by the angel, that he might take a double meal, "Arise and eat, for thy journey is long:" So God may be saying to thee, O Christian-traveller, Arise and eat, awake, O faith, awake, O spiritual appetite, thy journey may be long; take a good meal, you know not what hills you have to climb, what winds and storms may blow in thy face, before another occasion of this sort: Satan's storm may blow, and death's storms may blow, so that you may not see another table like this till you come to the mount of God above. This is the same bread the glorified saints do feed on in heaven. Christ is the Manna that came down from heaven to feed perishing souls. The Israelites manna was a type of Christ, and hence called *spiritual bread*, 1 Cor. x. 4.

The manna was freely given to them, and fell every morning round their tents, and all of them were at freedom to gather it, and there was enough for the whole camp; so Christ is God's free gift, and in him is a fulness of grace for the whole believing world, and every gospel-hearer is free to gather it, though indeed the morning of our lives is the most proper gathering time. There was a memorial of this manna preserved in the ark; so is there of Christ in the Lord's supper, as the food of our souls. Manna was ground in a mill, or beaten in a mortar, and baken in an oven, before it was fit for food; so Christ was bruised and ground by sufferings, and scorched in the fiery oven of his Father's wrath, that he might become a fit Saviour, and fit food for our souls.

But Christ crucified infinitely excels the Israelites manna: Theirs was peculiar to themselves; but Christ is free to both Jews and Gentiles: Theirs ceased when they came to Canaan; but ours continues for ever, and is enjoyed most fully in the Canaan above: Theirs only preserved a natural life; but ours gives a spiritual and eternal life. O come, then, eat of this heavenly Bread, when set before you in plenty, with hunger and desire, blessing God for it, saying, "Lord, evermore give us this Bread:" Come with spiritual appetites and purified hearts. The Israelites manna was laid up in the ark, and kept in a pure golden pot, to teach you to cleanse your hearts from sin and corruption, that they may be fit to lodge Jesus Christ our heavenly Manna. If the vessels which contain the sacramental bread were foul or polluted, you would censure it as most indecent; but much more unbecoming is it, to receive Christ into a foul heart.

Come to this table with humility, and a deep sense of your ill-deservings, acknowledging, that the least crumb of this Bread will be a great mercy to such an unworthy creature! "Truth, Lord, I am a dog," vile and polluted, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from the childrens table! May I plead for a crumb for thy free mercies sake. Oh, I am unworthy of the common bread that is set upon my own table, much more of the heavenly Bread that is set upon thine! Instead of bread thou mayst give me a stone; instead of a smile, a frown; instead of the cup of the New Testament, thou mayst put a cup of wrath and trembling in my hand: But thy free grace and large offers, encourage me to wait and hope, that "the needy shall not be forgotten, and the expectation of the poor shall not perish."

Come with a lively faith to receive and eat, not only of

the bread of life, but also to receive the Bread, the Lord, your Immanuel, in person, and make use of him in all his offices. Come, eat with love and thankfulness, to him that was willing to be beaten, bruised, ground, and scorched, that he might be bread for nourishing or starving souls. Receive this Bread of heaven thankfully as a distinguishing blessing, which is not granted to all indifferently; for as God rained down manna from heaven upon the Israelites; so he rained down fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah.

ADVICE V.

From Gen. xlv. 4.—*Come near to me, I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold.*

JOSEPH was an eminent type of Christ: though he was hated; sold, and cruelly used by his brethren; yet he still loved them, forgave them, and laid out himself for their preservation and happiness. Though Christ be Lord of heaven and earth; yet, O believing communicants, he owns himself as your brother, "bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh;" nay, he is not ashamed to call you brethren, "Go tell my brethren," said he to Mary, Mat. xxviii. 10. Though you be mean and low, and Christ highly raised, yet his exaltation doth not cause him forget his poor friends below; he still owns them as his brethren. He is indeed the elder Brother, and Heir of all things; yet he is pleased to adopt his younger brethren into his right, and make them joint heirs with him of the inheritance above. As Joseph was most condescending to his poor brethren, though he was lord over all the land; so is Christ. As they did not know Joseph, until he told them, "I am Joseph your brother;" so neither do we know Christ, until he discover himself to us. As Joseph seemed to deal roughly with his brethren at first, to make them remember the injuries they did him; yet in the meantime he loved them, gave them food, and afterwards spoke kindly to them. So Christ at first takes ways to humble his people, and make them sensible of their sin; yet, at the same time, he secretly supports them, and at length brings in consolation to them, saying, "I am Jesus your brother, it is I, be not afraid." "Come near to me," said Joseph, in a kind and familiar way to his brethren; so Christ saith to you, draw near to me with a sincere heart, and I will manifest myself unto you as a loving Brother.

But if you would have the gracious intimations of his favour, you must first be humbled for the wrongs you have done him. You have dealt treacherously and inhumanly with Christ, as Jacob's sons did with their brother Joseph. These sold their brother for twenty pieces of silver; but, ah! have not some of you sold Jesus, your brother, for less, even for some vile lust or filthy pleasure? Nay, have you not murdered him by your sins? As Cain slew his innocent brother openly in the field; so your sins have openly nailed Jesus to the cross, in the fields without Jerusalem, and shed his blood like water on the ground. O how can you answer for such horrid cruelty to your innocent Brother? How can you look him in the face, after all you have done against him? What feeling have you of the injuries you have done him? Are you deeply humbled, and heartily grieved for them? Then I have good news to tell you, you have to do with a most loving and forgiving Brother; though you have betrayed him, sold him, wounded him, murdered him; yet he is willing to forget and forgive all to the humble penitent: "Come near to me, (saith he) I am Joseph your brother;"—stand not at a distance, but come near me by faith and prayer, embrace me in the sacrament, and I will give you a sealed pardon of all your crimes; I will give you all the good things of the land, far excelling the richest fruits of Egypt, even my own body and blood, with all the spiritual and eternal blessings purchased thereby.

Object. But, alas! I have dealt so basely and treacherously with my Brother Joseph, I have no confidence to go and meet him, I am afraid he frown on me. *Ans.* He has indeed good ground to do it, but he is full of bowels, tenderness and pity to penitents, and most ready to forgive. Let me advise you to imitate Jacob when going to meet his brother Esau, whose wrath he very much dreaded. He carried presents alongst with him to his brother. In like manner, do you take presents with you; such as, 1. A broken, contrite and humbled heart, "a broken heart he will not despise." 2. Take faith with you, and the stronger it is, it will be the more agreeable present to Christ; put a firm trust and confidence in his blood and bowels, bode and threap kindness on him, like the woman of Canaan, "Truth, Lord, I am a dog," but dog as I am, I may plead for a crumb, seeing thy faithful word warrants me to do it. This present from that poor creature was so acceptable to Christ, that he immediately answered, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt, Matth. xv. 28. 3. Take with you a firm purpose and resolution, in the strength of your Brother, not to betray or wound him any more, and seal a covenant with him upon these terms. 4. Take with you a sincere heart and purpose of imitating your Brother, and studying conformity to him. "Learn of me, (saith he) for I am meek and lowly in heart." These presents would be most acceptable to your grieved and offended Brother. But seeing you have nothing of your own, cry, Lord, give them first to me, and I'll offer them unto thee.

What condescension is this that Christ, the King of kings, should say to all believers, Ye are my brethren and sisters! Who would not desire to stand in this honourable relation to an earthly king, and far more to the King of glory? Would we have him then for our Brother to own us, succour and sympathize with us in all our troubles; let us forthwith embrace and close with him by faith, as he is tendered to us in the rich, large, and free offers of the gospel, and then the relation is presently made up. O! how inviting and alluring is that word, I am Jesus, your Brother! It should conquer the most stubborn will, and make every unbelieving heart to receive him like Thomas, and say, "My Lord, and my God."

Let every believer in distress come like the bee, and suck honey from this Flower. I am Jesus your Brother, "Be not afraid, it is I." Do not mistake me for an enemy in any of my dealings with you. It is I your Brother, that means you no harm. It is I that loves you, and laid down my life for you. It is I who, by my blood, purchased sanctified afflictions to you, to work for your good. It is I that doth all things well, and have infinite wisdom and love to order and direct every dispensation for your interest and benefit. It was I that swate blood for you in the garden, was spit on and buffeted in the high-priest's hall, and nailed for you to the cross; and all to purchase eternal happiness and glory for afflicted brethren. I am Jesus your Brother, "behold my

hands and my feet." It is I that died and rose again for you, and have ascended to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God; and have gone up to prepare a place for you. It is I that sit at the helm, and all power is given to me It is I that am faithful and true, and I have the same tender heart and yearning bowels for you I had on earth.—It is I that never failed any that trusted in me It is Jesus your Brother, who am still the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Be not afraid in trouble, It is I your dear Friend and Brother; come near to me in the daily exercise of faith. Come near and close to me at my table, and take a narrow look to my five big wounds, and draw consolation from them. Behold the two wounds in my hands, and the two wounds in my feet, which were made to bring you back from hell to heaven. Behold a fifth wound in my side, and look into my heart, and see it panting with love, and do not question your Brother's love to you any more.

ADVICE VI.

From MATTH. xxii, 2.—*A certain king made a marriage for his son.*

THE gospel-covenant, or covenant of grace, is a marriage-covenant betwixt Christ and believers; a surprising marriage this is, and yet a marriage of God's making. Wonderful! The great God is content to give his dear Son in marriage to fallen Adam's daughter, that was become a slave to the devil! Yea, he hath drawn up the contract, and all the articles of it. Christ, the Bridegroom, hath cheerfully subscribed the contract, he dipt the pen in his own blood on the cross, and put his hand to it in the view of God, angels, men, and all the world, Now the Bridegroom wants your consent to the marriage-contract, and he hath long been courting you to subscribe it. Some of you have often been purposed to do it, yea, taken the pen in your hand, but, upon some small temptation, have stopt and thrown by the pen. This day Christ hath set a tryst with you to conclude the bargain, and his ambassadors are come, in his name, to spread the contract before you with all its articles. Well, then, "Will you go with this man?" Will you put your hand to the contract?

O sinners, you have no reason to be shy in this matter, you have nothing to be vain of, you are mean born, of low extract; you are loathsome lepers, you are deformed, black, and have no beauty; you are cripples, cannot walk, unless Christ lift you; you are drowned in debt, many old scores hath Christ to clear for you, if he match with you O who would make love to such a wretched creature! Yet, behold, here is one that is fairer than the sons of men, of the blood-royal of heaven, the heir of all things, courting you! Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this match! One infinitely rich with a beggar; the heir of heaven with the heir of hell; the beauty of heaven and earth with a deformed negro! But if the Bridegroom be content, why should you stick? Can you give any reason for your refusal or delay? Now the God of heaven is setting tryst with you to conclude this bargain with you at his table, and calling you there to sign and seal a marriage-contract with his Son, and that before all the Persons of the glorious Trinity, before the elect angels, before Christ's ambassadors, and before all the congregation, witnesses thereto. There have been many meetings heretofore, about this grand affair, to no effect: The world, satan, and the flesh, have formerly broke off the treaty; forbid it, Lord, that they do it this day. O that the long spoke of match betwixt a crucified Jesus and lost souls may hold at last. This may be the last tryst, the last offer Christ will make; it may be now or never with you. Lay your hand to your heart then, and consider well before you refuse.

Come, take another view of this beautiful Bridegroom that is in your offer. Behold how delicate his complexion is, "He is white and ruddy;" *white* in regard of his innocence, and *ruddy* in his bloody passion. O how peerless is his person! How ravishing his beauty! How charming his voice! How stately his goings! How fragrant are his garments! They smell of aloes, myrrh and cassia! Search all the world, you cannot find his equal. One glimpse of him is enough to ravish men and angels; "His locks are black and bushy as the raven, his lips are like lillies dropping sweet smelling myrrh, his legs as pillars of marble set upon sockets of fine gold; his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars; yea, he is altogether lovely!" Now, can you refuse such a lovely person, especially when you think how he loved you, so as to suffer a cruel and bloody death for you, and to send his portraiture with the marks of his wounds, to be put in your hands at his holy table, and all to win your heart? Come, view and remember the many wounds he received for you, by the thorns which pierced his head, by the pincers that plucked his hair, by the scourges that tore his back, by the nails that pierced his hands and feet, and by the spear that opened his side! Surely those wounds do not mar his beauty to the eye of faith; nay, though he be all over wounded, mangled and bleeding, yet to a believer he is still "white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousands, fairer than all the sons of men;" nay, and all the sons of God too.

Certainly the Bridegroom must be in earnest, when he comes in his marriage robes to win backward hearts, when he puts on his dyed garments, and is red in his apparel; when he displays his glory, brings the marriage-contract in his hand, spreads it on the communion table, and calls all who love him to sign it. O that many were made willing, in a day of his power, to go in to all the articles of this marriage covenant, saying, my heart is now content to go with the man Christ, that wonderful man; I consent to all his terms;" he is "My Lord and my God," my glorious Immanuel; "My Beloved is mine, and I am his." *Quest.* I would know particularly what he requires on my part of the contract, that I may distinctly close with him? *Ans.* He would have you, 1. Convinced of your sinking and perishing state, while you stand upon the old bottom of the covenant of works; and willing to leave it, and leap from it, and cleave to a covenant of grace, and a borrowed righteousness, for all the ground of your hope. 2. He would have you humbled and grieved for your long slighting his kind offers by your unbelief, and for your preferring satan's drudgery to his service. 3. Give up with all other lovers, and those that would rival it with Christ, such as sin, the world, and the law; self-righteousness must be renounced and parted with; you must break league with all Christ's enemies. 4. Accept of Jesus Christ as your Husband, receive him in all his offices, rest and depend on him alone for righteousness, strength, and salvation. 5. Give away yourselves, soul and body to Christ; resign your will to his will, and surrender

all you have to his disposal. 6. Resolve and vow, in Christ's strength, to crucify sin, and walk with him in all the ways of new obedience. 7. Engage to be true and faithful to your Husband and never to retract. 8. Keep up the remembrance of your Husband's coming at the last day to solemnize the marriage, and take you home to himself, and be always in readiness to go forth to meet him. The Bridegroom is ready long since, and will soon send those clouds to meet you in the air, and send his angels to bring you to him: "Therefore be ye also ready."

O why doth he delay his coming? What stops the wheels of his chariot? Surely it is not because he is unready, but because you are not ready. All the elect are not yet brought in to him, and he is determined not to want one of them. O then, be providing for the marriage day all proper furniture, robes, jewels, rings and ornaments, against the time that Christ and you take up house together in heaven. Be sure to go to Christ for every bit of your plenishing, for righteousness, and for all the graces of the Spirit. In the mean time, take home with you the marriage-contract, the precious promises which Christ hath subscribed with his blood. Be often looking into it, and viewing your Bridegroom's hand-write and engagement. His writing is fair and beautiful; let not satan or unbelief cast blots on it to deface it; keep it fair and legible, and draw all your comforts from it, your Husband is faithful, and will keep his word.

ADVICE VII.

From Lam. i. 22.—*Behold and see, the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.*

With far better ground may Christ make use of these words of his church, and call us to behold his sufferings for us under the fierce anger of God, in the day when "it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief in our stead," Isa. liii. 10. Many things did he suffer from men and devils; but his afflictions and bruises from the immediate hand of God taking vengeance for the elects' sins, were far more heavy. His soul sufferings were the most afflicting of all others. Let every communicant behold, see, and consider these with suitable affections.

Behold not only the buffetings, scourgings, woundings, and cruel mockings your lovely Jesus endured from men, the instruments of God's justice; but especially what he suffered in his soul by the desertion or dereliction of God the Father, whereby the gracious influences and comforts from the divine to the human nature of Christ were suspended for a time, and a black cloud of wrath overwhelmed him; so that no light appeared to him; which made him cry out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Nay, at this time he had a torrent of wrath flowing in upon his soul, and the most dreadful impressions of his Father's anger, and the law's curse, which fell upon him for man's sin, when he was made a curse for us, that it cast him into a fit of sore amazement, consternation and terrible agony, and into a sweat of blood. The fire of wrath raging in his soul affected his body so, that it dried up his strength and moisture as a pot sherd, and made his tongue cleave to his jaws. He held his peace under all his sufferings from men, and opened not his mouth; but when God's immediate wrath fell heavily on him, then he cried out: It is said, "He put up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears," Heb. v. 7. Yet God would not spare him, nor abate him one stripe or farthing of the debt; let him cry never so loud, justice was inexorable; he must satisfy to the full.

O can you see the great Immanuel substituted in your room and stead;—God acting against him as an inexorable Judge; Jehovah running upon him as a giant, not only withdrawing his countenance, and all feeling of his loving kindness from him, but making him the butt of his envenomed arrows;—and not be filled with admiration at Christ's love, and sorrow for your sins, which brought such a storm of wrath upon him! O how sad were the bruises! how deep were the wounds! how wide the gashes! and how heavy the blows he got from the sword for our sins! The sword was not dull nor sleepy, but furnished and awakened by justice to the execution. O how heavy were the blows our Surety got from this awakened sword in the garden of Gethsemane, which made his "soul exceeding sorrowful," and put him in a dreadful agony and bloody sweat! Behold and see how patiently he drank the bitter cup of God's wrath for you, "the poison whereof drank up his spirits," and made his blood to boil in his veins and burst thro' his body, clothes and all! He swate without any outward fire or heat, and bled without any external wound. Behold his garments dyed red, and the ground and grass where he lay all bedewed with his precious blood! Behold him broken with breach upon breach, till all the sea billows of divine vengeance went over him; so that he fell to the ground, was covered with blood, and overwhelmed with wrath! Behold and see, if there be any sorrow like his sorrows!

It is said, Mark xiv. 33. "He began to be sore amazed and very heavy!" which shews what a load and pressure of wrath his soul lay under, that put him in an agony that still increased more and more, like the waters in Ezekiel's vision, still deeper and deeper, from his ankles to the knees, till they became waters to swim in, yea, swelled into an ocean, that would have overwhelmed the whole elect world. Into this ocean our blessed Jonah was willing to be thrown for our sake, and in it he continued to swim until he brought every elect soul safe ashore. It is recorded of Abraham, when offering his sacrifice, Gen. xv. 12. "That in the evening, lo! an horror of great darkness fell upon him."—This was verified much more of Christ in the evening before his passion, in the garden. There, a terrible horror of great darkness fell upon Christ's soul, which made him exceeding heavy, and sore amazed, at the prospect of the sea of wrath that was coming rolling upon him; while the Father was hiding his face from him. O how great was the anguish of Christ's mind at this time, when he found himself pressed and bruised betwixt the millstone of God's justice and our sins! which pressure made him sweat without heat, and bleed without wounds! Ah! the fire, the heat, the wounds, were inward, even in his soul! O communicants, behold and see Christ's sorrows for you; nothing can be more acceptable to Christ than often to meditate thereon with admiration and love. If any of you had lost a hand, or even a finger, in defending or rescuing your friend from an enemy, you would expect he would be ever mindful of the favour, and never forget you. But O what is that to the sufferings of the Son of God for you! He hath lost [illegible] hand but his heart-blood, [illegible] f God for you for a time. He left his glorious throne in heaven, and

stooped to become a man, a poor man, a man of sorrows, a deserted man, and a dead man for you. Nay, he was willing to be made a curse for you, and to take on a dreadful load of wrath upon his innocent soul, yea, infinitely more than any damned soul in hell can bear; and to swim long in a sea of wrath to save you from perishing in it. Let the surprising love of Christ fill your soul with wonder, and kindle a flame of love in your soul to him

Again, meditate on Christ's sorrows with deep sorrow for sin, the cause thereof: believe that amazing word Isa. liii 6. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." Let the sound of it never go out of your ears; say, Oh! my sins were the thorns which pierced his head, the nails which pierced his hands, and the spear that pierced his side. My cursed sins put the Lord of life to a cruel death, they wounded him more than all his other enemies. When my dear Lord was in the garden, no Judas, no Pilate, no Jew, nor Gentile was there, to cause his amazing horror of soul, and his fearful sweat of blood; but, Oh, my unbelief, my pride, my carnality, my hypocrisy, and other sins, were there, and with their weight pressed him to the ground, and brought that agony and sweat upon him. Oh, that my head were waters, that I might weep a flood of tears for my sins!

Lastly, Abhor sin as the greatest evil, and never have slight thoughts of it any more; can you behold your agonizing Saviour under a burden of wrath, and hear him complaining of the burning heat and thirst which the fire of justice created within him? Can you see the great drops of blood standing above his garments! Can you hear his cries and roarings under the bruises and anguish of his soul, and not be convinced of the evil and demerit of sin! Can that sit light upon your soul which sat so heavy upon Christ's soul! O what desperate malignity must there be in that, which could not be expiated without such a costly sacrifice! Look on them as fools who make a sport of sin, which cost the Son of God so much soul travail and inward horror: Never yield any more to the temptations of sin, which cost so dear before it could be forgiven

ADVICE VIII.

From MATTH. xxvi. 22.—*They were exceedingly sorrowful, and began every one to say, Lord, is it I?*

IT was a commendable exercise of Christ's disciples, before partaking of the holy supper, to be searching themselves, and looking inward with a holy suspicion upon their own hearts, especially when Christ had told them that there was a traitor among them, and at the same time looking up to him that is omniscient to assist them in the search, saying, Lord, is it I? Am I the traitor? Will I betray my dear Lord and Saviour? Ah! every one of us have within us traitorous hearts to Jesus Christ, and have reason to suspect ourselves as they did, and acknowledge we have many enemies of Christ, lodged in our bosoms, such as "unbelief, hypocrisy, pride, malice, envy, ambition, worldliness, atheism, wanderings from God, backwardness to duty," &c. by which we have betrayed Jesus Christ. And as the disciples, when searching themselves, "were exceeding sorrowful;" so ought we before we partake: And good reason have we for it, when we reflect upon our former guilt and treacherous dealing with God, and when we consider the present deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of our hearts, and that they are as ready to betray Christ as ever; yea, that there is hypocrisy and treachery in our hearts against Christ, which we have not yet discovered. Upon all which accounts, we have ground with the disciples to be "exceeding sorrowful."

Now is the time, O communicants, to search and examine yourselves, and to be exceeding sorrowful for the many traitorous wounds you have given Christ, by breaking both tables of the law, and every command thereof; by sinning against light and conscience, against mercies and judgments, warnings and reproofs, confessions and prayers. By unthankfulness for redeeming love, neglecting gospel offers, not loving and resting upon a crucified Jesus, not accounting all things loss and dung for him; not delighting in attending his ordinances, and in remembring his love in the holy supper, O how treacherous have your hearts been to Christ! How blood-thirsty have your sins been against him, in pressing him down in the garden, in nailing him to the cursed tree! How are you able to look to Gethsemane or Golgotha, with unconcerned hearts or dry eyes! Were not your sins the principal actors in that horrid tragedy? These, to be sure, were the traitors, which, by the hands of Judas, delivered up Jesus to be crucified: What were Pilate, the Jews, or Romans, but the executioners of your sins? Who put the sword in justice' hands? Who raised the tempest of wrath against your Surety? Oh! it was your sins. Blame none so much as them; they were the Judas that betrayed him, the Herod that mocked him, the Pilate that condemned him, and the soldier that pierced him; will you not then be "exceeding sorrowful" for your traitorous hearts and bloody sins? Could they ever have been guilty of a more horrid crime than murdering the Lord of Glory? O shall the rocks about Jerusalem rend asunder, the earth tremble and shake, the sun vail its face, and the whole heavens put on a mourning habit, when Christ suffered for your sins? And shall you, the criminals, who deserved all this punishment, stand unaffected? O what stupid hearts must you have, if they do not mourn for your sins, which brought on such agonies upon the Son of God, before they could be expiated? Had you, in your passion, given a deadly wound to any poor innocent man, your hearts would have bled for it all your days; and will not your hearts much more relent for slaughtering the innocent Lamb of God! One that never wronged you, but was always interposing for you, and doing you good!

Remember what David said to the Lord, when he saw the people destroyed for his sin, 2 Sam. xxiv. 17. "Lo, I have sinned, and done wickedly; but as for these sheep, what have they done?" In like manner say you, Lord, I have sinned. I have done wickedly; but as for this spotless Lamb, what hath he done? I have "eaten the sour grapes," but his "teeth were set on edge." O when will your hearts melt, and your eyes weep, if not now? Never was there such a moving sight set before your eyes, as the Lord of Glory pierced and slain by your sins. Now it is that "deep calleth unto deep," deep sufferings in Christ for deep sorrow in thee.

O, saith one, I desire to be grieved for my hypocrisy and treacherous dealing with Christ, and for sin that crucified him, but how shall I know if my sorrow be of the right sort? *Ans.* Examine it by such marks as these, 1. Godly sorrow is accompanied with some view of the mercy of God in Christ, which supports the soul, and keeps it from despair. Judas'

sorrow, however deep it was, wanted this necessary ingredient. 2. If true, it will be universal, both for your own sins, and the sins of others; for the sins of the place where you live, and for those of the whole land. 3. If it be right sorrow, it will bring you to consider the aggravation and heinous circumstances of your sins, as being against light, against love, and against solemn engagements and professions of friendship; so as to mourn and cry, How traiterous hath my heart been to so kind a master? 4. It will produce these seven happy effects mentioned, 2 Cor. vii. 11. There it is said, Godly sorrow for sins works, 1. *Carefulness;* that is, a care to recover peace with God for what is past, and to please God for the time to come, by amending what is amiss, and avoiding all temptations and occasions that lead to sin. 2. *Clearing of yourselves,* by mourning over the sins of other men, dissenting from them, and shewing your detestation of them. 3. *Indignation* against sin, as the abominable thing which God hates. The heart of a true penitent rises, swells, and boils against sin. Then it is you are angry and sin not, when you are angry at sin, and at yourselves for sin. 4. *Fear;* the true penitent fears to offend God as he hath done, and that he may not do it, he nourisheth a holy fear and awful impression of the holiness of God; and also a fear of holy *jealousy* and *watchfulness* over himself, lest sin surprise him at any time. 5 *Vehement desire;* to wit, after reconciliation with God through Christ, and after reformation of every thing amiss, and to be entirely rid of all sin. 6. *Godly sorrow* produceth *zeal,* which is an affection or grace compounded of love and anger, to wit, love to God and duty, and anger against sin and every thing opposite to God. 7. *Revenge;* by seeking the utter extirpation of sin, by fasting, mortifying the flesh, and denying yourselves in some things lawful for a time. A good way to execute this revenge against sin is, for penitents to take frequent views of the deep and bloody wounds which sin hath given to your dear Redeemer. It is written of the emperor Julius Cæsar, that after he was murdered in the senate, they brought forth his robe all besmeared with his blood to the market-place, and exposed it to open view, in order to awaken his friends to take revenge on his enemies. This is surely one design of the holy sacrament, to waken your zeal against sin, which murdered the Lord of glory. *Lastly, Godly sorrow* for sin will drive you to Christ for help against sin; it will make you flee to Christ for deliverance from an ill heart, as well as from the wrath that sin deserveth; hence the apostle cried, "Oh! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" Rom. vii. 24.

ADVICE IX.

From Heb. vi. 18.—*Who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us.*

We have here a two-fold description of true believers, which come to one: 1. They are such as have fled to Christ as the true city of refuge, to shelter them from avenging justice. They are such as have by faith laid hold on Christ set before them in the gospel-promise, as their only hope of salvation.

Christ is our refuge city from the curses of the law which hang over us, from the avenger of blood, divine justice that pursues us, and from the devils which ly in wait for us.—The cities of refuge under the law were six, but under the gospel we have one better than them all. Theirs only protected the body from the wrath of man; but ours doth protect both soul and body from the wrath of an angry God.—The way to it is made plain and patent; pillars are set up, Christ's ministers to direct sinners in the way to it. In this blessed city there is protection, instruction, provision, and fulness for all that flee to it. Here is all our hope of salvation, and it is in vain to hope for safety any where else.—Now, communicants, this blessed hope is set before you; come, lay hold of it, and cleave fast to it. Now the city is set on a hill, the way to it prepared, and the gates open: The gospel trumpet is sounded, and proclamation made, whosoever flees to the city, be his case what it will, shall in no wise be cast out.

Under the law, he that saw his danger, and fled to the city of refuge, did firmly believe there was safety and security for him by public authority in that privileged place, if he could but get into it in time before the avenger of blood did overtake him: Therefore he earnestly desired to be at once within the gates of it, and for that end put forth his utmost vigour in running. He did not linger, halt, nor sit down by the way; nor would he turn aside to any crooked by-path that might lead him about, but kept the straight and nearest way to the city, as the pillars set up directed him. No persuasion of any man could make him look or flee to any other city, castle, or hiding place for safety, but to the city authorised by law. In like manner, let every convinced sinner learn from this, to flee to Jesus Christ, our safety from wrath, as the only refuge appointed by God for him. Look, desire, and pant earnestly to be within the gates. O sinner, run with speed, now the gates are wide open in the word and in the sacrament. Put forth your utmost vigour, and escape for your life. Do not linger nor delay, but flee as one that sees justice close at your heels. Avoid all other shelters and by-ways for relief; away with carnal company, sinful pleasures, worldly mirth or diversion; nay, take no shelter in your own duties and performances; believe that none of these can screen or protect you from the sword of justice, and that none else can, but he who is the "Lord our righteousness."

Of old, nothing could stop the man when flying to the city of refuge; had his wife and children hung about him, or his own heart suggested to him, will you leave your house, your garden, lands, relations, and many accommodations, and go to a strange city and spend your days? He would have flung them all from him, and taken flight, saying to wife and children, better part with all things, than part with my life: if you will not follow me, I must leave you all behind. So let awakened souls flee with speed and resolution to Jesus Christ; say to the world's profits, sin's pleasures, satan's allurements, and whatever would tempt you to stay behind, "Get you hence;" away with every thing that would hinder me from Christ. My Saviour and my soul are more precious to me than all the world; take all things from me, and give me Christ. How great was Jerom, one of the ancient fathers, his love to Christ? How strong was his resolution, when he said, "If my father were weeping on his knees before me, my mother hanging about my neck behind me, my brethren, sisters, and kinsfolk, howling on every side to retain me from Christ, I would cast my mother to the ground, run over my f[illegible] kindred, tread all under my

O awakened soul, behold how Christ displays his love to thee in the sacrament; he opens his wounds to be a refuge and hiding place to thee, and calls aloud to thee to come and flee in thither: "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" To whom will ye flee for help, when the avenger of blood is at your heels, if you flee not to Christ, the only refuge from wrath? Hills and mountains, seas and depths, heaven and earth, cannot hide thee from the storm, if Christ do it not. Now, you have a noble opportunity, while the clefts of Christ's wounds stand open, and the "blessed hope is set before you," in the sacrament, and Christ stretching out his hand, and waiting to see who will rise and flee to him! O to see souls rising in flocks and flying as doves to their windows! What a pleasant sight would this be!

O, saith one, I can't rise, my wings are clipt, my soul clogged, I can't mount up. *Ans.* If you can't mount up as with eagles' wings, see if you can run to Christ, and kneel before him, like that young man, Mark x. 17. *Object* I find myself so burdened and heavy laden, that I cannot run — *Ans.* Then shew a willingness to run to Christ; and cry, "Draw me, and I will run after thee;" even a desire to run will be accepted, as of those in Neh. i. 11. *Object.* But, saith one, My heart is so dead and sluggish, I have neither strength nor will to run to Christ *Ans.* If you cannot run, then see if you can but *go* towards him; for we read in Jer. ii. 2 Those *who went after him in the wilderness,* were accepted of him. *Object* Alas, saith one, I am so weak and feeble, I cannot go. *Ans* Then endeavour to *creep* and move towards him as you can *Object* But I am so lame and impotent both in hands and feet, that I can't creep nor move. *Ans* If you cannot move to Christ, then *look to him,* as the Israelites did when stung with fiery serpents. Christ calls every feeble soul to do it, Isa. xlv. 22. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth;" and would you have Christ come any lower than a look? O look up to Jesus as lifted up upon the pole of the cross, for all nations to behold him *Object.* My eyes are dim, the cross far off; Jerusalem, where it was set up, is out of sight *Ans.* The pole of the gospel and of the sacrament, on which Christ is now lifted up, is near hand; look up to him thereon, and be saved. — *Object.* Saith one, I am so burdened with guilt, I cannot lift up mine eyes. *Ans.* Then ly low before him like the humble publican, who was so burthened that he was ashamed to lift up his eyes to heaven, and under a deep sense of his vileness, cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and so doing, was accepted: In like manner, humble yourself before a merciful Redeemer, and plead his promise, Matth. xi 28. Trust his word for ease and rest to your burthened soul.

ADVICE X.

From John iii. 14.—*Even so must the Son of man be lifted up.*

THE lifting up the *brazen serpent* upon a pole, to heal serpent-stung Israelites, was a type of the lifting up of Christ on the cross, to heal convinced sinners of their wounds by sin. As there was but one brazen serpent for healing the whole camp of Israel; so Christ crucified is the only Remedy and Saviour for a lost world, "He must be lifted up;" his dying on the cross was necessary to fulfil his engagements from eternity to be our Surety; he must be offered up as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice for the sins of men, seeing nothing else could do Though Christ's engagement to suffer for us was entirely voluntary at first; yet having once undertaken, it became necessary for him to be lifted up. And glory to him that would not go back from his word, however great his sufferings were.

Come, then, O communicants, behold and consider, with suitable thoughts and affections, your *lifted up Jesus* dying on the cross. After he had borne the heavy cross on his bleeding shoulders up mount Calvary, this cross must next bear him upon the top of the mount, being first nailed to it, and lifted up with it Come, see how this was done; behold the cross-tree laid down upon the ground, and the Lord Jesus stript naked, laid on his back, with hands and feet stretched out upon the tree, that they might take the measure of his body, and mark the holes for the nails! And, lo! they take the measure longer than the truth, that they might both crucify and rack him at once, till his bones should go out of joint; so the cross was a rack as well as a death. Our first parents stretched forth their guilty hands to take the forbidden fruit from the tree; therefore our glorious Saviour did willingly stretch forth his innocent hands to be nailed to the tree, to satisfy for their guilt Come, see four big nails driven into his hands and feet, the most sinewy and sensible parts of his body, and fastened to the tree; apply your ear, and hear the hideous sound of the hammers knocking in these nails! Oh, your sins were the hammers that did it, mourn for them.

Come next, and see the Lord of glory, when nailed fast to the tree, lift up with it on high, and made to stand upright to the view of all the world! and then the front of the tree let fall down with violence into the deep hole they had digged to fasten it, which fall did unspeakably increase his torments, and rend the four wounds made by the nails. Thus his own weight became his torture, still widening the wounds more and more, till all his precious blood streamed out at them. Behold your great Immanuel lift up on a cross betwixt heaven and earth, as if he had been unworthy of a place in either, hanging betwixt two thieves, as if he had been the greatest malefactor of the three! O what a spectacle was your Redeemer to both heaven and earth, when thus lifted up! an astonishment to angels! a derision to the wicked! compunction to believers! but a Sacrifice acceptable to the justice of his eternal Father. — Look on this moving spectacle with deep sorrow for sin, that fastened him to the tree, and made him hang on these tormenting nails for several hours without comfort, inward or outward! No way could he turn for ease, being fixed to the tree; if he stirred his blessed body at all, he was tormented afresh by the wounds of his hands and feet, on which the whole weight of his body did hang. If he moved his head, which had the crown of thorns on it, the thorns would but pierce into it the deeper; yet, for all this, he complained not; no groan or sigh was heard from him, but what he offered up to God for your sins!

When the Son of man was thus lifted up, observe how the streams of his precious blood run down to the ground, and stood in a little pool at the foot of the cross, until the earth drank it up Let this sight affect your hearts, and open all the springs of sorrow for sin that pierced him Sit down at the foot of the cross, and receive this sacred blood, as it falls, upon your hard hearts; let it drop on them, un-

til it make them as soft as the ground it fell on. Let it drop on all the sores and wounds of your souls, for it is the balm that must heal them. Observe also the great extent of Christ's sufferings at this time; they reached to all the parts of his body, and to all the powers of his soul: He suffered in all his senses; his *seeing*, with the scornful gestures of his enemies; his *hearing*, with their scoffs and blasphemies; his *smell*, with the noisome stench of Golgotha; his *taste*, with gall and vinegar; his *feeling*, with the piercing nails and thorns. Behold his *hands*, that were still bestowing blessings, now fixed with nails; his *feet*, that walked in God's ways, now digged through; his *bowels*, that yearned for sinners, now shrunk and dried up; his *lips*, that spoke as never man spoke, now swollen with blows. Now he suffered on the cross, till "his strength was dried up like a potsherd, and his tongue cleaved to his jaws." The fire of God's wrath scorched him inwardly, which made him cry out, "I thirst." His enemies mingled, at this time, a cup of vinegar and gall to him, which he refused; but glory to him, he refused not the cup which his Father mingled to him, though filled with wrath and curses: This he drank for us, though it filled his whole soul with anguish, and made him roar and complain of his Father's deserting him: "The arrows of the Almighty were within him, the poison whereof drank up his Spirit." Amidst these fearful sufferings, our lifted up Jesus expired, willingly offering up himself on the cross, a propitiatory Sacrifice for us.

O believers, did Christ lift up himself as a willing Sacrifice for you on the cross; see then to lift up the gates of your souls to receive in this Saviour; let him have a joyful welcome into your souls, and give him the best entertainment, the best affections, and the best service. Did he willingly stretch out his arms to be nailed to the cross for you? Then be not unwilling to stretch out the arms of faith to embrace him; but see to embrace him wholly in all his offices, of Prophet, Priest, and King. Be willing to be taught, saved, and ruled by him.

Was Christ lifted up on the cross (as the brazen serpent was lift up in the wilderness) for healing all the stings and wounds given us by sin and Satan? O then look up to him with the eye of faith for healing. This is the great remedy of God's contriving and providing, put strong confidence in it, and look to it with hope and expectation: Never distrust the virtue of God's Remedy, nor despair of healing from it, however deep your stings, or large your wounds be: For Christ was lifted up to be a remedy for the chief of sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15. and none ever perished that looked to him. Was Christ willing to be lift up to suffer for you? Then let your hearts be lift up to serve and obey him, like king Jehoshaphat, whose "heart was lift up in the ways of the Lord," 2 Chron. xvii. 6. Lift up your hearts with your voice in his praise; speak of the glorious honour of his Majesty; and make known his mighty acts. Obey his commands, and particularly his dying command; to remember him at his table with activity and delight. Go with lift up hearts to a communion-table, to remember him that went so willingly to be lifted up on a bloody cross for you. The ancient exhortation to communicants was, SURSUM CORDA, "Lift up your hearts to meet with a lift up Jesus."

ADVICE

ADVICE XI.

From Exod. xiv. 15.—*Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.*

THIS is the answer of Moses's prayer for Israel, when in a great strait at the Red Sea. It is said, he cried to God; yet we read not of one word he spake: He only lift up his heart to God, who well understands the language of the heart. Moses's silent prayers of faith prevailed more with God than Israel's loud out-cries of fear. A believing communicant may, in a strait, cry to God in prayer, without speaking a word, so did Moses for fainting Israel. When they came out of the land of bondage, and fled from Pharaoh's tyranny, the Lord ordered them to march toward the sea; but now, when they are near to it, and see Pharaoh's mighty army pursuing and close at their heels, they are in a great strait what course to take; they think certainly they must turn either to the right or left hand to make their escape from Pharaoh. No, saith God, speak to them to "go still forward," as straight towards the sea, as if they saw a fleet of transport ships there waiting to take them in. O might they think this is a hard command, "Go forward," when we see nothing but the deep devouring sea before us; as good go back to the Egyptians, or stand still until they come up and put us to the sword, as go forward into the sea and be drowned. Will the deep sea have any more mercy on us than the cruel Egyptians? But, saith the Lord, make no objections, ask no questions, let the people go forward, obey my command, and trust me with their lives.

Observe here, O timorous communicant, O doubting believer, when you are in fears and straits with respect to the management or success of your duty, you are to set yourselves to obey God's command, "go forward," in the use of means, with a sincere heart, and leave the event to God. You may possibly, at this time, be brought to the straitning case of the children of Israel, when at the Red-sea, and their hearts in great perplexity, ready to sink within them for fear. Some may be saying within themselves, how shall such a vile, black unworthy creature *go forward*, to the red-sea of Christ's blood, who have both spilt it and despised it? How shall I, after all, venture to *go forward*, to wash or bathe my unclean soul in it? Well, it is God's plain command to you to *go forward* to it, however heavy loaden you be with guilt, see 1 John iii. 23. Matth. xi. 28. John i. 29. others as vile and black have obeyed his command, have gone forward to this red-sea, and been washed in it, see 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. yea we read, Acts ii. 36. of three thousand of those who actually imbrued their hands in this blood, who were washed by it. How wonderful is its virtue! it is able to take away the sins of a whole world, and much more the sins of a few; therefore do not, O sinner, rebel against God's command any longer.

Again, consider what is God's special command to thee at this time, namely "Do this in remembrance of me;" his precept is plain and express to keep up the memory of his love to lost men. Can you think to look on his face with comfort at the last day, if you have no pleasure to remember him now? Surely his presence will be terrible then to those, to whom his memory is not delightful now. But you may have straits and difficulties about this duty, O saith one, "My strait is great, I know not what to do; whether to stay back from God's holy table, or go forward: If I stay back, I disobey my dying Saviour's command to shew forth

his death in this manner: If I go forward unworthily, I contract the guilt of his body and blood, and eat and drink my own damnation. Alas, what shall I do? my need of Christ and his blood is so great, I cannot think of staying back; and yet my preparation is so little, I know not how to go forward. Ah! my unworthiness is great, how shall I go to the table of so great a King in the state and case I am in, so vile, so sinful, so indisposed, so hard-hearted? If the woman that had the bloody issue, feared so much to come and touch the hem of Christ's garment; how much more may I, who am full of the running issues of sin, fear to go forward to touch the sacred symbols of his body and blood, and put my hand into his wounds, and feel the print of the nails?" Come, then, unworthy as you are, obey Christ's command, and venture your soul in his hand: Go forward with all the preparation you can attain to, deeply sensible of your own vileness, and humbled for your short-comings, trusting in the worthiness of the Lamb that was slain to answer for your unworthiness, in his blood to wash away pollution, and in his strength to help your weakness. Venture forward, saying like Jehoshaphat, "Lord, I have no ability, no might for this great ordinance, neither know I what to do; but my eyes are unto thee, it is in thy name, in thy strength, and at thy command; that I go forward to remember a dying Jesus at his holy table. Lord, put on me the wedding-garment, prepare, receive, and welcome me."

Object. Some may say, They are only the children of Israel, who, in the text, are bid *go forward;* and we are afraid we are none of these. *Ans.* All are bidden, without exception, to come to Christ, yea, even the stout-hearted are called to go to him. Now, if you come to Christ, it will be a sure proof of your being Israel's children, and among those who are bid go forward. Ministers indeed have a special commission to speak to the children of Israel, that they go forward to this table; whoever stay back, they ought not.

Quest. Who are those that may be numbered among Israel's children, or the seed of Jacob? *Ans.* The children of Jacob or Israel, if they be of the true kind, will be like their father, particularly in these things: 1. Jacob was a great wrestler with God in prayer, and hence he got the name of Israel; he wept and made supplication at Bethel, and prevailed as a prince with God, which is the meaning of the name Israel. Now, if you be wrestlers with God, you are Israel's children, and called to go forward. 2. Jacob was a plain man; so he is called, Gen. xxv. 27. that is a single-hearted man: It was by this character that Christ describes a true Israelite, John i. 47. "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." Now, if you study godly sincerity, and plain dealing in your behaviour both to God and man, you are Israel's children, and called to go forward. 3. Jacob had faith in Christ, and believing views of him as the glorious Shiloh; he waited for his coming, drew his comfort from it, and rejoiced in the gathering of the people to him. If it be so with you, then we bid you go forward. 4. Israel and his children were God's covenanted people; they chused God for their God, and gave themselves up to him: If it be so with you, you are Israel's children, go forward. 5. Jacob was zealous for reformation, both with respect to himself and his family, and caused them put away all their idols, cleanse themselves, and change their garments, when going to renew covenant with God, Gen. xxxv. 2. Now, if you study sincerely to follow his example, you are among the children of Israel, to whom God warrands ministers to speak, and bid them go forward to his table. Now, if you have any of the foresaid five characters, in Christ's name we can promise you welcome to his table. Go forward to it then, with hearts burning with love to Christ and to his people; go with thankfulness and praise to God for providing such a Saviour, and spiritual feast for you; and go with hunger and thirst to partake of it. Go forward with humility and self-denial, renouncing all confidence in your preparations and performances, and depending only upon Christ's mediation for acceptance with God.

ADVICE XII.

From JOHN xii. 32.—*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*

AS the sacrifices under the law were heaved and lifted up before the Lord; so Christ the Antitype must be lifted up on the cross as the atoning Sacrifice for our sins. The Jews were not more willing to lift him up, than he was to lift himself; he readily undertook to be lift up, *Lo I come,* said he; he willingly carried his cross to the place, that he might be lift up on it. He dissuades the woman to weep for him. Why? Because I am going to be lift up a Sacrifice to justice for your sins, and to draw your souls unto me.

Quest. But how doth he draw all men, when satan keeps many still fast in his grips. *Ans.* Christ was lifted up to obtain drawing offers and invitations to all men without exception, and accordingly gives drawing calls to all men in his word; and if they be not drawn to him it is their own fault. But though many be called, and multitudes flock to the word; yet there are none effectually drawn to Christ but the elect; and these may be called all men, as they are gathered out of all nations, kindreds and languages, ages, sexes and qualities. All men, Gentiles as well as Jews: All sorts of men, sinners of all sizes, greater as well as lesser. *Quest.* But how doth the lifting up of Christ draw sinners effectually to him? *Ans.* By the merit of his lift-up sacrifice, he obtained the removal of all hinderances of their coming to him, such as the guilt of their sins, the enmity of their natures, the power of their corruptions, their unbelief, hardness, blindness and discouraging fears. And likewise by it he purchased all the means requisite for drawing men to him, such as the preaching of the gospel, sanctified rods, the grace of faith, and, above all, the powerful influences of the holy Spirit. As Christ was *lifted up* on the cross, so he must also be *lift up* on the pole of the gospel, for drawing sinners to him. Thus, the brazen serpent was lift up in the wilderness, for drawing the stung Israelites about it, and it proved most effectual for that end; so a crucified Jesus held out and evidently set forth in the gospel, as he was lifted up on a bloody cross, with his pierced hands stretched out to embrace lost sinners, is surely the most attractive and drawing sight in the world. This wonderful Loadstone hath drawn thousands of hard *iron hearts* to it at once. A natural loadstone, though it draw iron to it; yet it may be drawn away from it again: But a crucified Christ draws the heart so powerfully and closely to him, that they can never be separated again. Never was there such a drawing engine in the world as this! A lift up standard or ensign draws

numbers of scattered soldiers unto it, but it is seen by few: But a crucified Jesus lift up in the gospel, is an ensign to draw great multitudes in different nations under the banner of love, Isa. xi. 10. The first experiment that was made of its virtue in Jerusalem by the Apostle Peter, three thousand souls were drawn to Christ at once, and after that many nations that knew him not, did run unto him. Come then, O sinners, admire and experience the power of this lift up Ensign; let your iron hearts be drawn by this Loadstone; it hath lost nothing of its virtue to this day. Thousands of hearts in other places do still feel its power; we are sometimes refreshed with the welcome news of their being drawn off from the vanities of time, and the love of sin, to glorious Christ: Why then do not your hearts also yield to the power of this blessed Loadstone, Christ crucified lift up in the word and sacrament? It hath the same virtue here as elsewhere, were but the eyes of faith opened to behold it, according to that alluring call, Isa. xlv. 22.

When Christ was lifted up on the cross, his face was turned to the Gentiles, for the Jews out of malice (as several write) would have him crucified with his face toward the west, as reckoning him unworthy to look to the temple and holy city that stood on the east side of mount Calvary; but Christ had a loving design in it to us Gentiles, and to accomplish that word, Psal. lxvi. 7. "His eyes behold the nations." Behold, O sinners, Christ turned his face to you on the cross to draw you unto him; there he bowed his head toward you to draw you; there he opened a cleft in his side to draw you; there blood and water flowed from his heart to draw you to him! And now he hath sent his word and Spirit to draw you: Now he displays his blood and wounds in the sacrament to draw you; now he is casting his cords of love about your hearts to draw you to him; now the devil is holding, and Christ drawing; Christ and the devil are now struggling for your hearts; the eyes of many are on you, the eyes of the glorious Trinity, the eyes of angels, the eyes of ministers and saints are on you, to see what the issue of the combat shall be, which of them shall gain the prize. Satan indeed is the strong man, but, glory to God, Christ is stronger than he. O that he may prevail, the heart is his by right, surrender it to him without delay. He will not enter without your consent; his people must all be "made willing in the day of his power." Oh, if the will were once conquered, the day were Christ's, and the field were won for ever.

Would you then have satan defeated, your biassed will overcome, and your souls savingly brought to Christ, O look up and cry for a draught of Christ's power. You have neither strength nor will to come to a crucified Christ, unless he draw you. Ordinances or providences cannot draw you, the word or sacraments cannot draw you, judgments or mercies cannot do it; yea, neither ministers nor angels can draw your dead and heavy hearts. O then look beyond them all to a lift-up Immanuel, "Draw me, Lord, and I will run after thee." The ordinance you have in view can never be a drawing ordinance, if Christ put not forth his virtue with it; the sacrament will be lifeless, and the administrators lifeless, if Christ draw you not. The most powerful sermons, the most alluring calls, will all be lost, if he draw not. You will sit still in the Sodom of a natural and wrathful state, if he draw not; you will die in your sins, if he draw not; you will be eternally damned, if Christ draw you not to him. You can never overcome the strong and subtile temptations satan casts in your way; you can never deny self, forsake beloved lusts, renounce justification by works, quite all confidence in your own doings, go naked and empty to Christ, be content to live wholly upon his righteousness, and receive grace, life, strength, and glory, as a free gift from Christ, without the drawing influence of a lift up Saviour. Oh, if you were once acquainted with this drawing power, you might go with comfort to his table, and feed upon his purchase.

Quest. How shall I know, if I have yet been drawn effectually to a lift-up Jesus?

Ans. Try it by these marks, Have you discovered his matchless excellency, so as to draw off your hearts from sin and the perishing things of the world? Have you felt the cords of his love about your heart and will, constraining to yield yourself wholly to him? Is your heart drawn out in love and affection to a crucified Christ above all things, so that the desire of your soul is to him and the remembrance of his name? Are you growing still liker to him, more holy, more humble, meek, and heavenly-minded? Nearness will breed likeness. Are you troubled for distance from Christ, when at any time you are drawn off him by sin, satan, or the world's allurements? Are you drawn to duty with a view of enjoying his presence therein? In the meantime, are you drawn off from resting on duties, or putting any attainments in Christ's room? Then you may conclude your heart is effectually drawn by a lift up Saviour; and so may, with holy confidence and joy, draw near to him in the sacramental trysting-place, and hold communion with him there.

ADVICE XIII.

From John i. 36.—xix 5. *Behold the Lamb of God.—Behold the Man.*

O COMMUNICANTS, both John and Pilate call you to behold Christ suffering and sacrificed for you, and, which is more, the Spirit of God calls you to this duty also. Let each one of you then say with Moses, Exod. iii 3. "I will now turn aside, and see this great sight." A great sight indeed! For though he be called a Lamb, and a Man, he is also God, God in human nature, suffering, bleeding, and dying, a great and wonderful sight! all the Persons of the glorious Trinity call you to behold it, Isa. xlii. 1.—xlv. 22. John i. 29. Draw then as near as possible, that you may get a good view of it; stand not at a distance like those who followed him from Galilee to the cross, of whom it is said, Luke xxii. 49. "They stood afar off beholding these things." Do not now stand afar off, nor take a far off look of a crucified Christ, but come close to him by faith, and take a near and saving look of him, as he calls you, Isa. xlv. 22. "Look unto me, and be saved; I am God, and there is no Saviour beside me." O then turn not your back or shoulder to him, look not asquint to him, look not by him to other things; but look with a broad, straight, and steady look unto him. The Man Christ Jesus is the Lamb of God, appointed by him to be sacrificed to make atonement for our sins, and to purchase pardon, life and salvation to us: And looking to him by faith, is the great mean of securing and applying the blessings of his purchase to us. And in a special manner he calls us to look unto him in his sufferings for us, *Behold me, behold me!*

Behold the suffering Man, a man of sorrow indeed! And particularly behold him entering upon that fearful scene in the garden of Gethsemane, when he began to fear, turn sorrowful, and very heavy: When he was sore amazed, fell into an agony and bloody sweat, and cried out, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death!" O what was it that made your Saviour so heavy, but the dead weight of the elect's sins, with the law's heavy curses annexed to them? Oh, your souls were exceeding guilty, which made his soul exceeding heavy. Behold and see your sorrowful Redeemer falling into a fearful agony, and, while in it, falling down sometimes on his knees, and sometimes on his face, praying once, praying again, and praying the third time, until he is quite overwhelmed with wrath, and covered with his own blood! Behold the sorrowful Man with the great drops of blood standing above his garment for your sins, and bedewing the ground! See Jehovah now acting against him, as an inexorable Judge, running on him as a giant, and making him the butt of his envenomed arrows! Behold him in his agony making his moan to his disciples, who could make no help to him; for neither they nor the angels in heaven durst touch his load, nor taste his cup: Yea, he got not so much as sympathy from his disciples; they all fell asleep when he was at the worst, and left him in his agony to struggle and tread out the wine press alone! O be not idle spectators of your Saviour's agony, but let your souls be exceedingly affected with Christ's soul-suffering for your souls sins.

"Behold the Man Christ," betrayed and sold for a little money, apprehended and bound with cords like a thief, and bound fast, as Judas bade; yea, so fast, (as some say) that the blood burst out of his tender hands! O can your heart or eyes hold to see those hands that made the heavens, wrung together and bruised with hard cords! To see him bound as a prisoner, that came to set the prisoners free! But had not the cords of your Redeemer's love held him faster than the cords of his enemies, though they had been cables or chains, they could not have kept him; but his love to you made him a willing prisoner! "Behold the Man," blindfolded, mocked, buffeted and abused for you! Behold him stript naked and scourged! Behold him that clothes the lilies of the field, that made coats of skin to clothe our first parents, now stript and uncloathed himself! He is stript naked, that you might not be found naked at God's bar! He is stript of his robes, that he might provide a robe of righteousness to cover your nakedness! "Behold the Man," scourged by Pilate, and that above measure, thinking thereby to save his life; but as the Jews were not satisfied therewith, so neither was infinite justice satisfied; so that his life must go, and the Man-Christ is willing it should. Willingly did he give his back to the smiters, that you might be freed from the everlasting lashes of God's wrath in hell! Behold every part of his blessed body torn and wounded by scourgings, because every part of you was wounded by sin; and his stripes were the only cure for your wounds.

"Behold the Man," with a platted crown of thorns on his blessed head, with the sharp points turned inward, and these beat into his head with a staff, till all his head is but as one wound, from whence a new shower of blood ran down his neck for you! You may be ready to cry, Fy on the Jews, or fy on the soldiers that used our Saviour so; but rather cry, Fy on your sins that did worse to him, these platted the crown of thorns and crucified him too. Behold the Lamb of God, now willingly caught in the thickets, like the ram, to be sacrificed in your room, when you were bound like Isaac for that end. Behold him willing to wear a crown of pain and ignominy, that you might wear a crown of glory and renown: Willing to be disgraced and affronted, that you might be honoured and exalted: Willing to let a Barabbas, the vilest malefactor in all Jerusalem, be preferred before him, that you might be preferred to a room among God's children. "Behold the Man," after all these sufferings, put to bear the heavy cross on his sore wounded shoulders, a heavy load, indeed, with the elect's sins and laws curses fastened to it; yet he bears without complaint till his strength is spent, and he is ready to faint under the burden, so that another must help! Oh! it was not the weight of the tree that made him faint; he had a greater burden to bear than ten thousand worlds, even the infinite wrath of God due to the elect's sins? O can you behold this sight with dry eyes!

"Behold the Man," brought to Golgotha, nailed to the tree, lifted up, and drinking out the bitter dregs of the cup of wrath thereon, till at length he yielded himself prisoner to death, by bowing his head, giving death his orders to execute his commission, and carry him off the stage! Behold and wonder at the sight, the Lord of life death's taken prisoner? O man, canst thou stand and see the Lamb of God slain in thy room, and for thy sins, and not be affected! Write that man a beast, a stone, a lump of earth, that can be senseless, stupid and unconcerned at such a sight! O blush and be ashamed, O man, at thy stupidity, when the dead earth and rocks about Jerusalem quaked and rent at the sufferings you now behold represented in the sacrament. O cursed sin, (which many make light of) that could not be expiated by any other sacrifice than that of our Immanuel, the Lamb of God, the Man Christ Jesus? O behold the Man and tremble at sin, the accursed thing that murdered the Son of God, the Man that is God's Fellow, the Man that is infinitely preferable to a million of world's full of men and angels too. O that men would always look on sin in the glass of the agonies and sufferings of the Man Christ, that they might be filled with horror at it, as at hell itself! Nay, in several respects sin is a greater evil than hell.

Let every communicant, every Christian, come and behold the glorious Son of God, with the greatest love and admiration, who for our sakes was willing to become a Man, and God's Lamb to be sacrificed for the sins of men. O let his name Jesus be always to you as precious ointment poured forth, and let the remembrance of his love inflame your souls with a vehement indignation against sin, and a burning affection to the Lamb of God, the Man Christ, that was willing to struggle in bloody agonies, and bleed to death on the cursed tree to deliver you from lying in hell for ever! O what can we render to him for his free love, amazing and unspeakable love! O that we could spend our whole lives in admiring his love and contemplating his beauty, and were thereby made meet, in some measure, for the exercise of the redeemed above. Amen.

ADVICE XIV.

From Job xxxvii. 14.—*Stand still and consider the wondrous works of God.*

THE works of God, being wondrous, do well deserve our most serious consideration; but so wavering are our minds, we cannot consider them aright, unless we stand still and compose ourselves for that end. This advice doth Elihu give to Job in the text, and Moses gives to the children of Israel, Exod. xiv. 13. All God's works are wondrous, and highly worthy of our observation, as his works of creation and providence; and more especially his works of redemption and of grace, as they are made known to us in the gospel-dispensation, and particularly in the sacrament of the Lord's supper. Here God calls you to stand still, and consider his wondrous works of redeeming wisdom and mercy, in saving fallen sinners. The work of creation is indeed most wonderful and stupendous; but his work of redemption is far more costly and surprising: The one cost him but a word of his power, but the other cost him the death of his Son: the one is but the work of his fingers, Psal. viii. 3. the other is the work of his arm, Luke i. 51. Much of the divine wisdom and power is displayed in making us men, but much more in making us saints; by the one we have but a short mortal life, but by the other, an eternal and immortal life. God's works of redemption and of grace will be the admiration of saints and angels to all eternity, Rev. v. 12 —xv. 3.

Come, then, and behold these works of the Lord, as they are set forth before you in the word and sacrament! Come and see God, from all eternity, passing by angels, and pitching his love upon poor ruined sinners of Adam's family, and contriving their redemption by the incarnation and death of his dear Son, while he passed by the angels that fell. Come and see the glorious Son of God undertaking, in the council of peace, to become Surety to pay our debt, and satisfy justice for the injury our sins did to God's glory! Behold and consider the device of infinite wisdom for reconciling justice and mercy about guilty men, and satisfying the demands of them both, by punishing sin severely, and yet pardoning the persons guilty! "Stand still and see the wondrous work" of making the Word flesh to dwell among us; of the Creator's leaving his throne of glory to lodge in a virgin's womb, and a beast's manger; of the "Ancient of days" becoming "a child of a day old," learning to speak and go, and subjecting himself to his own law in the room of rebel sinners! "Behold God's wondrous work," in setting up a court and throne of grace among the prisoners of justice, and causing grace sit as a queen on the throne, with a sceptre of mercy in her hand, and thence to issue forth proclamations of grace to poor, wretched, blind, miserable, and naked sinners, proclaiming pardon to the condemned, liberty to the captives, and life to the dead; yea, see grace laying siege to the hearts of rebels, summoning them by the gospel-trumpet to surrender, and using the most prevailing arguments with them to do it, taken from the mediation, sufferings, blood, righteousness and satisfaction of the Son of God.

Behold and consider the wondrous work of God in furnishing and fitting the Mediator for our miserable circumstances, joining the divine and human natures in one person for our relief! Observe how well he suits our exigencies; he is Man, that he might die for us; and God, that he might overcome death! Man, that he might combat the devil; and God, that he might vanquish him! Man, that he might take on our guilt and punishment; and God, that he might support under it! Man, that he might offer a sacrifice for us, and God, to make it infinitely meritorious! Man, that he might sympathise with us in trouble; and God, that he might deliver us! a wondrous work indeed! Again, observe the Mediator's fulness, how exactly it suits our miseries and wants! In our wonderful Immanuel, there is life for our deadness, light for our darkness, beauty for our deformity, strength for our weakness, health for our sickness, balm for our wounds, raiment for our nakedness, riches for our poverty, merit for our guiltiness, righteousness for our justification, a fountain for our pollution, grace for sanctification, bread for our hunger, water for our thirst, and deep mercies for our deep miseries! a wonderful work, to make one depth so exactly to answer another depth! "This is the doing of the Lord, and wondrous in our eyes."

Stand still, and see God's wondrous work, in sending our *Immanuel, the Prince of the kings of the earth,* to go up and down the wilderness seeking after the lost sheep, calling and inviting them in the most tender manner to come unto him for life and salvation, willingly submitting to be buffeted by satan, contradicted by sinners, to suffer all manner of indignities, a cursed death, and the wrath of God, and all that he might be a sacrifice to satisfy justice for our sins: And after he had submitted to death and the grave for a time, he conquered them and rose again; and gave commission to his ambassadors to go through all the earth, and call perishing sinners to come unto him, and offer them salvation in his name; and having done so, he ascended into heaven to intercede for them. Now, it is incumbent upon all communicants to remember these amazing works of God, at his holy table, with wonder, thankfulness and praise.

Come here, and see the *fountain of the great depths* of infinite love broken up, and the streams of the water of life running freely therefrom to the sons of men. Come, see Jacob's ladder set up, that reaches from earth to heaven, and God the Father at the top of it, calling you to climb to heaven by the steps of it; viz. *Christ's wounds, offices, and promises!* Come, see the manna coming down in plentiful showers, and falling about your tents, and every man invited to gather. Come, see the Rock broached in the wilderness, to supply the necessities of your souls; see the Rock smitten by the rod of Moses, and bearing the curse of the law for you! Come, see the "City of refuge" opened for poor manslayers, that sinners, who have slain their souls by sin, may flee to it for shelter. O then flee for your lives, and do not linger by the way! Come, see God bringing his righteousness near you who are guilty criminals, and bidding you put it on for your safety in judgment; it is a robe that will fit every one of you. Come, see the "fruits and leaves" of the Tree of life shaken and scattered among starving wounded souls: Gather and feed on the fruits of his purchase for your nourishment; apply the leaves of his promises for your healing. Come, see "the Well of salvation" opened, bring the chain and bucket of faith and draw water. The great medicine-well is here, come with all your diseases and ailments to it, come with your hard hearts, blind eyes, weak hands, feeble knees,

lame feet and cold affections to get them healed. Come, see Christ's testament opened, and every man allowed to put in for a share of the legacies therein contained: This you are to do by believing, claiming, laying hold and embracing the promises! Come, see straying prodigals returning to their Father's house, and see their Father embracing them, and the whole family rejoicing at their return: See their filthy rags taken off, and the white robe of the Son of God put on them, and the fatted calf killed for them. Come, see the King of glory entering in at the everlasting gates of mens souls, dethroning sin and self, taking possession of their hearts, and setting up his throne and kingdom in them. Come, see King Solomon both crowned and married in one day! An astonishing match concluded between the Prince of life and the heir of hell!! All the daughters of Zion are called forth to behold this sight. Cant. iv 11. All these are great and wondrous works of God to be seen in the word and sacrament, which all communicants ought to stand still and consider.

Consider these marvellous works so as to be suitably affected with them, make them the subject of your meditations, entertain high and admiring thoughts of God, and of his infinite love and wisdom manifested in them. Give firm credit to the record and testimony God hath given us of these wondrous works, and glorify the great Author of them with your hearts, tongues, and lives. Embrace the gospel-offer, and be afraid of offending that God who has humbled himself so low for our sakes, and has wrought such great and wondrous works for us. Be careful to serve him and please him in all things, and abhor sin his grand enemy.

ADVICE XV.

From Rev. xxii. 2.—*In midst of the street was the tree of life.*

IT was a sad day to mankind, when God banished Adam from the earthly paradise, and from the tree of life that grew therein, and also shut the entry to it! But behold God, in his free mercy, is now opening an entry and inviting Adam's banished posterity back again to a better *paradise*, where there are purer delights, and neither sin nor satan can enter; and where there is a *Tree of life, Jesus Christ*, infinitely preferable to that in Adam's paradise. This Tree of life far excels that in its leaves, shadow, fruit, and virtues; it animates, yea, restores, and preserves life for ever, neither is there any flaming sword to hinder our access to it. Adam's tree endured but a short time, but ours lasts for ever. Other trees decay, fade, and wither, but "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." O come, then, sit down under the shadow of this tree, eat of its fruit, and live for ever. Though the tree be now planted in the heavenly paradise, yet his branches, shadow, and fruit, extend to every believer on earth, as well as to the saints above. Thousands of communicants at the lower table have "sat under his shadow with great delight, and found his fruit sweet to their taste." Christ is a tree that bears fruit at all times, every month, and even in the sharpest winter months of sickness and death.

There are some very useful trees in the world, that afford all necessaries to men, such as meat, drink, physic, and clothing. Behold, God hath provided such a tree for us. Jesus Christ affords us all these. 1. Meat: He tells us, That "his flesh is meat indeed," that is, his flesh wounded and dying, yields strengthening food for the soul, in respect of its fruits and effects. It is food well prepared; the holy Trinity spent a whole eternity in preparing it. It is meat well seasoned; it is seasoned with the love of God, sauced with the blood of Christ, and spiced with the graces of the Spirit. 2. Drink: Christ's blood is also drink indeed to the soul, in respect to its comfortable effects; such as pardon, peace, light, life, strength, &c. These streams from the Rock are most refreshing, cordial, and savoury drink; savoury to God, savoury to angels, and most savoury to every soul that hath tasted it. It is a sweet cup that is to be put into your hand, if you have faith, but it is poisonous to an unworthy communicant that wants faith: But, if you be worthy, the drink will poison sin, quicken grace, and refresh the soul. Fear not, O believer, to take a good draught, faith will make the cup medicinal and restorative to thy soul, and it will only kill and destroy thy lusts. 3. Physic: The leaves of this Tree are for the "healing of the nations:" Christ hath many healing promises, which, when applied by faith, are most useful to purge out sin and corruption, and to heal all the soul's wounds and diseases. 4. This Tree affords clothing also. Poor fallen Adam, when naked, went to the fig-tree for its leaves to cover him; but, O let his posterity go to the Tree of life, where they shall get infinitely better clothing, even Christ's perfect *righteousness*, which is spotless and law biding. Behold *a rich robe*, set with the pearls and diamonds of heaven. *A large robe*, so broad as to cover a whole elect world. It also covers all the spots and infirmities of believers; so that not one of them is to be seen. This robe is as broad as the law, which we are told is exceeding broad. And it is just as beautiful as broad; for it makes every elect soul amiable and acceptable to God. Never then was there such a Tree, either in the earthly or the heavenly paradise, as our glorious Tree of life, Jesus Christ. O hungry souls, here is *meat*! O thirsty souls, here is *drink*! O diseased souls, here is *medicine*! O naked souls, here is *clothing*! O come then to to this Tree of life, and you have all things necessary for you.

O communicants, you are called to take a view of this blessed Tree, as it was hewn, mangled, and cut down, by the ax of justice, when he died upon the cross for you. Even in this his mangled condition, he is a most beautiful and engaging sight to the eye of faith! O believer, behold your princely Jesus lifted up on a bloody cross, on the top of mount Calvary, for all nations to see him, and gather to him for food and healing. Since that mount was first created, it never produced such a Tree, or such precious fruit, as the Lord of Glory hanging on the tree of the cross that was planted there some hours: Christ's hanging on it changed its nature from a cursed to a blessed tree, a Tree of Life and Salvation. This Tree of life made mount Calvary a sweet and lovely paradise that day, (notwithstanding of all the malefactors' bones that lay scattered upon it,) and the fruits growing on it that day hath enriched both heaven and earth, and will fill heaven with eternal songs of praise.

You are likewise called, at this time, to draw near a crucified Christ, the Tree of life, that is always laden with fruit: Come as near as possible you can win, shake the Tree by faith, and gather as much fruit as you can; eat, and lay up

for after-times; yea, gather, and lay up for eternity. The fruits of this Tree are durable and lasting, plentiful and enriching, sweet and satisfying, manifold and various, Rev. xxii. "twelve manner of fruits every month," which is an hundred and forty-four crops in the year. Likewise, they are most suitable to the wants and necessities of your souls. What can be more suitable to the guilty than pardon? to the dead than life? to the hungry than bread? to the thirsty than drink? to the wounded than balm? to the blind than eye-salve? to the naked than clothing? to the impotent than strength? to the weary than rest? to the captive than liberty? to the disturbed than peace? to the bewildered than light? to the warrior than victory? All these, and innumerable more, are the sweet and suitable fruits of the Tree of life.

O then, give all diligence to secure and clear up your interest in this blessed Tree of life and its fruits, which are now offered to you freely without money or price. Abandon and reject the sour and unsavoury fruits of sin, the world, and your own righteousness; and embrace the Tree of life in the arms of faith, and all its fruits are yours — Come, "sit down under his shadow," at his table, and believingly receive and feed on these delicious fruits. O how delightful and refreshing is the shadow and shelter of Christ's righteousness, to the soul that hath been scorched with a sense of divine displeasure for sin. This shadow screens and protects him from the heat of God's wrath, from the curses of a fiery law, and from the slavish fears of death, and wrath-like dispensations. Then let every weary and scorched soul come at Christ's call, and sit down under his shadow: Give firm credit to the gospel report concerning Christ's suretyship, his sufficient righteousness, and free offers: Acquiesce heartily in this blessed contrivance of shelter and safety, and put all your trust and confidence in his righteousness alone; and abide contentedly under its shadow without wandering from it, or going from tree to tree, as many do, seeking rest or shelter. Surely all who leave Christ, and wander after the shadow of creature-comforts, or their own doings, for relief, will disquiet themselves in vain; for there is no rest or shelter any where, but under the shadow of the Tree of life. Here only you will find protection and provision: This made the spouse say, Cant. ii. 3. "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste."

Let all those who have experienced the safety and sweetness of Christ's shadow and fruit, bless God, that gave them counsel, and drew them to this happiness. See that you abide close under this shadow, and make it your continual resort. Christ speaks to you, as David to Abiather, when he fled to him from Saul's cruelty. "Abide thou with me, fear not, for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life, but with me thou shalt be in safeguard." Likewise pity and pray for them who slight the Tree of life, and are going through all the trees of the wood for rest and satisfaction, but cannot find it. O commend this blessed Tree to them, and invite them to come and sit down under the shadow of it, where they will find all things. Say to them as Philip to Nathaniel, "Come and see." Be also looking out, and longing for the full enjoyment of the Tree of life in the Paradise above, where you shall eternally sing among the branches of it, meet with all your friends, and eat the fruits with a far better appetite and relish than ever any did here below.

ADVICE XVI.

From Isa xxxii. 2.—*A man shall be a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest.*

WHATEVER storms or tempests believers are exposed to here, Christ is an excellent shelter and hiding place from them. Before Adam's fall, that sin entered into the world, all was calm and serene; but since that, the world is become a weary wilderness, full of tempests; and as soon as one is laid, another is ready to blow. There are storms of outward afflictions, sickness, losses and disappointments, and many wrath-like dispensations of providence; there are storms of temptations from satan, challenges from conscience, thunderings from mount Sinai, desertions from God, reproaches and persecutions from the world: And yet all these storms here, are but like drops before the shower, if compared with the terrible storm of wrath to come, which is abiding the ungodly and unbelieving. But glory to infinite wisdom and free love, for finding out a proper hiding place for lost sinners amid these storms, to which we are called to turn, Zech. ix. 12. "Turn ye to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope." The Man Christ is an excellent Strong Hold and Hiding Place against all storms whatsoever; in him there is sufficient room and accommodation for us, his *wounds* are wide, his *mercy* large, his *merits* infinite, his *offers* free, his *calls* most gracious and extensive, Isa. xlv. 22. "Look to me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" The access is declared free, and the way patent, to all who turn to the Strong Hold for shelter, and never was any excluded that turned to it.

A crucified Jesus, O communicants, represented to you in the sacrament, is the Strong Hold and Hiding place to which you are called to turn by faith for shelter and safety, from the sword of justice. In him there are excellent clefts for shelter, Cant. ii. 14. and which you ought to be well acquainted with. There are the clefts of his *wounds* and merits, which all *Christ's doves* flee to when storms arise. There is also the cleft of his *power*, the clefts of his *wisdom*, the cleft of his *love*, and the cleft of his *faithfulness*; many a storm have they escaped in these clefts. In this hiding place there are also *chambers* of safety, to which you may retire when the tempests blow, Isa. xxvi. 20. There are the *chambers* of Christ's *offices* and sweet *relations*, which he hath assumed for the safety and comfort of believers; in each of these many of them have found shelter when storms have blown. There is also the pleasant *chamber* of his *covenant*, with the closets of it *promises*, which afford sweet retiring places in tempestuous times. O study to be acquainted with them. David was well acquainted with the well-ordered covenant and its promises, and had his recourse thereto in troublous times, and particularly when he was threatened with the storm of death, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. "Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; this is all my salvation." And he pleads the promises of his covenant for his safety, Psal. cxix. 49. "Remember the word to thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope." Come, then, by the exercise of faith, and shut yourselves up in these sweet chambers at the Lord's table, and take complacency in viewing and walking through them.

Christ crucified is a Covert and Hiding Place to believers, and to every thing that belongs to them: He is even a Covert to their *bodies* in time of danger; so was he to his disciples, when the storm was breaking upon himself, John xviii. 8. "If ye seek me, let these go their way." But more especially, he is a Covert to their *souls*, these he accounts precious as his *jewels;* he hides them in his wounds, and "keeps them by his power through faith unto salvation." He is also a Covert to their *graces*, and keeps them in life when ready to die, and saves them from being overwhelmed in the day of tempest. What had become of David and of Peter's grace, under violent storms of temptation, if he had not been a Covert to them. Many a time hath he preserved the *smoaking flax* and the *bruised reed*, under the most dangerous storms. Likewise Christ is a Covert to their evidences and marks of grace; he preserves them, and keeps them legible after many blots which sin and satan do cast upon them He hath the blessed art of recovering and clearing up their evidences, when they are frequently given up for lost in times of backsliding.

Let all consider how miserable they are who have no interest in this Hiding Place; you, that are out of Christ, have no covert from the tempest; you can neither have safety nor comfort in times of trouble. Nay, when any storm blows from without against you, a guilty conscience will be ready to raise the storm within; and also shew you a more terrible storm gathering against you, even the wrath that is to come—wrath, still coming, but never all come a storm that will still be blowing, but never will blow over O what will become of you, if death come upon you in this shelterless state, while out of Christ the only hiding place? —to be sure, then, "hell will follow the pale horse." To whom then will ye flee for help or shelter? The rocks or hills will not be a hiding place, if Christ do not hide you.— No creature will screen or pity you, if Christ do it not. All the creatures will take part with their Creator against you, and, instead of hiding you, they will be ready to divulge and accuse you to the pursuer, the justice of God. If you cry to the heavens, O cannot the vast expanded heavens afford me a hiding place from the tempest No, will they say, there is no refuge, no entrance here for the slighters of Christ, we will open only to rain fire and brimstone, and furious storms upon their heads If you look to the air and say, Is there no hiding place through the vast regions of the air for me? No, the air is transparent, and will discover the criminal, and will raise a whirlwind of wrath to blow you into hell. If you cry to the sea, Is there no hiding place in all the depths of the spacious sea to shelter me from the Lamb's wrath? No, the sea will give up her dead to be judged, and will rage furiously against you If you look to the earth, Is there no cave nor pit in all the earth to hide me from the dreadful storm? No the earth, instead of hiding you, will open its mouth and let you go quick down to hell, for slighting the wounds of Christ that were opened to shelter you.

O let every sinner then flee now, while it is time, to these blessed wounds of Jesus for safety: "Be of good comfort, O sinner, rise, he calleth thee;" rise and come, for there is yet room; forsake all false shelters and lying refuges Absolute mercy, a blameless walk, convictions, resolutions, prayers, tears, ordinances, ministers, will not be a hiding place to you, if Christ be neglected. Nothing can satisfy justice, nor screen from wrath, but the wounds and blood of the Redeemer; therefore see to make these only your covert and hiding place

It concerns all to try if they have got into this hiding place, and if they be among Christ's *hidden ones;* so believers are called, Psal. lxxxiii. 3. If you be among these hidden ones, you will have a hidden life, and be acquainted with a life of secret prayer and correspondence with heaven, and a life of faith and leaning upon the Son of God; you will have hidden food, meat the world knows not of, the hid manna of communion with God. You will have hidden clothing, and be acquainted with putting off your own rags, and putting on the hidden garment of Christ's righteousness. You will have hidden strength, and be acquainted with borrowing strength from Christ, both for work and warfare. You will live upon hidden supports in dark and calamitous times and draw comfort from the promises, and make these the ground of your hope. If you be in Christ as your hiding place, you will be among Christ's poor and needy ones, for it is to such he is a refuge, Isa. xxv 4. Do you see your own emptiness, ill-deservings, and insufficiency, and depend upon free mercy for every crumb? Are you still begging at a throne of grace, and inclining to exalt free grace? saying, "Not unto us, but unto Christ be the glory;" he is "all our salvation and all our desire." Happy are they who can lay claim to these marks.

ADVICE XVII.

From 1 Kings, xix 9.—*The Lord said unto him, What dost thou here, Elijah?*

IT is the concern of every man to be always in case to give account to God of his errand and design in every piece of work he is employed in, and so ought communicants at the Lord's table, when God or his ministers ask them, as the Lord did Elijah, "What dost thou here, communicant?" What is your business and errand at this table? Can you say, I have many errands here; I come upon my Saviour's call, to celebrate the memorial of his dying love, that his name may be remembered to all generations? "And worthy is the Lamb that was slain," to be admired, adored, and praised for ever. I come also to subscribe and seal a marriage-contract with him in the most solemn manner, before all the Persons of the glorious Trinity, before the elect angels, and before all the congregation Seeing Christ doth once more call me to it, after many a broken tryst, and hath put on his marriage robes, his dyed garments, to win and engage my heart, I come to join hands with him before God, angels, and men, and take them all witnesses to the bargain. Surely this is a good errand: O that the long spoken of match may now hold.

Can you say, I am come to a rich and liberal Saviour, to supply my needs out of his fulness. I come on a good day, when he uses to deal bountifully to the poor and needy, and to say to them, as the king to Esther, "What is thy petition? and what is thy request?" Well, is thy petition ready? Dost thou come with the publican's petition, "God be merciful to me a sinner?" Or with David's petition, "Lord be merciful to me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee?" Or with that petition, "Purge me with hyssop, and

I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than the snow?" Or with that, "Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee?" Or, do you come with the spouse's petitions and requests, "Draw me, and we will run after thee. Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out!" Surely these petitions are agreeable to your Redeemer; see that you insist upon them, and press for an answer. Study to have a lively feeling at this time of all your wants. Would you have them all supplied at once? Then come and embrace a crucified Jesus in the arms of faith, and he will fully answer them all. Would you have all your five senses satisfied at once? Behold Christ invites you to come to him to get it done. Would you have the sense of seeing satisfied? Then he says to you, "Look to me, and be ye saved. Behold me, behold me! Behold king Solomon with the crown on his head!" Would you have the sense of hearing satisfied? Then, saith he, "Incline thine ear; hearken to me; give ear to my voice." Would you have the sense of tasting satisfied? He saith, "O taste, and see that God is good."—Would you have the sense of touching satisfied? He saith, "Reach hither thy hand, thrust it into my side, feel the wounds made by the spear and the nails." Would you have the sense of smelling satisfied? Come, then, to Christ, whose "name is as ointment poured forth;" and whose "garments smell of aloes, myrrh, and cassia." Come here, and get all your spiritual senses satisfied at Christ's full feast.

Object. But I am afraid I am not among these invited guests that Christ will make welcome. *Ans.* Have you any of the scripture-characters of those that Christ invites? Are you among his friends? Do you wish well to his cause and interest? Then Christ saith to you, "Eat, O friends," Cant. v. 1. Is your heart open to Christ's offers, and willing to accept him in all his offices? Then he saith to such, he "will come in and sup with them, Rev. iii. 20. Doth your heart love him? Then he saith, He "will manifest himself" to such, John xiv. 21. Are you poor and needy? Then he saith, "The needy shall not be forgotten," Psal. ix. 18.—Do you see yourself a lost sinner? Then he saith, He is "come to seek and call such," Luke xix. 10. Mat. ix. 13. Do you feel sin to be a heavy burden? Then he bids the "heavy laden come to him," Mat. ix. 28. Are you sick, and much distressed? Then Christ chuses to entertain and converse with such, Mat. ix. 12. Do you hunger and thirst for Christ? He saith, "He fills the hungry with good things," Luke i. 53. Are you sensible of backslidings? He invites such to come to him, Jer. iii. 14. Are you desirous to put on the wedding garment of imputed righteousness? Then, to be sure, you shall neither be excluded nor neglected. Do you earnestly seek for his holy Spirit? He assures you he is more willing to give the Spirit to them that ask it, than loving parents are to give bread to their hungry children. What is men's compassion to their children in comparison of Christ's to his? Well, then, you may rest on Christ's word; for he is not more free in making promises, than faithful in making them good. He is a God that keeps covenant to a thousand generations. Venture then upon his word, and come to his table, with hope and expectation to get all your wants supplied.

Let me again ask you, as God did Elijah, What dost thou here, communicant! Can you say, that you are come to get a heart-affecting sight of the blood and wounds of the glorious Redeemer, so as you may love Christ, and hate sin more than ever! That is a good errand, and what God will surely approve. Come, then, draw near, as it were, to the foot of the cross, and take a narrow and close view of his wounds, and of the blood that streams from them. Observe how fast the blood runs down from his hands to the ground—faster than ever tears ran down from your eyes for sin, that caused the shedding of his blood! Christ is not sparing of his blood for you, however sparing you be of your tears for him.—Draw yet nearer, and lay your ear to his wounds, especially his five big wounds in his hands, feet, and side; which, like so many mouths, are wide opened to speak to believing communicants. Listen and hear what they say: What is the language of the two wounds in his hands? "Come to me, and cast your guilty soul into my bleeding out stretched arms," and I'll save you from the sword of justice. Lay your ear to the two wounds in his feet, and hear what they say, "Run to me, and cast yourself down at my feet," and I'll protect you from the avenger of blood. Hearken to the deep wound in his side, saying, "Flee to me, O trembling dove, and I'll shelter thee in this cleft of the Rock: Thou hast now free access to the Ark, behold the window opened in the side of it; look in at it, and see my heart burning with love: Yea, thrust in thy hand to my side (unbelieving Thomas) and feel my bleeding heart, how warm it is to you, and be no more faithless, but believing."

O communicant, can you come to the foot of Christ's cross, and see his wounds, and hear such language, and your hearts not be affected with love to Christ, and hatred to sin? Can you behold Christ thus cruelly used, nailed to the tree, bleeding and dying in your room? Can you see the heavens turning black, the sun drawing in its head, the earth quaking, and the rocks rending at the sufferings of the Son of God, and your heart not quake for sin, that awakened the sword of justice against him as our Surety. O what cause have you to be ashamed of the hardness and unconcernedness of your heart at such a sight, and to cry to God that the heart of stone may be changed into an heart of flesh, and that the fire of Christ's love may descend, and kindle such a flame in your soul, as may melt your frozen affections, and consume the stubble of your lusts and corruptions. Of old, the Lord used to answer his people's prayers and sacrifices by fire from heaven: Pray that he may answer your's in like manner, by kindling a holy fire in your soul, as he did in the hearts of the two disciples going to Emmaus; even a two-fold fire, to wit, a fire of love to Christ, and a fire of indignation against sin. O love the Lord Jesus as your treasure and portion; let your thoughts be mainly upon him, and your souls breathing after him. Be much concerned for his interest and cause, and for the spreading of his kingdom and glory in the world. And be looking out, and longing for the full and perfect enjoyment of him. Likewise keep up a strong aversion to sin, and to what is opposite to Christ, and injurious to his interest and kingdom; look always upon sin as the grand enemy and murderer of Christ; and therefore do not spare it.

ADVICE

ADVICE XVIII.

From JOHN v. 6.—*Jesus saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?*

THIS miraculous healing-pool of Bethesda, at which the impotent man had lien thirty-eight years, was a type of the Messiah, and the fountain of his blood opened and set forth in gospel-ordinances, for healing all our spiritual diseases. And Christ's method of healing this man teaches us, that if we would be healed, we must be willing to wait at the pool of ordinances, till the spirit come to stir the waters, apply the blood, and effect the cure. And, in the mean time, we must be sensible of our disease, and look up to Christ, our great Physician, with earnest desires for healing. This is imported in Christ's question, "Wilt thou be made whole?"

O communicants, you are diseased by sin, and the plagues of your hearts; these have blasted the primitive beauty of the soul, and brought on it a ghastly deformity, with much pain and weakness. Your diseases are manifold: Atheistical thoughts, misbelief, and ignorance of God's truths, are woeful plagues; hardness of heart, and earthly-mindedness, formality, and heart-wanderings in duty, trusting to your own righteousness, ingratitude, and backslidings from God; these are diseases you ought all to be sensible of, God would have "every man to know the plague of his own heart," 1 Kings, viii. 38. in order to his being made whole. These are the sick that Christ is ready to come to heal, Mat. ix. 12. Christ first makes men sick and sensible, before he makes them whole. Have you then any acquaintance with this healthful, preparatory sickness? Have you been made sensible of the dangerous nature of your disease, and thoughtful and solicitous about the issue of it? Have you been made to groan and moan under the burden of your disease, saying, "I am troubled and bowed down greatly, I go mourning all the day long?" Have you seen, there is no healing in yourselves, or in your convictions, prayers, tears, or reformations? and that it is only in Christ, who hath an infinite fulness of merit and Spirit to suit your desperate malady? Are you willing to submit to the Physician's prescriptions for healing? Be the pill or potion never so bitter, you will swallow it: Is it your cry, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" These are tokens of a right preparatory sickness. May the holy Spirit work them in you.

The great meritorious means of your healing, is the blood of Jesus Christ, which is set before you in the sacrament, for you to look to and apply by faith. As the Israelites were made sensible of their stings before they looked to the brazen serpent for healing; so must ye in order to your prizing of Christ, and looking to his blood for healing your spiritual plagues. Now the fountain is open, and the healing streams run freely on both sides of the table: Come then, with a feeling of your diseases, and bathe in them for curing your hard hearts, your blind eyes, your weak hands, your feeble knees, your lame feet, and cold affections. O impotent man, are you lying at the side of the pool while the waters are stirring? Have you no strength to move forward, and is there none to put you in! O then look up to Christ, that healed the impotent man after many years waiting; look to him by faith, as he calls you, Isa. xlv. 22. "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth. As I offer myself to every diseased soul in particular, as well as to all in general; so let every soul embrace me as his Saviour, and apply my blood to his particular diseases. Faith is a healing grace, not only its touches, but its very looks, are healing; hence Christ said to severals who were healed, "Thy faith had made thee whole." O see then if you have got this healing faith.

Quest. How may I know if my faith be of this kind?

Ans. A healing faith will make the soul heartily approve the gospel method of salvation, embrace God's testimony, and close with his gospel-offer in all respects. And it hath in it an appropriating trust and confidence in the merit and virtue of Christ's blood, offered to the sinner, in particular, for his pardon and healing; which makes him rest upon Christ as his Saviour, and venture his soul and salvation upon his merits and promise. In this healing faith of a diseased sinner, there is a particular acceptance of, and confidence in a crucified Christ, corresponding to that free gospel-offer which he makes of himself to the distressed soul. This faith brings him to a fixed resolution to ly at the Physician's door, and depend upon him alone for healing. And it makes him cast open all the doors and rooms of his soul, to receive and entertain this Physician. Now, O poor impotent soul, if there be such a faith as this wrought in thee, then thy faith in Christ makes thee whole. The healing balm is applied, the cure begun, and shall shortly be perfected. "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee; Jesus Christ maketh thee whole."

It concerns you also, to try if the happy fruits and effects of this healing faith appear in you, whereby you may conclude, that the strength of your disease is broken, by virtue of the blood of Christ; and that you have got it applied for curing your heart-atheism, hardness, unbelief, pride, carnality, and particularly your weakness of hands, and feebleness of knees: So that, though formerly they were so weak and feeble, that you could not lift up the one, nor bow down the other in prayer, with any fervency and liveliness, yet now it is otherwise: Then this is a good token the strength of the disease is broken, Christ has taken you into his hospital, and has you under cure, by the daily application of his blood and Spirit, and you are on the way of recovery. Can you say further, that your drought is greatly abated, your thirst after sin and the world; and that your appetite for soul-food, communion with Christ in ordinances, is happily increased? Can you bear the light better than before? Do you love searching sermons? All these are good signs. Have you a high esteem of your Physician, and do you entertain him kindly when he visits you? Have you recovered more strength and willingness to serve him in the way of commanded duties? And have you a holy fear and jealousy of every thing that might bring on a relapse into your old distempers? Then there is "good hope, through grace," that your faith is a healing faith, the work of healing is begun, and so far carried on. Christ is our Rock, and his work is perfect.

O then study to be thankful to your great Physician, saying, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, healeth all thy diseases, and redeemeth thy soul from destruction; who reneweth thy youth like the eagles, maketh thee run and not weary, walk and not faint. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to

his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us." Then the cure shall be fully perfected, and we shall dwell always beside our Physician, and enjoy perfect and uninterrupted health for ever and ever. Express your thankfulness while you are here, by being witnesses for Christ, shining as lights before others, commending Christ and his ways to them, hating all sin, abstaining from it; reproving sin in others, and testifying against it. Be meek and lowly in your carriage; deal uprightly with all men; love all that bear Christ's image; be zealous for family religion, for sanctifying the sabbath, and attending God's ordinances. Pray earnestly for the coming of Christ's kingdom upon the earth, and do all you can to promote it.

Watch and pray against backslidings and relapses into old distempers, and for that end be humble and self diffident, be denied to your own strength and conduct, and be always jealous of your corrupt and deceitful hearts. "Live by faith upon the Son of God, looking to him both for righteousness and strength. And because you are invironed with enemies, "put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." It is not the armour of your own resolutions, it is the armour of God, even the graces of the Spirit; it is not some graces, or parts of that armour, it is the whole armour, all the Christian graces. It is not enough to have the armour in the house, or grace in the habit; no, it must be put on, daily worn and exercised. God hath provided different pieces of armour for you, the sword of the Spirit, the shield of faith, the helmet of hope, the breast plate of righteousness; but there is nothing for the back, for God disowns runaways, Heb. x. 38. "If any man draw back," &c.

ADVICE XIX.

From EXOD. xii. 14.—*And this day shall be unto you for a memorial.*

AS the passover-feast was a memorial both of the deliverance from Egypt, and the redemption by Christ; so a communion-sabbath is a memorial of sundry remarkable things, and ought to be held as a most memorable day by every believer; as it brings to our remembrance the greatest events and blessings.

1. A communion-sabbath is a lively memorial of Christ's death, for the sacrament administered that day, by breaking of bread and pouring out of wine, is a visible representation of Christ's death, by the breaking of Christ's body, and pouring forth his blood on the cross; an event which God will have remembered to the end of the world, and through all eternity. Why? because by it God's perfections are highly glorified, and the elect world redeemed from hell. Christ did institute the ordinance to be a standing monument of his death while the world stands, 1 Cor. xi 26. "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." And a monument of the wonderful love of God in giving his Son, and of the Son in giving himself, to be a sacrifice for our sins, who were utterly unworthy of his love. By this memorial God would teach us the inestimable value of Christ's death, as the greatest obligation that ever he put upon the world; and that we ought to declare our gratitude to God for the favour, in the most open and public manner; and rely upon Christ's death and sacrifice, as the foundation of all our hopes of pardon and salvation. The death of Jesus Christ is the most worthy subject of the discourse and praise both of the redeemed on earth, and the glorified in heaven, according to Rev. i. 5.—v. 9, 12. Hence it was, that Moses and Elias, when they came from heaven to mount Tabor, to wait upon their Lord when transfigured, they made choice of Christ's death for the subject of their conversation, Luke ix. 31. and good reason, for Christ's death was the spring and cause of all their glory in heaven; neither Moses nor Elias had shined there, if it had not been for Christ's death.

2. A communion sabbath is a special memorial to us of Christ's resurrection from the grave, which was on the first day of the week, and hence called the Lord's day, it being the most honourable day to our Lord Redeemer, and the most joyful day to all the Redeemed; as it gave a clear proof of the perfection of Christ's sacrifice he offered to divine justice, and that our Surety's satisfaction was accepted for our complete justification and absolution. Hereby it appeared that the elect's debt was discharged, their redemption finished, and their Cautioner liberated from prison. This day Christ was "declared to be the Son of God with power." As his death did shew him to be truly man, so his resurrection did manifest him to be truly God and the great Redeemer of the world. This was the day of Christ's victory and triumph, in which he solemnly appeared to be the Captain of our salvation, and obtained a glorious victory over all his and the church's enemies. This day he triumphed over the grave, death and hell, and over sin, satan, and wicked men. Now death was unstinged, the grave lost its purchase, the serpent's head was bruised, the powers of hell vanquished, and they were all swallowed up in victory. Likewise Christ, by his resurrection, as the Head of the church, gave to all the members of his body a sure pledge and earnest of their resurrection from the grave at the last day, to immortality and eternal life. And on this day he rested from all his works of suffering and redemption, and rejoiced in the review of them with infinite delight and complacency. Now, a communion-sabbath is a bright memorial of this glorious day, which is to be had in everlasting remembrance. O believer, remember it with thankfulness and joy.

3. This day is a memorial of your spiritual resurrection and new birth, as it declares your reception into God's family, and seals your title to the privileges of his children, that you are born "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," of the heavenly inheritance. And though the Lord's supper be not a converting ordinance in its own nature; yet the preaching of a crucified Christ this day, has been the means of converting many thousands, and, in many others, of beginning the pangs and forerunners of the new birth, to wit, saving convictions of sin, and enquiries after Christ, and salvation through him, which have ended in their conversion. O pray that it may be such a day to you and many others.

4. This day is a memorial of your marriage-day; because on it you enter into or renew your marriage-covenant with Christ the Bridegroom of the church. Ministers, by the gospel offers, court your souls to Christ, saying, as those did to Rebekah, Gen. xxiv. 58. "Will you go with

the Man Christ! On the communion-day, you solemnly give your answer, as she did, "We will go;" and at the Lord's table you seal your engagement to him. Likewise this day is a memorial of the consummation of your marriage with Christ at the great day, when he will come to receive home his espoused bride, and conduct her to the King's palace with joy and triumph. O prepare and long for that day.

5. The communion-sabbath is a memorial of your crucifying sin, which was the cause of your Redemer's death. At this ordinance you draw virtue from the death of Christ, to kill sin and mortify strong lusts. Many wrestling believers have been enabled, at this occasion, to give a death's wound to those lusts and idols they had been long struggling against before. Resolve, then, in Christ's strength, that sin shall not out-live this day; it is most just to revenge the death of Christ upon it.

6. A communion-sabbath is a memorial of Christ's conquest and coronation: For on this day Christ frequently receives the fruit and reward of the travail of his soul and his bitter agonies, by overcoming hearts, deposing satan from his throne, and delivering souls from his thraldom, and translating them into his own kingdom. And, at this occasion, all worthy communicants do, as it were, put a crown of glory and honour upon Christ's head, by renouncing sin, satan, and all that had exercised dominion over them before, and giving their full and hearty consent that Christ alone shall reign over them for them. Christ is so delighted with this, that he esteems it as his coronation-day, Cant. iii 11. O come, then, and yield your hearts to Christ, and pray that the communion-day may be a day of his coronation and conquest, when sinners shall give their free and willing consent to the dethroning of satan, and enthroning of King Jesus; come under Christ's sceptre and government, and abandon all his enemies; for he hath best right to the throne, and the justest title to reign over you.

7. A communion-sabbath is a lively memorial and emblem of the everlasting sabbath above, and the heavenly feast there that shall never end, which Christ hath purchased and promised to his people. Why? because on a communion-sabbath here, there is an assembling of God's people to give thanks for redeeming love, and to feed upon Christ and his purchase, with satisfaction and songs of praise. In like manner, in the heavenly sabbath, there will be a great gathering of all the saints through all the world, to admire and praise God for redeeming goodness, and to sit down and feast with Christ for ever, upon the benefits of his purchase. O how great is the plenty, variety, the fulness of provision and satisfaction, which is at the upper-table! there they feed upon eternal redemption from hell and wrath, perfect freedom from sin and satan, and from all afflictions and complaints. They feed upon the glorious presence of God in human nature, the constant shinings of his face, and intimations of his love; the bright discoveries of the works of God in creation and providence, and especially in the redemption of men by Christ. And, in this festival, they have perfect satisfaction, joined with eternal songs of praise. But, O how far will the communion-sabbath above excel those we have here below! Here we are oft put to mix our praises with mourning and tears, because of sin prevailing, or the Spirit withdrawing. Here Judases, and unworthy guests, thrust in among the disciples; but at the higher-table there is no such mixture, all is pure and holy, and there is nought to allay their joy. Here our communion-sabbaths are soon over, and have nights, week-days, and trials to succeed them; but the communion-sabbath above the feast, music and assembly, are everlasting, without interruption or uneasiness of any sort. O then improve these short sabbaths, as memorials and means to prepare you for this everlasting sabbath; and, in all ordinances here, keep your eye upon the heavenly festival.

ADVICE XX.

From Jer. iii. 19.—*How shall I put thee among the children? Thou shalt call me, My Father.*

THOUGH there be great mountains of difficulties in the way of sinners salvation, yet God, in his free mercy, hath found out an expedient to get over them; even by making choice of God as our God and Father in Christ. That you may admire his grace the more, take a view of the difficulties that ly in the way. God might say, "How shall I put thee among the children" of my family, who are the offspring of apostate and rebellious parents, who ungratefully departed from God without any provocation, sold themselves to the devil to do his drudgery, and rebelled against a most gracious God, and loving Father? And how shall I put you, that have sinned after the similitude of Adam, among my children? How shall I be reconciled to such treacherous dealers? Again, he might say, "How shall I put you among my children," who are condemned rebels in the hands of my infinite justice, and whom I am engaged by my truth to destroy, having said, "The soul that sinneth shall die?" Here is a burning mountain of justice in the way of your salvation; how shall mercy get over it to help you? "How shall I put you among my children," whose hearts are full of enmity against me, and have all your days been plotting with the devil, and assisting him to fight against me, and pull the crown off my head? "How shall I put you among my children," who are so deformed polluted and loathsome creatures, as black as hell can make you, who have all your days been wallowing in the mire, and drenched in the puddle of sin? "How shall I put you among my children," who have been all your days Satan's vassals, drudging at his work, grinding in his prison, and serving divers lusts and pleasures? "How shall I put you among my children," who are impotent and lame, cannot run my errands, nor move one step in my service, nor do any thing to please or glorify me? "How shall I put you among my children," that hate my childrens bread, and chuse rather to feed on husks with the swine? "How shall I put you among my children," who hate my children, and my image in them, and have preferred the devil's children to mine? "How shall I put you among my children," that never liked my childrens work never loved prayer, praise, nor any spiritual employment? "How shall I put you among my children," who are sinners in Zion, have sitten many years under gospel-offers and calls to come to Christ, and have slighted them all, and bolted the door against my dear Son, and quenched the motions of my Spirit? "How shall I put you among my children," who have been so impenitent and hard-hearted all your days, as never to drop one tear for any of all the black and heinous sins you have committed against me? "How shall I put you among my children," who have never kept one word to me, but have broke all your

baptismal engagements, and gone over to the devil's camp, and harboured my enemies? O how is it that God can come over these mountains, to put such as you among the children, and allow you to sit down at the childrens table, and eat of their bread? How is this consistent with the honour and holiness of God?

Blessed be God, who hath found out a way for his mercy to come over all these mountains, by providing a Mediator and Surety to satisfy justice for our sins, and proclaiming a new covenant, that whosoever accepts of the Mediator, and makes choice of God as his God and Father in him, shall be taken into God's family, and be numbered among his children, notwithstanding of all that you have done to provoke him to cast you off. "Thou shalt call me my Father." Wonderful condescension, that he should allow such prodigals and runaways at all to speak to him, and far more that he should put words in their mouths, and such kindly words, as my Father! Amazing goodness!

If you would make this address aright, and take hold of his covenant, so as you may be taken in among the children of God, and allowed to come to his table and eat of their bread; you must be truly grieved for your long rebelling against your heavenly Father, and slighting his offers of mercy and pardon through Christ; you must be deeply humbled before him, and fall in with the gospel-method of access to him by a Mediator; you must quit all dependence on your own righteousness, and break with all your Father's enemies; you must make a free and hearty choice of God, as your God and Father in Christ, resting wholly upon Christ's mediation and righteousness for acceptance with God; you must make a surrender of yourselves, and all you have, to him, and engage in Christ's strength to serve him, as obedient children, desirous to please your Father in all things.

O come, then, enter into covenant with God, and make choice of him as your Father in Christ; this is the only expedient for removing the difficulties in the way of your salvation, and for taking you into God's family, and numbering you among his children; unless you fall in with it, you can have no right to the childrens bread you will be unworthy communicants, and eat and drink judgment to yourselves.— O then, prevent it, by entering into covenant with God, that you may be taken in among the children. O young persons, let me put the matter home to you, as Joshua did to the Israelites, "Chuse you this day whom you will serve." Chuse you whom you will take for your Father, whether God or the devil! Both are courting your hearts; which of them will you yield to? Is there any so foolish as to halt betwixt two opinions in this case? Is there any so mad as to stand in doubt whether to dwell with Christ or the devil for ever? Now, Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels, are struggling for your hearts; a cunning devil is holding, and a dying Saviour is drawing; now cast the balance, and shew which of them you incline to: The eyes of the glorious Trinity are on you, the eyes of angels and men are on you, to see what the issue will be. O then, be wise, and come presently, and make a surrender of your hearts to God in Christ. There is no music so melodious in God's ears, as the voice of young persons weeping and covenanting with God. The season of youth is the male in your flock, it belongs to God, let him have it; they are cursed who deny it him, and reserve the blind and lame to God, such as the dregs of old age, or sickness, Mal. i. 7.

O communicants, see always to bring Christ alongst with you in your covenanting with God; never think of covenanting with him but by sacrifice; bring the sacrifice of Christ's death to atone for the breach of the first covenant, and bring his Suretyship to answer for your faithfulness in the second, otherwise you can never call God your Father, nor be taken in among his children. Remember you are all engaged in this covenant by your parents undertaking for you in baptism; but as soon as you are capable, God will have you to renew it personally and explicitly, and to come sensible of your breaking this covenant, in running away from Christ's colours, and in going over to the devil's camp; and deeply sensible of your folly in delaying and standing out so long against Christ's gracious calls and free offers.— O come, as penitent prodigals and mourning backsliders, with your faces Zion-ward, weeping as ye go, willing to enter into God's covenant, and give yourselves away unto the Lord, who is your rightful owner. Since Christ comes to you at this occasion, as in *streams of blood*, it is surely proper that you meet him with *streams of tears* for sin, that caused his blood to be poured forth as water; and that you come presently to an open rupture with all his enemies, and particularly with your unbelief, your pride, your passion, your hypocrisy, and other sins that have pierced him. Break with them all, and come to him with the appropriating acts of faith, saying, "My Father, my Lord, and my God."

ADVICE XXI.

From Luke v. 26.—*They glorified God, saying, We have seen strange things to-day.*

THOSE who have been attending ordinances, ought to recollect what they have been seeing, doing, and hearing, and to be suitably affected therewith. Self-examination is needful after communicating, as well as before it. Had you the eyes of faith open to see and observe the goings of our God and King in his sanctuary; you may then say on the evening of a communion-sabbath, "We have seen strange and marvellous things to-day." You have seen the bloody tragedy of Christ's sufferings represented and reacted; Christ with garments dipt in blood, fighting a bloody battle for us; in which the glory of the divine attributes are wonderfully displayed: Behold the free love and mercy of God, who was highly offended at us, yet contriving our redemption, and giving the Son of his love to die for us, who were his enemies; and for this end creating a new thing in the earth, the incarnation of an infinite Person, making a woman, a virgin, to be mother of him that created her!— God incarnate is a world's wonder, Jer xxxi. 22. A strange thing! The Son of God consents thus to humble himself and die for condemned criminals; rather than he would see elect sinners plunged into the bottomless gulf of eternal misery, in his love and pity he would put himself into it to keep them out! Here infinite *wisdom* displayed in finding out a way to satisfy justice in punishing sin severely, and at the same time to gratify mercy in pardoning the sinner freely! A strange device! *Justice* and *mercy* are reconciled, and kiss one another in man's redemption by Christ's death, the demands of both are answered, and the glory of both equally discovered. Here is seen the severity of justice and

fierceness of God's wrath against sin, in not sparing his innocent Son when he became our Surety, nor abating him one farthing of the debt! Nay, he awaked the sword of justice against him, and poured out the vials of his wrath upon him, which kindled a fire in his soul, made him sweat and fall to the ground; and there he that made the heavens lay grovelling in the anguish of his Spirit, and sweating clods of blood! O how heavy was the burden of guilt that pressed his soul at this time!

You have seen a strange thing, *blood streaming* forth of marvellous virtue, that can soften hearts, though harder than a stone; that can heal all the wounds given you by the old serpent; that can wash away the deepest stains of guilt, and make creatures black as hell, whiter than snow! And though many thousands have been cleansed by it, yet the stream is nowise defiled; but still is pure and clear as crystal! You have seen the amazing humiliation of the Son of God for vile worms! a strange thing! He was made a worm, a clod of dust; yea, made sin for us! strange! that he who thunders in the heavens, should be brought to lie in the manger, and cry in the cradle! That he who framed the heavens, should work with a carpenter in his trade! That the great Judge of all the world, should be brought to the bar, accused as a malefactor, condemned and crucified betwixt two thieves, that such criminals as you might have a room among the blessed! You have seen the Lord of Life deprived of life, to purchase life for you! spotless Holiness made sin, and eternal Blessedness made a curse, to redeem you from sin, and the curse due to it! A strange thing! for the holy One of God to make such an exchange with you, to take the curse, to give you the blessing! to take shame, to give you glory! to take death, to give you life! to take your sins, to give you his righteousness! A strange thing to see the righteousness of one Man, a robe large enough and sufficient to cover many thousands, so as not one spot of guilt can be seen in them by the eye of infinite justice! A strange thing! to see Christ willing to have his side opened, to satisfy doubting souls of the reality of his love, that you might look into his heart, and see it panting with love to you, and hear him saying, as to Thomas, "Be no more faithless, but believing!" Strange! to see him bowing his head on the cross, to whisper comfort into your ear saying, Now "it is finished;" I have drunk the brook in the way, even the whole river of God's wrath, so that there is not one drop left for you; every believer's debt is paid! A strange thing! to behold the Father pleased to see the bruises, agonies, and sufferings of dear Son, that his enemies might be eternally freed from them!

A strange thing! to see death conquering death; the death of Christ conquering all his and our enemies! If any had seen Christ entering the lists with death and hell, law and justice, he might have stood amazed, and said, O what will come of this Champion, that is engaged with such strong enemies? But stay a little, and you will see him lead captivity captive, triumphing over them all, and fetch all he came for, out of the hand of the devil! When Christ was brought to the cross, one might have thought that devils, wicked men, and death, were triumphing over him; but his word saith, that on "the cross he spoiled principalities and powers; and made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it." A strange mystery! while enemies were scoffing and insulting him, Christ is triumphing over them! A glorious conquest Christ's was; for he not only subdued his enemies, but conquered them, so far as to make them useful and serviceable to him and his people! Let us admire the conquest and the Conqueror, though he was despised by men; yet, like David, he gloriously subdued Goliath, that defied the armies of the God of Israel: He crushed the head of the old serpent that had bruised his heel, and enslaved his elect; and he put all his other enemies to flight!

A strange sight! you have seen to-day, God coming over the greatest mountains of difficulties, to pardon and save sinners; taking rebels to be his children and favourites; and exalting them above angels that never sinned? You have seen the King of glory courting poor slaves, black Ethiopians, and inviting them with out-stretched arms to come and match with him, and sealing the marriage covenant with his blood! You have seen him make a rich feast to them, and welcome them to feed on a crucified Christ, and all his purchase! Behold the heavenly Pelican, that feeds his young ones with his blood! How amazing is the sight, that God should not only feast; but seal a marriage covenant with you, whose descent is base, whose person is ugly, whose portion is nothing but diseases and misery? O what strange sights you have seen to day! you have seen the love of Christ, the worth of souls, the price of pardon, an emblem of the higher table, to which many of your friends and acquaintances are gone, where the feast will never end!

You have seen, to day, a strange act of mercy to guilty and ill-deserving creatures, who have ate and drunk before the Lord, and yet on them he hath not laid his hand; he hath made no breach upon any, as on Uzzah, Nadab, Abihu, or the men of Bethshemesh! He hath not struck any dead with the bread in their mouths, or cup in their hands, nor sent any from the table to hell, though you must acknowledge you deserved rather to have had a cup of wrath put into your hand, than a cup of blessing! A strange sight! that gospel offers are yet continued to those who have abused many sacraments and sermons! that Christ should be stretching out the sceptre of grace, and offering pardon and mercy to those who have crucified him afresh, and trampled his blood under foot.

Have you seen evidences of gracious changes wrought on hearts and wills by the word, secure souls awakened, blind eyes opened, proud creatures humbled, careless sinners made to cry, Away with the world, and give me Christ: None but Christ, I count all things but loss and dung in comparison of Christ and his righteousness. These are strange sights, with which you should be much affected, so as to hate sin, love Christ, bless God, and glorify him with your hearts, tongues, and lives. It is the end of all God's works that we should glorify him Oh! the best have reason to lament that they are so little affected with the marvellous things set before them in the word and sacraments! Surely, when you compare the rock whence you are hewn, and that on which God sets you! and when you consider the low stoop Christ has made to purchase such clods of earth and sins with his blood, you have cause to be amazed at his love, and confounded at your own ingratitude, in being so little affected with his marvellous loving kindness, or melted for sin that was the cause of all his sufferings! O let the strange and wonderful tokens of Christ's love you have been seeing and sharing of in the sacrament, engage you to more thankfulness in heart and life. Have you been washing your robes white in the blood of the Lamb? Be careful to keep them clean, and do not defile them again in the mire of sin, remember your vows, and keep your face still towards you

Father's house, which is a pure and undefiled dwelling; you cannot take filthy hands or feet thither, for no unclean thing enters there, Psal. xciii. 5. "Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever."

ADVICE XXII.

From Luke vi. 21.—*Blessed are ye that hunger now, for ye shall be filled.*

IN scripture, hunger and thirst, when applied to spiritual things, imports the same thing, to wit, a strong desire after spiritual and heavenly good things; which desire implies spiritual life, a feeling sense of want, and a longing for food to the soul, together with the use of all proper means to obtain it. Now, the main object of this hunger or thirst is Jesus Christ, or God in Christ, Psal. xlii. 1, 2—lxiii. 1. Now, there are many things in Christ which the hungry soul doth desire; as, 1. Christ's blood, as the soul's ransom and cleansing fountain. 2. Christ's Spirit, as the soul's quickener, comforter, and guide. 3 Christ's righteousness, as the soul's clothing and protection. 4. Christ's word, as the soul's daily food and cordials. 5. Christ's supper, as the soul's feast and pledge of heaven. 6. Christ's graces, as the soul's riches and ornaments. 7. Christ's way, or holiness in heart and life, as the soul's path to heaven. 8 Christ's day, as the soul's weekly market-day, for getting in provisions necessary for working, journeying, fighting, &c. 9. Christ's mansions above, as the soul's dwelling-place for eternal communion with God and his saints. Now, if ye would be truly blessed, ye must hunger and thirst for these things, firmly believing that in these your true happiness doth lie, and not in the world or sensual things.

Again, see that your hunger be of the right kind, that it be insatiable, so that nothing can put it off or satisfy it but Christ; the truly hungry soul will not be pleased with the best duties, ordinances, ministers, sermons, sacraments, or any other thing without Christ. The hungry soul will adventure on the greatest difficulties for Christ, he will part with any thing for him: All the treasures, honours, music, or comforts of life, cannot satisfy him, none but Christ, the soul's food. True hunger will put him upon the use of all means, and make him content to take Christ upon any terms, and put a blank in his hand, and say, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do! I'll subscribe to any thing, only give me Christ, give me food to my starving soul.

Such hungry souls are blessed, because he hath promised to satisfy and fill them. It is God that creates the appetite, and excites the hunger, and therefore he will satisfy it.—The hungry are the most earnest and importunate beggars at the throne of grace; and such he has promised to hear, Luke ii. 9. The hungry will wait at God's door for an alms, and he promises that those who "wait for him shall not be ashamed," Isa. xlix. 23. The proud, the rich, the full and self-righteous will go away, if the door be not presently opened; but the hungry will ask, seek, knock, and knock again, and wait till God think fit to open, and grant an alms. These God is bound by his word to satisfy. He is their Father, and hath the bowels of a Father to pity his children. He hears the ravens and young lions when they cry, and feeds them, and will he not hear his own children, and fill their hungry souls? Yes, he hath promised it.

Quest. But what is that fill he promises to the hungry? *Ans.* He fills them with divine discoveries, as with the knowledge of God's greatness and majesty, so as to make them sensible of their own nothingness, and with the knowledge of God's goodness and free love to sinners in Christ, so as to make them fall into raptures of admiration, and cry who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity? Micah vii. 18. He fills them with a discovery of the excellency of the gospel-remedy for perishing souls, so as to make them say, it is a device every way worthy of God; Christ's mediatory offices, his covenant, his righteousness, his blood, his purchase and fulness, do nobly answer all our souls wants and necessities; they deliver us from sin and misery, and they bring us grace and glory. He fills his hungry people with gospel-promises, by letting them see their name in them, and giving them faith to take hold of them and apply them. Many a sweet fill do they get from such promises as these, Jer. xxxii. 40. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 28. Jer iii 22. 1 John ii. 1. Rom. xvi. 20. Heb. xiii. 5. He fills them with the intimations of the pardon of their sins, and with peace and joy in believing, Rom. xv. 13. so as to banish their doubts and fears. What a sweet fill doth Christ's voice give them, such as that in Matth. ix. 2. Luke xxiv. 36, 38. John xiv. 27. Rom. viii. 1. He fills them with resolution and strength to conquer sin, perform duties, resist temptations, and bear afflictions; when he speaks to them as to Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 9. or as in Isa. xli. 10. and xliii. 2. He fills them by giving them sweet returns of prayer, assurance of his love, and of his gracious presence with them. He fills them by making over Christ's fulness and purchase to them, and by giving them Pisgah-views of the promised land, and will at last fill them with glory.

It is only the hungry that shall be filled, the needy, the humble, and self-denied, for "the rich are sent empty away," Luke i 53; the *rich*, that is, those who are filled with a conceit of their own strength and sufficiency, their gifts and performances, and go about to establish a righteousness of their own, and see not their need of Christ; those shall go empty away, for they do not prize Christ, nor are willing to come up to his terms. They go away empty of Christ and his riches; but alas, they go away, filled with pride and self-conceit, filled with love to sin, love to the world, and love to their own righteousness. Oh, this is a miserable fill.

O hungry souls, bless God, that gives you this appetite, when others are rich and full in their own conceit, labour to preserve this appetite and wait about God's house and table, where soul-food is to be had; and bless him even for the smallest crumbs, as when he gives you a greater hatred of sin, a higher esteem of Christ, a greater desire after heart-holiness, a restlessness without Christ, a willingness to part with all for Christ, or stronger resolutions to cleave to Christ and duty. These crumbs are worthy of thanks, though ye be not filled with joy and peace in believing. Wait on the Lord, and wait on him in every ordinance and duty of his appointment, believing him to be faithful who hath said, "They shall not be ashamed who wait for me."

Object. Some may say, We have waited long, and have not got a crumb. *Ans.* some eminent saints have been put to cry, "How long wilt thou forget me, Lord, shall it be for ever?" Psal. xiii. But they must wait in the use of means until God's time come, and adore the sovereignty of

God in his dealings with them. His people have resigned themselves to the care and wisdom of God, who knows what is best for them; believing there is a time coming when God will make up all their losses. O believers, there is a fill remaining for you above, that will soon make you forget all your days of scarcity here below.

ADVICE XXIII.

From PSAL. cvii. 2.—*Let the redeemed of the Lord say so*—

WHAT is it such persons should say? Let them both say and sing of God's goodness and mercy to them; for, (of all men) the redeemed of the Lord have most reason to be thankful for Christ's distinguishing mercy in freeing them from the law's curses and satan's power, from the guilt, dominion, and punishment of sin; from the sting of death, and the wrath to come. Believers are redeemed both from sin and hell.

Quest. How may I know if I be among these happy ones, "the redeemed of the Lord?" *Ans* Take these marks: Did you ever see your slavery and bondage by nature, so that no less than an infinite price and power could ransom and liberate you? Was you so convinced and humbled with the sight of your misery, as to be content of freedom from it on any terms? Have you ventured your soul on Christ's merit and mercy, conform to gospel-offers, being well pleased with the frame of the new covenant, and the self-denying way of saving soul's by Christ's imputed righteousness? Are you content with Christ to be your King and Ruler, as well as your Priest and Saviour? Have you given up yourself to the Lord to live for him, desirous that his love may always constrain you to do his will? O then, you may conclude you are among the "redeemed of the Lord," and that his blessed body was broke, and his blood shed to ransom you.

Peculiar reasons have you to extol his goodness and mercy above others. Why? He hath opened your *eyes* to see the beauty of your Redeemer, and the ways of holiness, when others remain in blindness! He hath opened your *ears* to hear the joyful sound, and fall in with it, when others are deaf to it! He hath loosed your tongues to pray and praise, when others are dumb, and tongue-tied! He hath opened your hearts to entertain Christ crucified, when others shut him out! He hath brought you to a *feeling* of the evil and burden of sin, when others are without feeling! He hath given you *appetites* for spiritual food, when others relish nothing but things earthly! He hath given you the *promise* and *hope* of complete redemption from sin and misery above, when others live without Christ, and without hope! Let the "redeemed of the Lord" then sing and praise him above all others.

O believing communicants, "redeemed of the Lord," give him thanks, and express your thankfulness by your thoughts and actions, as well as your words; namely, by your high esteem of your Redeemer, and of his blood and righteousness that purchased all for you By avoiding every thing that dishonours him, and flying from the sins that are common and fashionable where you live. By commending your Redeemer to those who know him not. By standing up as witnesses for him, and for his truths and ways, in the midst of a Christ despising generation. By strictly observing the Lord's day, as being a weekly memorial of redeeming love. By longing for the enlarging of Christ's kingdom, and rejoicing at the news of it: And by putting honour on all the friends and lovers of the Redeemer.

Lastly, Shew your thankfulness, by singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, in praise of redeeming love, and of the Redeemer's person, offices and sufferings; a subject that can never be exhausted. Sing praises to the great God, that humbled himself to leave his high throne, that came down to dwell in flesh, and die for us; and to rise again, and ascend to heaven, to take possession of the inheritance, and make accommodations for us there. On this account, the Spirit calls us four times to sing praises in one breath, Psal. xlvii. 6 "God is gone up with a shout; sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises unto our King, sing praises." This singing is most acceptable to God, and profitable to ourselves. As God makes it the eternal work of heaven, so he would have us frequently employed in it on earth. But, Oh! how do we fail here! Reformed churches abroad do far exceed us in the frequency of this duty, as they do in the variety and sweetness of their tunes

What is *singing*, but a kind of reading with meditation and deliberation, in order to give the more free vent to the thoughts and affections to breathe and ascend heavenwards. The wise God institutes *singing* in his praise, because the melody of the voice helps to affect the heart, and raise the thoughts; "for he knoweth our frame." And indeed, it is only when the heart corresponds with the voice, that music is pleasant to God: To this purpose one saith well:

Sweet melody the hymn affords,
When with the lines the heart accords.

O let the *redeemed* sing praise, and give thanks to God for his unspeakable Gift, both now, and for evermore. Amen.

I shall add no more *Sacramental Advices* in the preceding method, but shall shut up all with a cluster of short *Scripture Directions*, proper not only for communicants, but for all Christians travelling heavenward.

A SHORT

CHRISTIAN DIRECTORY:

CONSISTING OF

FORTY SCRIPTURE-DIRECTIONS,

PROPER FOR ALL

CHRISTIANS INTENDING HEAVEN.

IT ought to be the great concern of all baptised persons to renew their baptismal covenant betimes, and, by a private transaction with God, to take the baptismal engage-

ments upon themselves, and thereby become Christians by their own personal consent and surrender, as well as by their parents' dedication, and afterwards go and seal this transaction publicly, by partaking of the Lord's supper.—Concerning this, I have given directions in *The Young Communicants Catechism.* Only, I would intreat all my readers, for Christ's sake, and their own souls' sake, to beware of going about this work in a superficial or formal manner, and of resting upon lip-labour, and the external part of the duty. O never be easy until you inwardly and heartily close with Christ, according to the gracious gospel offer which God makes unto you. Take no rest till you get your souls united to Christ by a true faith, and savingly renewed and changed from nature to grace, by the efficacious working of the holy Spirit in regeneration. And as you are to close with Christ by faith in your first conversion; so you must study to live all your days a life of faith on the Son of God, always making use of him, and leaning on him for righteousness and strength. I shall say no more by way of preface, but proceed to branch forth the Christian's work and exercise in this lower world, in the following Scripture-Directions.

Direction I.—*Let never the world come in God's room* —Beware of the love of the world; often think upon that awakening word, 1 John ii. 15 "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Oh, this is the ruining sin of multitudes, their love to, and complacency in, the things of the world. Nay, the most part of men are damned for loving the world too much, and loving God too little.—Remember, the faster grips ye take of the world, the looser are your grips of Christ; and the more ye get of the world, ye have the greater account to make to him that gives it, and has made you steward of it; therefore use your money and goods for his service and honour: You must answer for your riches, but your riches cannot answer for you.—Also, remember, if ye set your hearts on the world, it will be all that you will get; to have a competent portion of things earthly is a mercy, but to have earthly things for our only portion is a dreadful misery. Wherefore, while your hand is in this world, let your heart be in heaven. Let the business of your soul be the business of your life.

Direct. II.—*Keep up the same opinion now of the things of the world, that you will have when you come to die.* You see what a low price men set upon the riches, pomp, and glory of the world when they are dying: Had you the same thoughts of these things now, I am sure you would not venture the loss of your souls, the loss of God's favour, the loss of a good conscience, and the loss of eternal glory, for a whole world; far less for a small trifle of it, as many now do. Think much upon that text, Matth. xvi. 26.

Direct. III.—*Be not strangers to yourselves, but often commune with your own hearts;* as directed Psal. iv. 4. When others are censuring and backbiting their neighbours, be you searching and censuring yourselves. Self-examination is a most necessary duty. Examine yourselves after every ordinance, what good you have got by it, what entertainment you gave your Saviour: Ask how were your hearts affected by such a word, &c. Commune with your hearts about your title to heaven: Judge of your eternal state by your spiritual state, and judge of your spiritual state by the delightful and customary actions of your lives. Judge of it by your hatred of sin, and love to Christ, and by the conscience you make of secret prayer, and reading God's word. In communing with your hearts, among other things, ask yourselves, What are likeliest to be your death-bed thoughts and wishes? Will they not be such as these? O that I had loved Christ more, and the world less! O that I had improven gospel opportunities better! O that I had accepted Christ's calls and offers more readily! O that I had spent more time in prayer and searching the scriptures! O that I had been more spiritual and fervent in every duty!—Ask yourselves, what are these sins or practices which will be most frightful to look back on, when ye see yourselves just within a step of God's tribunal? Study always to keep up death bed thoughts of things.—Commune with your hearts about these things *upon your bed,* and also *before you go to bed.* Let conscience bring in the accounts of every day before you ly down: mourn over the sins of every day, and apply the blood of Christ for washing them away. Thus keep short reckonings with God and conscience, that you may not have old scores to clear when you come to a death-bed. Likewise, at these communings, let every man ask himself, What is my present state and condition? Would I be willing to ly down and die in the frame and disposition I am in just now? And I know not but I may be as near death this moment, as if my friends were looking on me struggling with the pangs of death on my bed.

Direct. IV.—*Begin early in the service of God, and give him the days of youth,* Eccles. xii. 1. Those who are young cannot begin their service to God too soon, God desires it, to shew God's delight in early piety. We see the Scripture commends young ones for it; it is recorded with honour, that the child Samuel ministered to the Lord, 1 Sam ii. 18. Josiah is commended for his tender heart for God in his tender years, 2 Kings xxii. 19. Christ was well pleased with the hosannahs of the children that attended him, Matth. xxi. 15, 16. When Solomon in his youth sought God for wisdom, it is said, "The speech pleased the Lord," 1 Kings iii 10. So Timothy is commended for his early piety, 2 Tim iii. 15. And God says to Israel, "I remember the kindness of thy youth," Jer. ii. 2. And he recommends to every one to begin soon, Eccles. xii. 1. The young disciple was most beloved, and leaned on Christ's bosom.—Now is the proper time, O young people, for making your acquaintance with God, and for laying a good foundation for the time to come. Repentance is easiest in younger years; sin is then less rooted, satan's grips less fastened, gospel offers not so slighted, the Spirit is not so much quenched, the conscience not so hardened; the heart is then more easily melted and broke. God seeks the *male of the flock,* the best of your time, O then let him have it. If you forget God when young, it is just with God to forget and neglect you when old.

Direct. V.—*Shun the company that shuns God, and keep the company that God keeps,* Psal. cxix. 63, 115. Prov. xiii. 20. Look on the society of the carnal or profane as infectious; but reckon serious praying persons the excellent ones of the earth: Such will serve to quicken you when dead, and warm you when cold. Make the liveliest of God's people your greatest intimates; and see that their love and likeness to Christ be the great motive of your love to them, more than their love or likeness to you. It is not true Christian love, but party love, to love only those who are of your sentiments in all things. Yea, though they should differ from you in some things, if you see God's image on them, and that they have fellowship with the Head, you ought to love them, and have fellowship with them: Keep

up the communion of saints, for it is one of the articles of our creed. Christian conference and social prayer have been blessed of God to preserve the life of religion in many places, therefore let those who fear the Lord speak often to one another, Mal. iii. 16.

DIRECT. VI.—*Put a high value upon precious time, and lose none of it by sloth,* Eph. v. 16. Esteem time as those do who are at the point of death; and always remember that it is impossible to call time again. Look upon the loss of time as a greater loss than the loss of your money, or any worldly thing; and therefore shun time-wasting games, unprofitable diversions, and idle talking.—Especially value the most precious part of your time, such as the morning of youth, the morning of every day, and particularly the precious time of the Lord's day. Look on the Lord's day as a tryst-day with heaven; lose not any part of it, but carefully improve it for God and the good of souls, both your own and others. It is want of thought, not want of work, that makes any say, they have time to spare.

DIRECT. VII.—*Allow a little time every day to think upon eternity.* Consider the import of these words, *everlasting punishment, and life eternal,* Matth. xxv. 46. O eternity, eternity, that is never nearer an end, but always, as it were, but beginning! One serious thought of eternity is enough to strike a careless soul to the heart. Why? he stands every hour at the door of eternity, and if he step in while out of Christ, he is eternally undone; eternally in despair.—Oh! the swift river time is carrying every one of us into an ocean of eternity, an ocean that hath neither bank nor bottom, and what each of us must soon launch forth into.—What an awful thought is this! every one of us is within a step of being eternally blessed, or eternally cursed! eternally saved, or eternally damned! O if every one would believe and consider this, and be wise, so as to pray as for eternity, repent as for eternity, hear as for eternity, live as for eternity, obey and do every thing as for eternity.

DIRECT. VIII.—*Throughout your whole life be mindful of the chief business of life,* Phil. ii 12. Now the business of life is to make it sure that Christ is your life; it is to think much on the end of your life, and provide for it; it is to lay hold on eternal life, and keep still sight of it: So that "when Christ who is your life shall appear, ye may also appear with him in glory," Col. iii. 4. Let not religion be your diversion, but your business; mind it as the one thing needful; give all diligence to make your calling and election sure. Make sure your calling, and thus you make sure your election. If you would make sure your calling, make sure that you are united to Christ by faith, and that Christ is the life of your souls. Do not rest in convictions, nor in tears, prayers, or duties, nor in any thing short of Christ. Press both for an interest in Christ, and for the assurance of it. Assurance is attainable, and actually attained by many; and it is most necessary for chearful obedience, for bearing the cross, rejoicing in the Lord, giving thanks for redeeming love, and for performing many other duties of Christianity.

DIRECT. IX.—*Let the rational soul govern, and the body be subservient to it,* 1 Cor. ix. 27. Alas, many, on the contrary, make their souls drudges to their bodies, and employ their noble faculties, wholly in devising how to please the flesh. Ah, what fools are they who mind nothing but their bodies! Why? they are the greatest enemies to their bodies; for, by so doing, they forfeit the eternal happiness of their bodies, as well as of their souls. Whereas those who prefer their souls, and mind them chiefly, they consult the happiness of their bodies as well as of their souls; for the body is never so well as in heaven; when fashioned like Christ's glorious body, then it is in perfect and eternal health.

DIRECT. X.—*Study both to live and die in the exercise of repentance and godly mourning for sin,* Mat. v. 4. Some may think repentance a melancholy word, but it is one of the sweetest words in all the book of God: It is a gospel-duty, for the law or covenant of works admitted of no repentance; it is the effect of God's free love in and through Christ, to open the door of repentance to fallen sinners; it cost Christ his blood to obtain it for us, and it is his free gift to us, Acts v. 31. Surely it is good news to hear that our Sovereign bids poor condemned criminals, that were brought to the place of execution, repent, and throw themselves down at his feet, and they shall get pardon. It was the sum both of John's and Christ's preaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." It was the saying of a godly minister, "That if he were to die in the pulpit, he would wish to die preaching repentance; and if out of the pulpit, he would wish to die practising repentance." Augustine saith, "Repentance is the fittest disposition both for dying christians and ministers;" and it is written of himself, that he died with tears in his eyes, weeping for sin. This is a duty never out of season; therefore study daily to keep up a tender and mourning frame, maintain contrition of heart and abhorrence of sin, and for that end take every day a turn upon mount Calvary. Many think it a sad thing to be repenting on earth, but it is a sadder thing to be repenting in hell.—Seek repentance from God for Christ's sake; say with Ephraim, Jer. xxxi. 18. "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God."

DIRECT. XI.—*While you mind the necessary study of holiness, or inherent righteousness, let it never take the place of imputed righteousness,* Romans x. 3. Psal. lxxi. 16. Inherent righteousness indeed is to be loved, but imputed righteousness only is to be trusted; for though inherent righteousness or holiness be a necessary qualification for heaven and salvation, and our evidence for it, yet it is imputed righteousness only that is the foundation of it, and our title to it.—Let Christ's name be dear to you, "The Lord our Righteousness."

DIRECT. XII.—*Employ Christ as your Surety in all cases, and in every strait go to him for relief,* Psal. cxix. 122. Isa. xxxviii. 14. Study therefore to be well acquainted with your Surety, and live near him. When the law demands payment of debt, and threatens you with prison, look to Christ, and cry, "Lord, be Surety for me; Lord, undertake for me." When you are called to perform duties, bear affliction, resist temptation, struggle with corruptions, engage with enemies, &c. look still to Christ to be your Surety, and to undertake for you; plead with him to make out that promise to you, Deut. xxxiii. 25. "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

DIRECT. XIII.—*As you expect to live with Christ in heaven, study to live to Christ on earth,* 2 Cor. v. 15. Philip. i. 21. If you would live to Christ here, then you must make Christ's honour and glory your ultimate end in all your designs and actions; and make your most valuable interests subservient to his interest and glory. Study an universal conformity to Christ's holy laws and precepts, and make it your great business to approve yourselves to Christ in all things: Chuse the things that please him, and carefully avoid every thing that is displeasing to him, Psal. cxix. 30 Isa. lvi. 4.

DIRECT. XIV.—*Cleave fast to Christ, and the way of holiness, whatever it may cost you,* Acts xi. 23. 2 Tim. iii. 12.—Think not the worse of Christ and his ways that they are persecuted or reproached, and that few do own them.—Christ foretold this, and saith, his way is a narrow way that few walk in. Join with the little flock to whom the kingdom is promised, which will abundantly compensate all your sufferings for Christ. Never follow a multitude to do evil, but cleave to Christ however few join you.

DIRECT. XV.—*Seek the approbation of God above that of men,* 2 Cor. x. 18. What is the applause of worms to the smiles of the God of heaven? What would it avail us to have poor men like ourselves to commend us, when the great God that made us doth condemn us? No matter tho' men censure or condemn our actions, if God approve and commend them. "It is a very small thing to be judged of man's judgment, but he that judgeth us is the Lord," 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

DIRECT. XVI.—*Be much employed in admiring God's redeeming love, and Christ's suretyship for us,* 1 John iii. 1, 16. This is the employment of the redeemed to all eternity, Rev. v. 9. And all who go to heaven must be acquainted with their work while here, Rev. i. 5. O what matter of eternal wonder and praise is there in God's giving his dear Son to be our Surety and sacrifice, and in the Son's voluntarily undertaking it.

DIRECT. XVII.—*Delight much in thinking and speaking of Christ, and particularly of his death and sufferings for us,* Luke ix. 31. Rev. v. 9, 12. Oh, did he wade through a sea of wrath, a sea of blood, a sea of sorrows and sufferings, to bring redemption to us? And will we ever forget him? The great God takes great pleasure in the work of our redemption, and is well pleased with our Redeemer who undertook it.—God repented that he made man, but never repented his redeeming man. Now, what God delights in, we should delight in, especially since we reap the benefit. We see, from Luke ix. and Rev. v. that the subject of Christ's death is matter of discourse and praise to the glorified society above. When Moses and Elias came from heaven to mount Tabor, to wait upon their transfigured Lord, they chose Christ's death for the subject of their conversation: Why? Christ's death was the spring and cause of all their glory in heaven; neither Moses nor Elias had shined there, had it not been for Christ's death. And shall not we, here below, delight in thinking, speaking, and singing of this noble subject, which is the ground of all happiness we either have, or hope for.

DIRECT. XVIII.—*Treat objections raised against your closing with Christ, as suggestions of the enemy, that is seeking the ruin of your souls.* Reject them, as Christ did Peter's counsel, Matth. xvi. 23. "Get thee behind me, satan." As satan would have hindered Christ's dying for us, so he would hinder us from relying on Christ's death. Oh, (saith one) I am unworthy of any share in Christ's death. *Ans.* If you will have nothing but what you are worthy of, you must have nothing but hell. What was Abraham, Paul, Magdalene, the thief on the cross, the idolatrous Corinthians, worthy of, before the Lord called them! Whatever be your unworthiness, are you willing to apply Christ's blood? Then see what Christ saith to you, Rev xxii. 17. "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." Oh, but (saith another) my sins are heinous. *Ans.* Canst thou be more guilty than Christ is gracious? Doth he not promise to wash away sins that are like scarlet and crimson, Isa. i. 18. and tells us, 1. John i. 7. that "his blood cleanseth us from all sin?" O bless him for that word *all.* Do not then believe satan, who would tempt thee to think that God hath cast thee off; but, in spite of all he can say, still believe God's faithful word, that there is mercy enough in God, merit enough in Christ, power enough in the Spirit, and room enough in the gospel-offers and promises to you. Believe that word, Lam. iii. 25. "The Lord is good to them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him." Say to thy soul, "Can this word of God fail? Has God made thee willing to wait and seek for him, and is he not willing to be found of thee? O my soul, dost thou not see an infinite perfection in Christ's righteousness, in Christ's blood and merits!" We may see an end of all earthly perfection, but we can see no end of Christ's perfection, which is infinite.

DIRECT. XIX.—*Study much these great gospel-lessons of denying yourselves, and exalting God's free grace,* Matth. xvi. 24. 1. Cor. i. 31. The design of the gospel is to cast down self and all idols, that God alone may be exalted; it is to make self nothing, and God all, in point of wisdom, strength, righteousness, and glory; it is to take man wholly off himself, and cast him on Christ for the whole of his salvation.—It is a good sign of a saving change upon the heart, when a man is thus humbled, and cast into the gospel-mould, when self-loving is turned into self-loathing, self-admiring into self-abhorring, self-excusing into self-accusing, and self-seeking into self-denying.

DIRECT. XX.—*Draw all your strength for work and warfare from Christ, and present all your duties to God in Christ's name,* Isa. xlv. 24. Col. iii. 27. Christ himself tells us, that "without him we can do nothing," John xv. 5. that is, nothing aright, or nothing that is acceptable to God. All our duties, if acceptable, must be done in Christ's strength, and covered with his righteousness. The apostle owns, that "of himself he could not so much as think a good thought, 1 Cor. iii. 5. but he could do all things through Christ, that strengthened him," Philip. iv. 13. And hence he exhorts us to "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," Ephes. vi. 10. Let us think, before we go to duty, from whence our strength for it must come, and study to fetch it in by faith, and believing ejaculations; and when we are assisted, let us ascribe the glory to Jesus. Be assured of this also, that your most costly sacrifices are unsavoury, if they be not perfumed with the fragrant incense of Christ's merits and intercession; and that your fairest "righteousness is but as filthy rags" in God's sight, if Christ's righteousness do not cover it. Let it therefore be your constant language, "In the Lord Jesus have I righteousness and strength," Isa. xlv. 24.

DIRECT. XXI.—*In all the actions of your life, set the Lord still before you,* Psal. xvi. 8.—xxv. 15. Acknowledge him in all your undertakings, and by faith and prayer commit your way to him, look to him for direction and success, and depend on him as the Father of your mercies, the sum of bliss, the strength of your life, the staff of your bread, the breath of your nostrils, and the length of your days. Set the Lord always before you as your Almighty Creator, your loving Redeemer, your rightful Owner, your careful Preserver, your all-sufficient Portion, your holy Pattern, your observing Witness, and your awful Judge. Undertake and perform all your actions under a sense of God's all-seeing eye, and of your being accountable to him for all you do.

DIRECT. XXII.—*Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God,* 1 Cor. x. 31. We eat and

drink to God's glory, when we do it for the end that our bodies may be fitted to serve our souls in honouring and serving God; and when we receive these mercies with thankfulness from the hand of God, and depend upon God's blessing to make them nourishing to us; and when we remember we are but stewards of what we possess, and are accountable to God the Proprietor, how we improve these earthly blessings to his honour and service. You must also apply the business of your callings to God's glory, and this you do, when you depend on God to bless you in it, and to prosper the work of your hands, and to arm you against all the sins, snares, and temptations, which your business may give occasion to. You ought also to pay and receive visits, and attend company, with an eye to God's glory, by blessing God for giving you friends and earthly accommodations, and looking to God for wisdom to behave yourselves so, as ye may do no harm to those ye converse with, nor get any harm from them: But, on the contrary, may be helped to do them good, and get benefit from them. You are also to undertake journies for God's glory, to look to him for protection by the way, and for direction, through-bearing, and success.

DIRECT. XXIII. – *Spend as much time as possible in secret prayer and converse with God*, 1 Thess. v. 17. And that ye may do this with delight, endeavour to keep your hearts always in a serious praying frame, with an abiding impression of God upon your spirits. There is a great difference betwixt a serious fit, and a serious frame. Ahab, Saul, Felix, and others had their serious fits, but religious persons only keep their souls in a serious frame, and study to be "in the fear of the Lord all the day long," as God enjoins, Prov xxiii. 17. Prayer, that is acceptable to God, must be performed with faith, delight, and liveliness, and not with deadness and weariness, as if it were a task or burden. A life without prayer, or a prayer without life, are both hateful to the God of our life. He is the living God whom we worship, and hath no pleasure in dead performances. But they who delight themselves in duty, shall have the desires of their hearts granted them, Psal. xxxvii. 4. Surely, they who spend their days in faith and prayer, shall end their days in peace and comfort.

DIRECT. XXIV. – *Make conscience of family religion, as well as of closet-duties*, Joshua xxiv. 15. 2 Sam vi. 20. Neglect not family prayer nor praises, reading the word, catechising children and servants, sanctifying the sabbath, exhorting to duty, reproving and curbing sin. Religion and reformation must begin in families, if we would wish it to be national and universal. God is the author and founder of families, and therefore should have homage from families as such, by the morning and evening sacrifice of prayer and praise.— Go to him to bless family-mercies, supply family-wants, sanctify family-trials, and redress family-grievances. Early train up children in the way they should go, pray much for them, and for God's blessing on the means of their education.

DIRECT. XXV. — *Begin and end every day with God*, Psal. v 3 —— iv. 8. Let prayer be the key to open the heart to God in the morning, and lock it against all his enemies at night. Let no Christian say, he cannot pray; for prayer is as necessary to him as breath, Lam. iii. 56. Let none say, they have not time for it; better take time from sleep, than want time for prayer. Think it not enough to say your prayers, but mind you must pray your prayers, pray with sincerity and fervour. Think with yourself, this morning may be my last morning, or this night my last night; for certainly that morning cometh of which you will never see the night; or the night in which you will never see the morning. Let the conclusion of every day put you in mind of the conclusion of all your days, by the long night of death, that will put an end to all your work, and bring you to count and reckon with your great Master about your work. O to ly down every night reconciled with him! O that we could ly down and leave our hearts with Christ, and compose our spirits so, as if we were not to awake till the heavens are no more.

DIRECT. XXVI. —*Seeing none knoweth what a day may bring forth, spend every day as if it were to be your last*, Prov. xxvii. 1. Look on yourselves as standing every day at the door of eternity, and hundreds of diseases and accidents ready to open the door to let you in. No doubt you have sometimes apprehended yourselves nearer death than you think yourselves just now, yet it is certain that death was never so near you, nor judgment never so near you as they are at present. We, who stand every hour at the door of eternity, should spend our precious hours with the greatest frugality, seeing the work we have in hand is soul-work, and work on which eternity depends; and the time we have to work it in is very short, and cannot be recalled. This short life being only a passage to eternity, it should be spent as a continual preparation for eternity. Surely those who have immortal souls so near eternity, have other work to do than trifle away time in tippling, idle-talking, gaming, and such diversions.

DIRECT. XXVII. —*Sojourn in this world as travellers, keeping so loose from the world, as to be able to pack up and be gone from it upon short warning*, 1 Pet. i. 17. 1 Cor vii. 29. 31.— We have no continuing city nor certain abode here; therefore, let us always be ready to arise and depart. And if we would be right travellers towards Zion above, we must have Christ in our hearts, heaven in our eye, and the world under our feet. We must take God's Spirit for our guide, God's word for our rule, God's glory for our end, God's fear for our guard, God's people for our companions, God's praise for our recreation, and God's promises for our cordials. We must make religion our business, prayer our delight, holiness our way, and heaven our home. O Zion's travellers, distinguish yourselves from the men that dwell upon the earth. Let Christ always be precious to you, the word sweet, sin bitter, the world a wilderness, and death welcome. Let Christ's will be your will, Christ's dishonour your affliction, Christ's cause your concern, Christ's success your joy, Christ's day your delight, Christ's cross your glory, Christ's sufferings your meditation, Christ's wounds your refuge, Christ's blood your balm, Christ's righteousness your clothing, and Christ's presence your heaven. While travelling here, let your hearts burn with love to Christ, love to think of Christ, love to hear of Christ, love to read of Christ, love to speak of Christ, love to speak for Christ, love to speak to Christ.

DIRECT. XXVIII. —*Keep up a lively sense of sacramental vows and engagements, and walk answerably thereto*, Psal. lvi. 12, 13. You are under a sacramental oath to be true and faithful soldiers to the Captain of your salvation; see that you fight his battles against his and your enemies, the devil, the world, and the flesh. Remember what your Captain hath done and suffered for you; let his love, as well as your oath, constrain you to abide by his standard. Never go over to his enemies camp, nor keep correspondence with

them. Your glorious Captain gives you choice feasts at his table to strengthun and encourage you both for work and warfare; walk on in strength of these spiritual meals, and grow stronger in grace, and more lively in all spiritual duties, pray more fervently, hear more attentively, meditate more frequently, partake more believingly, keep sabbaths more delightfully, and walk worthy of the Lord unto all well pleasing. Your spiritual meals are designed for your nourishment, strength and growth. Therefore, grow in grace. O believers, if you would lay up a treasure of glory for yourselves hereafter, lay up a treasure of grace in your hearts just now; increase faith, love, heart-purity, and humility. Whoever is rich in grace now, will be rich in glory hereafter: For what is grace but glory begun, and what is glory but grace perfected? Who then would not love grace, seeing it is begun glory, and a certain pledge of complete glory?

DIRECT. XXIX.—*Improve the talents God gives you for his service and glory,* Luke xix. 13. Remember you were not made for yourselves only, but for society and the benefit of others; therefore, employ your gifts, your substance, and whatever God has bestowed, for the good of others; teach the ignorant, relieve the poor, strengthen the weak, comfort those that are cast down, tell them your experiences, commend Christ as a choice Master and a lovely Saviour, and invite them to come, "taste and see that he is good;" pity those who are strangers to him, and pray for them. Be useful to others while you live, which will make your memory savoury when you die; many, alas, are so unprofitable in their lives, that when they come to die, neighbours scarce think their life worth a prayer, or their death worth a tear; but public-spirited and useful persons are much lamented. Let every one in their stations be active, and occupy their talents for God. Be assured, the more you do for God in this world, the more God will do for you in the world to come. If the saints were capable of grief in heaven, it would be for their doing so little for God on earth.

DIRECT. XXX.—*Let all believers be thankful to God for his distinguishing favours and mercies to them,* Psal. cxvi. 8. 12.—A life of praise doth highly become the proofs of God's love to you. Fall down humbly before God, and ascribe all to his free undeserved grace! For, "who is it that maketh thee to differ from another? What hast thou, but what thou hast received in a way of free gift?" O wonder at his free love, that has distinguished you from others! has done that for you that he has not done for thousands, for myriads, for millions! nor for those who sit in the same assembly, or dwell in the same house with you! O bless God who sent his dear Son to ransom you, and bring you out of prison, when others are left in bondage! Who sent his holy Spirit to open your eyes, when others are left blind; to open your ears, when others are left deaf; to open your hearts, when others are left shut; to open your mouths to praise free distinguishing love, when others are left dumb. Employ your tongues then to commend his love, and sing his praise.

DIRECT. XXXI.—*Since God distinguishes you from others, in his mercies to you, see that you distinguish yourselves from others, in your service to him,* Matth v. 47. Are you christians indeed? You are under stronger obligations to live and act for Christ, than others: Why? You have both your new name and your new nature from Christ, which others have not; you are more nearly related to Christ than others; you are engaged to act for him, by more frequent and solemn vows than others; you have greater mercies bestowed on you than others; others have but common mercies, but you have covenant mercies, mercies that accompany salvation. You have spiritual life within you, and divine influences which others want; not only the world, but Christ himself expects more from you than others; all which are powerful engagements on you, to do more for God than others. You know more of the things of God than others; you talk more of them, you profess more, you promise and engage to do more than others; yea, God has done unspeakably more for you than others; and he may justly expect more from you than others; and put that question to you, "What do ye for me more than others?" Mat. v. 47.

Quest. Wherein should believers distinguish themselves, and do more for God than others? *Ans.* You should be witnesses for God, and testify against what is dishonouring to him, by abstaining from all known sin, and from these sins which are common and fashionable, and little thought of by others. By reproving sin in others, and endeavouring to pluck them out of the fire. By keeping up family-religion even in the midst of business, and banishing all known vice from your dwellings, even minced oaths, rash using of God's name, idle walking or talking on the Lord's day, backbitings, evil-wishes, revengeful actions, unnecessary drinking or tippling, lottery-games, or pastimes of bad report, &c. Be zealous for sabbath-holiness. Be meek and lowly in your carriage; commend Christ to others; speak for the honour of religion before those who disregard it; shew special regard to those who are stamped with God's image, though mean or despised; be ready to forgive wrongs, and render good for evil; deal honestly and justly with all men; be sober and temperate in eating, drinking, sleep, apparel, &c. Guard against pride, passion, hasty and unguarded words; put great respect upon God's word and ordinances; be concerned for the enlarging of Christ's kingdom; never venture upon any known sin for the sake of worldly gain; make conscience of relative and stational duties, as to be good husbands, good wives, good parents, good children, good masters, good servants, good neighbours, &c. In such things as these, you are to do more for God than others.

DIRECT. XXXII.—*Be not content with a fair profession of religion, or with a form of godliness, and a name to live among men,* Tit. i 16. 2 Tim. iii. 5. But endeavour to know and feel the power of godliness in your hearts, and to have your practice in all respects corresponding to your profession.—If your practice be not answerable to what you profess, you sin against great light, you discredit religion, and tempt men to think it all hypocrisy. If a man live and die a mere professor, it had been better for him he had lived and died a mere heathen.

DIRECT. XXXIII.—*Keep always a watch upon the door of your lips,* Psal. cxli. 3. seeing the tongue hath a world of iniquity in it, James iii. 6. Keep it as with a bridle, Psal. xxxix. 1. and beg the Lord's help to keep it, and that he himself may set a watch upon your mouths, as the Psalmist prays, Psalm cxli. as knowing that no watchfulness or resosolution of our own is sufficient for the governing of our tongues, without God's special grace; without this, the most wake-rife watchman watcheth in vain. Earnestly seek for Christ's sake, God's special grace to govern this unruly member, that it may not be suffered to utter words which may tend to the dishonour of God, or to the hurt of men. Study to govern your tongues, by using God's name with reverence, speaking always what is truth and what is

seasonable, useful, and edifying, guarding carefully against lying, evil-speaking, passionate, proud, and self exalting words, and against all rash censures: You have need of great caution in speaking, and to take heed either how ye commend yourselves, or condemn others.

Direct. XXXIV.—*Walk cheerfully and contentedly in every condition*, Acts viii. 39. Phil. iv. 11. Such a walk as this doth bring great credit to religion and the service of our Redeemer. What though a believer be fed with the bread and water of affliction the most of his life, he hath other bread and another cup to sweeten both; the forgiveness of sin is a reviving cordial in every case. Have no will of your own distinct from God's will, but be resigned to God's disposing will in every thing, and let God's will and choice be always yours. If you cannot bring your condition to your mind, then you must labour to bring your mind to your condition, believing that the will of your heavenly Father is always best for you. Still remember that he hath engaged himself to be with you in all states and conditions, and to order all things for your advantage: Be sure, then he cannot deny himself; all his words are oaths for their certainty, and all his promises are the sure mercies of David. Be content in every case, for since Christ is yours, "all things are yours." Well, then, let your covenanted God choose out your lot for you; for you may trust that it shall be done with more wisdom, and with more affection, than you can chuse for yourself.

Direct. XXXV.—If ye would manifest yourselves to be truly religious both before God and man, *keep always the first and second table of the law joined together, and make conscience of both*, Matth. xxii. 37, &c. Love both God and your neighbour, be just and upright in all your dealings with men, acting always under a sense of the all-seeing eye of your heavenly Father, who enjoins you to do the same to others, as ye would have them doing to you. Let a moral man try his religion by the duties of the first table of the law, and a professor his by the duties of the second table of the law. See that ye love God above all things, and prefer his worship and service to every thing. Love God for himself, and love men principally for what is God-like in them.

Direct. XXXVI.—*Carefully guard against apostasy and backsliding from God and his ways*, Heb. x. 38, 39. Be always jealous of your deceitful and treacherous hearts, knowing that they are bent to backsliding. A holy fear of departing from God, is a good means to keep us from departing from God. Therefore, endeavour to preserve always a watchful and tender frame of heart, and be afraid of falling away, according to that word, Heb. iv. 1. If ye would preserve yourselves from total apostasy, rise speedily after every fall by sound repentance, and have recourse to the blood of Christ. Ly not one day in any sin, but rise out of the puddle immediately, and get to the cleansing Fountain, and renew your covenant with God, and beg more strength, and faith to derive continual supplies from Christ your Head. Be often calling your souls to account, and asking your hearts, What is become of the good frames, the melting sense of sin, the hungering desires, the delightful taste, the heavenly longings, the warm affections to Christ, that they sometimes had. When ye attain to these, or to any of them, see that ye commit them to Christ's keeping, saying with the Psalmist, "Lord, be surety for thy servant for good." *Lastly*, Consider the dreadful case of an apostate, as described by our Lord and his apostle, Matth. xii. 43, 44. 2 Pet. ii. 20. 21. That man's case becomes far more miserable than it was at first. What a sad case is it for a soul to fall back into hell, after it had climbed near the gates of heaven? None fall so deeply into hell as those who fall backward into it.

Direct. XXXVII.—*Be watchful against all sin, and particularly your darling or constitutional sin, the sin that most easily besets you*, Psal. xviii. 23. Heb. xii. 1. Our adversary the devil, well knows this sin, and on what side we may be attacked with the greatest success; and to be sure, he will bring his strongest temptations thither, and employ his most subtile wiles and devices, that way to ensnare us. It were happy for us if we were still watching against him, and could say with the apostle, "We are not ignorant of his devices." You are likewise to watch against all sin whatsomever, sins of omission as well as of commission. Gross outbreakings make conscience to start at their appearance, but it is not so alarmed with the neglect of duties. But if conscience be awakened, sins of omission will lie heavy as well as sins of commission. Some eminent Christians, who have lived the most circumspect lives, when they have come to die and reflect on their by-past time have been put to cry, "Lord, in special forgive my sins of omission." Venture not to live in any frame, course, or practice, that you would not adventure to die in, seeing you know not but your next step may be into the grave. Guard against all these sins and evils now in the time of your health, that may put thorns in your pillow when sickness and the harbingers of death approach, such as "mispending of precious time, neglect of prayer, or reading of the Scriptures, formality and luke-warmness in religion, earthly-mindedness, unthankfulness for mercies, and miscarrying after them. Neglect of improving Christ, quenching the Spirit, neglect of convictions, breaking of vows, falling from your first love, returning to old sins you had mourned over, sinning against light, and after afflictions," &c.

Direct. XXXVIII.—*Be heartily concerned for the coming and enlarging of Christ's kingdom in the world*, Matth. vi. 10. Psal. lxxii. 19. Bewail it that his flock is so little, his subjects so few, when satan's are so numerous. Bewail the unsuccessfulness of the gospel, the restraint of the Spirit, the divisions among Christians, and the many hindrances of the progress of Christianity. Lament the wrongs and dishonours done to God by others; cry and wrestle for the outpouring of the Spirit, both at home and abroad; pray for the revival of God's work in these lands, amidst these declining years; and in enquiring after public news have a view to this, be concerned for the interest and welfare of Christ's kingdom through the world, for the accomplishment of God's promises concerning the destruction of Antichrist, Babylon's downfal, the inbringing of the Jews, and the subduing of the nations. And when you hear of any appearance of God's arising to countenance his word, and conquer sinners to himself, whether at home or abroad, rejoice at the news, reckon them good tidings of great joy, and bless the Lord for them with all your hearts. It is most pleasing and acceptable to God, to see his people heartily concerned for the prosperity of Jerusalem.

Direct. XXXIX.—*Be busy laying up a stock for a sick-bed or death-bed, when all the comforts of life will be tasteless to you*, 1 Tim. vi. 19. Lay up a stock of faith and patience, a stock of evidences of divine love, and of your interest in Christ; a stock of divine promises and experiences of God's loving kindness, which may be supporting to you in the day of sharp trials. When mariners go to sea, they victual the

ship, and provide for a storm. And ought not we to foresee the storms of affliction, of sickness and of death, and provide and lay up for them? It will be sad, if, when the Bridegroom is come, we have our oil then to buy, when the market is over. Now is the time for providing oil; now is the market of grace; now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation.

DIRECT XL.—*Be looking and longing for the eternal supper of the Lamb*, Philip i. 23. Rev. xix. 9 Hungry souls, who have tasted the love of Jesus, long for the Lamb's supper below, that they may enjoy communion with him here, and this makes them cry, When shall the opportunity return? When shall I come and appear before God? When shall I again see his power and glory in the sanctuary? When shall I again taste his love and goodness in the sacrament? And yet these are but small foretastes of the Lamb's supper above. What is our drinking of the fruit of the vine here, to our drinking it new with Christ in his Father's kingdom? Therefore, look out, and long for the time when the day shall break, and the shadows flee away, and the marriage of the Lamb shall be triumphantly solemnized and completed with the church his espoused bride, whom he will then lead into the King's palace, where their transient glances shall be changed into immediate vision, and their short tastes into everlasting feasting and fulness. "O blessed are they for ever, who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb:" These are the true sayings of God. I believe, Lord help my unbelief. Amen.

Unto the foresaid *Directory*, I shall subjoin a variety of *Scripture Songs*, for the use and benefit of *Zion's travellers*; and these I design as a supplement to my *gospel-hymns*, published some months ago; and which addition I understand will be agreeable to the desires of not a few.

As to the duty and advantage of praising God by singing such *hymns and spiritual songs*, according to the Apostle's repeated instructions, I shall add nothing to what I have said thereanent, in my preface to the foresaid *Gospel-hymns*, but refer my reader thereto.

SCRIPTURE-SONGS

FOR

ZION'S TRAVELLERS,

IN

THEIR WAY TO HEAVEN.

ISA. xxxv. 10.—*The Ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to* ZION *with Songs.*

PSAL. cxxxviii. 5.—*They shall sing in the ways of the Lord.*

SONG I.

The PRIMITIVE COMMUNICANTS.

1 CHRIST's friends at first oft broke his bread,
Inspir'd with love divine,
They drank the Spirit of their Head,
As well's the sacred wine.

2 They shew'd his death with heart and soul,
And feasted on his love;
His blood and wounds they did extol,
And sung like saints above.

3 Lord, grant us part of that love-flame,
Which in their hearts abode;
That made them witness for the Lamb,
And suffer for their God.

4 Warm show'rs from heav'n send down on us,
That frozen hearts may yield,
And turn us from a wilderness
Into a fruitful field.

5 Thy people, Lord, lament for thee,
And sore thy absence mourn;
They long thy face again to see:
To gospel-feasts return.

6 Come to thy table, with us sit,
Our grudges all remove,
Unite our hearts, and make us fit
To keep the feast of love.

7 Cause streams of living waters flow
In channels of thy grace;
And let the north and south wind blow,
Our straitnings to release.

8 Thy Spirit's temple make our hearts,
And with us still abide;
Make his convictions pierce like darts,
Let us no more backslide.

9 Thy hidings are a bitter cup,
Like flowers we fade and mourn,
We droop, we grieve, and can't look up,
Till thou our Sun return.

10 Lord charge not on us former guilt,
Let all thine anger cease;
Look to the blood on Calv'ry spilt,
And bid us go in peace.

SONG II.

The HOLY SPIRIT *fits us for the* HOLY TABLE.

1 O FATHER of our dying Lord,
Hear thy Son's speaking blood,
Fulfil to us his gracious word;
Send down the heavenly food.

2 Thy Spirit grant, for which he pray'd
To glorify thy Son;
His promis'd influences shed,
That wonders may be done.

3 Glad we'll his death commemorate,
Ay till he come again;
Bless both the word and sacrament,
Take thy great power and reign.

4 Christ's table now stands furnished
With blessings of best kinds;
Pardon and *Peace* bought with his blood,
Choice food for troubled minds.

5 Give faith to feed and view his love,
His stripes and wounds each one,
How he was jeer'd that's fear'd above,
Blasphem'd and spit upon.

6 In's hands and feet we see the nails
Piercing his tender veins;

For us each wound the blushing ground,
With blood infinite stains.
7 Black clouds for us o'erwhelm'd his soul,
Sore was his agony;
When he cry'd, *My God, my God, why*
Why hast thou forsaken me?
8 Thy matchless love we'll praise aloud,
Ourselves it doth constrain,
To love and live to thee our God,
Who for our sins wast slain.
9 May I no more to pray'r be dragg'd,
To serve thee let me run.
May I in duties keep my course,
Like to the rising sun.
10 Unto the Lamb that once was slain,
Be praise and glory giv'n,
By all that dwell upon the earth,
And all the hosts of heav'n.

SONG III.

CHRIST's SACRIFICE, *the only Foundation of our* TRUST.

1 SO great's the guilt of fallen man,
None could his pardon buy;
Great must it be, when God himself
Must for his creature die!
2 Slain beasts for sin could not atone.
Such off'rings all were vain,
Had not the Father giv'n his Son
For sinners to be slain.
3 Had the whole church been offer'd up,
As one burnt sacrifice;
Our smallest debt this could not pay,
Creatures could not suffice.
4 But mercy, in this hopless case,
A Sacrifice prepares;
A Lamb of all sufficient worth,
Which dissipates our fears.
5 This Sacrifice more precious
Than all created things,
To us eternal happiness
In soul and body brings.
6 This is the sure Foundation-stone,
Which God in Zion lays,
For men to build their hopes upon,
He's blest that on it stays.
7 Tho' earth's foundations be remov'd,
This Rock still standeth fast,
By storms unmov'd, on this alone
My anchor I will cast.
8 The Lamb, our Rock, for us did die,
For us rose from the dead,
For us he did ascend on high,
For us his blood doth plead.
9 O bleeding Lamb, shew me thy name
Writ in thy book of life;
Then I will long to be with thee,
Out of this land of strife.
10 To worship with the heav'nly host,
JEHOVAH one in three,
The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
To all eternity.

SONG IV.

The DISTRESSED SOUL *looking to the* LAMB *for Pity.*

1 COME see my case, O bleeding Lamb,
In mercy take me as I am,
Quite naked, and put cloathing on
A stranger, and make me a son.
2 Burden'd with guilt, and give me ease
A bond-man, and my soul release,
All vile, not fit to join thy saints;
A creature all made up of wants.
3 By nature I have nothing good,
All must be brought me by thy blood,
But since thy wounds are open'd wide,
I'll hope in Jesus crucify'd.
4 Thy blood mens sorest plagues doth cure,
Thy wounds their backward hearts allure,
Thy blood strange changes works in men,
For wond'rous works the Lamb was slain!
5 Thy Bible doth thy pity shew,
I rest on thy words sweet and true,
Souls come to me, and no more doubt,
For him that comes I'll not cast out.
6 Renew my soul, plant grace this day,
Give me a heart to mourn and pray,
O kill in me this rebel sin,
Restore thy image me within.
7 For these things I to thee do come,
Cast me not out, since there is room,
Make good thy words, and hear my cries,
For on thy truth my soul relies.
8 O dearest Lamb, didst thou not bleed,
To purchase every thing we need?
Doth not thy blood still run to heal
Distressed souls, their plagues who feel?
9 We feel our sores—Lord, heal us soon.
And in us let thy will be done.
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
One God in Christ, that saves the lost

SONG V.

A call to wonder at CHRIST's SUFFERINGS, *from* LOVE t[illegible]

1 BEHOLD Christ in a bloody sweat,
Which all his garments stains!
See four wide wounds in's hands and feet,
When big nails pierc'd his veins!
2 Behold his soul oppressed sore,
And in the greatest pain!
How heavy was the wrath he bore,
Of which he did complain?
3 Yet, Lord, whilst our sins fill'd to thee
This bitter wrathful cup;
A blessed feast thou mad'st, that we
Might at thy table sup!
4 O friends of Christ, draw near his throne
To him thank off'rings bring,
For *in his temple ev'ry one*
Should of his glory sing.

5 Let men him love; and sin abhor,
Which caus'd him grief and pain;
Let all the angels still adore
The Lamb for sinners slain!
6 With warm affections let us bless
Our great High-Priest above,
And ev'ry day admire and praise
The wonders of his love!
7 From love he left his throne on high,
Lodg'd in a virgin's womb!
Love brought him to the cross to die!
Love laid him in a tomb!
8 Love rais'd him up, and took him back,
To heav'n to make us room!
From thence return he'll for our sake,
In love to bring us home!
9 From love he wearies not to plead,
And shew his bleeding hands,
Since he hath justice satisfy'd,
Our freedom he demands.
10 Thy blood hath done all things for me,
I'll glory in the cross;
My best things I'll give up for thee,
I count them all but loss.

SONG VI.

From 2 Sam. xxiii. 3.—7.—*Being a* Prophecy *of* Christ, *and King* David's Swan Song *in the views of death.*

1 A RULER just o'er men shall rise,
In God's fear rule shall he,
As morning light springs from the skies,
So welcome shall he be.
2 Like rising sun he scatters all
The black shades of the night,
No clouds this morning darken shall,
Refreshing is its light.
3 He shall the frozen earth solace,
Like sun-shine after rain,
Whose warm beams revive the grass,
And make all spring again.
4 I'm griev'd, all prove not good and just,
Who from my loins do spring;
But glad to see he springs from me,
That's Zion's blessed King.
5 A King that saves us from our foes,
In hearts rules by his might;
With his just laws let all men close,
Obey him, it's his right.
6 Although my house be not with God
Such as it ought to be;
Yet he hath, thro' Messiah's blood,
A cov'nant made with me.
7 A covenant which life doth bring,
And evermore endure,
Well ordered in ev'ry thing,
With promises most sure:
8 My heart's desire is towards it,
'Tis my salvation,
Altho' he doth not come as yet
For to redress what's wrong.
9 But Belial's sons who are his foes,
God smite them will in ire;
He'll them consume who him oppose,
Like thorns burnt up with fire.

SONG VII.

The Saints Triumph *over death* From Job xix. 25 &c.
1 Cor. xv. 43. 53. Philip. iii. 21. Ezek. xvi. 14.

1 THOUGH on me heavy trials come,
And death's stroke on me fall,
My faith and hope shall not succumb,
But triumph o'er them all.
2 I know that my Redeemer lives,
Who pleads my cause with God,
To save each soul who him believes,
He comes to shed his blood.
3 Then for a while he'll go away,
But will return again,
And on the earth, at latter day,
Stand with a glorious train.
4 Though in the grave my body fall,
And worms do it consume,
Ev'n skin and flesh, blood, bones, and all,
Yet death I'll overcome.
5 My Lord will raise me from the dust,
He'll clothe my bones with flesh,
I'll see my God whom now I trust,
Which will my soul refresh.
6 That flesh which all consumed was,
The very same shall rise;
Yea, I will see Christ's lovely face,
With these my very eyes.
7 Though for a time my dust be loath'd,
Most beautiful I'll be,
My mortal body shall be cloth'd
With immortality
8 Like Christ's own body I will shine,
With raiment white as light.
His comeliness is ever mine:
This ev'ry saint makes bright.

SONG VIII.

CHRIST's Eternal Love *to Mankind.*

From Prov. viii. 27. *to the end.*

1 WHEN the creation was begun
By God's almighty hand,
Then I, his own Eternal Son,
Concurr'd in the command.
2 I joined to his counsels wise,
Lost mankind to redeem;
I was my Father's chief delight,
And I rejoic'd in him.
3 And in the earth, when it for man
Was fram'd with divine art;
With pleasure I foresaw the Church,
Its habitable part.
4 Before the light was made to shine,
My heart was set on man;

My thoughts, from all eternity,
On his salvation ran.
5 The foresight of men's misery,
Made me engage for them
To be their help; for my delights
Were with the sons of men.
6 O children, then to me give ear;
They're blest my ways that chuse:
Be wise, and my instruction hear;
They're fools who it refuse.
7 Blest is the man that hears my word,
And doth attend my gates;
Who watchfully looks for the Lord,
And at his door-posts waits.
Blest is the man that findeth me,
With me he'll live above,
And have, thro' all eternity,
God's favour and his love.
But his own soul he doth injure,
Who slights my offers free;
And those who hate my precepts pure,
Court death eternally.

SONG IX.

From Solomon's Song, chap. i. *Being a Dialogue betwixt* CHRIST *and his* Spouse.

Spouse.

1 LIKE sweetest ointment smells thy name,
Dear JESUS, unto me.
Hence virgin-souls send out a flame
Of holy love to thee.
2 O draw me, and we'll run to thee;
Blest King, thou didst me bring
Into thy chamber, hence will we
In thee rejoice and sing.
3 More than the taste of richest wine,
Thy love think on we will;
Most costly was thy love design;
The upright love thee still.
4 Tell me, good Shepherd, whom I love,
Where thy dear sheep are fed;
Shew me the paths wherein they move,
And where they find a shade.
5 Leave me not in a wand'ring course,
Like those who lose their way:
With flocks of thy competitors
Let me not go astray.

Christ.

6 Art thou bewilder'd, my fair one,
And canst not find thy rest?
Come, follow my direction,
I'll shew thee what is best.
7 In footsteps of my flock go on,
The shepherds tents keep nigh;
Thy kids and young ones bring along,
So thou shalt meet with me.

Spouse.

8 While at his table sits the King,
My spikenard smelleth sweet:
My graces languishing do spring,
With this Sun's quick'ning heat.
9 Dear Jesus, as a bunch of myrrh,
Shall in my bosom lie;
To lodge with me he'll not demur,
While nightly shades do stay.

SONG X.

From Song iii. 1. to 9.

Christ.

1 I AM the Rose of Sharon's field,
The Lily of the vale;
I sweetness and delight do yield,
When earthly glories fail.
2 As lilies shine amidst the thorns,
So doth my love the bride;
The daughters want what her adorns,
Though they live by her side.

Spouse.

3 As th' apple tree doth far excel
The forest's barren growth;
So my Love outshines mortals all,
Though in their blooming youth.
4 Under his shade, with great delight,
I sat down for to rest;
I found solace, his heav'nly fruit
Was sweet unto my taste.
5 He brought me to his house of wine,
My faintings to allay;
The banner of his love divine
O'er me he did display.
6 Bring strength'ning flagons unto me,
With cordials from above;
Fetch me sweet apples from the tree,
For I am sick of love.
7 When thus my fainting soul did cry
For grace me to uphold,
My tender-hearted Lord drew nigh,
His arms me did infold.
8 All things without me and within,
I charge to stand in awe,
To wake or grieve my love with sin,
Lest from me he withdraw.
9 Though griev'd, he doth return to me,
For lo! his voice I hear,
O'er hills of guilt him leap I see,
My mourning soul to cheer.
10 He hastes to me like hart or roe,
Our dark walls he makes light;
Through lattices himself doth shew,
With comeliness most bright.

SONG XI.

From Song ii. 10. to the end.

Christ.

1 RISE up, said Christ, my fairest one,
Come thou away to me;
The winter-storms of wrath are gone,
I bore them all for thee.
2 From barren ground the flow'rs do spring,
Men hear the turtle's voice;

The drooping birds begin to sing,
And sad hearts to rejoice.
3 Young figs and grapes do now appear,
And yield a sweet perfume;
The heav'nly vine faint hearts doth cheer,
Rise up, my love, and come.
4 My dove that lodgest in the rock,
In clefts of my deep wounds;
And dost to me in secret look,
When in thee grief abounds:
5 Lift up thy face and voice to me,
These please mine eye and ear;
Thy graces all I love to see,
Thy voice of pray'r to hear.
6 Take us the foxes, whose designs
Are vineyards to annoy,
The little foxes, which the vines
And tender grapes destroy.

Spouse.

7 My Love is mine, my soul's delight,
And I am also his;
Among his saints, those lilies white,
His place of feeding is:
8 There he abides till break of day,
When shadows all shall flee;
Till then, come like a hart or roe,
O'er Bether hills to me.

SONG XII.

From Song iii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11.

Spouse.

1 ALL's dark when Jesus hides his face,
Night-shades fall me upon;
Desertion is a weary case,
When Christ my Love is gone.
2 I on my bed my loss did mind,
I sought him thus alone;
My drowsy search him did not find,
Vain was my slothful moan.
3 I'll rise, and round the city go,
Through streets, broad-ways, and lanes;
This way I sought my Love, but lo!
Successless were my pains.
4 The city watchmen found me out,
Their doctrine touch'd my case:
Ah, where's he! Can you solve my doubt?
None of them brought me ease.
5 When means and duties prov'd so weak,
Beyond them all I past:
When I some steps from them did make,
I found my Love at last.
6 I him embrac'd, and held him fast,
Till once I got him brought
Into my mother's dwellings waste,
To strengthen what he wrought.
7 Since he's come in, I do you charge,
Who Salem's daughters are,
By roes and hinds which run at large,
Our joys you do not mar.
8 Let sin or earth no motion make,
For to disturb his rest:
Let none presume my love to wake,
Until it please him best.
9 O, Zion's daughters, all go forth,
Behold King Solomon,
Ev'n Christ our King, of higher worth,
Wearing his glorious crown;
10 Wherewith his mother crown'd his head,
On his espousal day,
That day on which his heart was glad,
Him love and praise for ay.

SONG XIII.

From Song iv. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16.

Christ.

1 THOU art all fair when in thy dress,
My love, thou'rt fair to me;
When clothed with my righteousness,
No spot is seen in thee,
2 My spouse, come off from Lebanon.
And mounts of vanity:
Let all the world's deceits alone,
And come alongst with me.
3 By faith look from Amana's top,
Shenir and Hermon fair;
From dens of prey, behold with hope
The land beyond compare.
4 My spouse, thou dost my love enhance,
And draw'st my heart to thee,
With thy neck-chains, and with a glance
Of thy believing eye.
5 Thy love to me more grateful is,
Than wine of any kind;
Thy graces more than fragrant spice
Acceptance with me find.
6 Thy lips drop sweet; and from thy tongue
Do milk and honey flow:
Thy garments smell as Lebanon,
Which I on thee bestow.
7 A garden fair, inclos'd by grace,
My spouse thou art to me;
I chus'd thee from the wilderness,
With fine springs furnish'd thee.

Spouse.

8 If I thy garden be, O Lord,
Cause heaven's wind awake,
Sweet quick'ning gales to me afford,
My graces lively make.
9 Sharp northern blasts send to convince,
And cause the south wind blow;
With breathings warm assist my mints,
And make my spices flow.
10 Then let my Love his presence sweet
Unto his garden grant,
That he may eat his pleasant fruit,
Which he himself did plant.

SONG

SONG XIV.

From Song v. 1, 2, 3, 4.

CHRIST.

1 MY Spouse, to answer thee I'm come
Into my garden fair;
My myrrh and spice of sweet perfume,
With pleasure I do share.
2 On honey, wine, and milk I feast;
All friends, come eat with me.
And drink my wine of heavenly taste,
Yea, drink abundantly.

SPOUSE.

3 While Christ invites, my soul prevails,
Yet something wakes in me,
To hearken to Christ's knocks and calls,
His voice speaks pressingly.

CHRIST.

4 Open to me, my Father's child;
Open to me, my love;
Open to me, my undefil'd;
Open to me, my dove.
5 From love I'm standing at thy door,
Thy heart cast open soon;
A midnight show'r of wrath I bore,
To save thee when undone.

SPOUSE.

6 I am undress'd, and rest is sweet,
From bed I cannot rise;
How shall I now defile my feet?
Thus sloth did me entice.
7 By the key-hole, my well-belov'd
His hand of pow'r put in;
So that my bowels all were mov'd,
For being ungrate to him.
8 When I rouz'd up, obey'd his knock,
My hands dropt pleasantly
With oil of myrrh, left on the lock,
Which made the bolt to fly.
9 To my Belov'd I open'd fast,
Who to my grief was gone!
I fainted when his speeches past
I mournfully thought on.
10 I sought him then with carefulness;
But found he could not be:
I call'd on him in this distress,
He did not answer me.
11 The watchmen who do go their rounds,
And keep the city-wall,
Abus'd me and did give me wounds,
And tore away my veil.

SONG XV.

A DIALOGUE *betwixt the Spouse and Daughters of Jerusalem, from* Song v. 8. *to the end.*

SPOUSE.

1 O SALEM's race, if you him find,
I charge you tell my case;
I'm sick of love, sore pain'd in mind,
He only can me ease.

DAUGHTERS.

2 O fairest one, we fain would know,
The object of thy love;
What charms he hath, that thou dost so
Prize him all men above.

SPOUSE.

3 My Love is white and ruddy too,
The chief of thousands ten;
His innocence and suff'rings do
Him beautify to men
4 His blessed head doth far excel
The gold that is most fine,
His locks are black and curled well,
They raven-like do shine.
5 His eyes are like the eyes of doves,
When they in flocks are met
Near water-streams, which they do love,
Milk-wash'd and fitly set.
6 His cheeks are like the sweetest flow'rs,
And beds where spices grow;
His lips like lilies are, from whence
Sweet smelling myrrh doth flow.
7 As rings of gold with beryl set,
So do his hands appear;
His belly bright as iv'ry
O'erlaid with sapphires clear.
8 His legs like marble pillars are,
Which on gold sockets went,
Like Lebanon his face is fair,
As cedars excellent.
9 His mouth that makes sweet promises,
To ev'ry saint is sweet:
Yea, he all over lovely is,
View him from head to feet.
10 O daughters of Jerusalem,
This is my Love and Friend,
For whom none can devise a name,
Or proper emblems find.

SONG XVI.

The DIALOGUE *continued.* Song vi.

DAUGHTERS.

1 O FAIREST bride, we fain would know,
Where's thy beloved gone?
Tell us that we with thee may go,
To seek this matchless one.

SPOUSE.

2 My Love is gone to heav'n above,
Yet doth he condescend
To come into his garden here,
And beds of spice attend.
3 In meetings of his saints he's found,
These gardens of delight,
He's there to bring them rich supplies,
And gather lilies white.
4 To my Beloved I belong,
And my Belov'd to me;
To feed among the lily flow'rs,
Great pleasure taketh he.

CHRIST.

5 O who is she that looketh forth,
Like to the morning light?
When it darts out to chase away
The darkness of the night.
6 Fair as the moon, clear as the sun,
With dazzling beams array'd;
Yet like an army terrible,
With banners all display'd *.
7 She comes up from the wilderness,
She walks and always leans
On her beloved; for her heart
From all things else she weans.

* Chap. vi. 10.

SONG XVII.

CHRIST'S *sufferings for us.* From Isa. liii.

1 WHO hath believ'd the faithful word,
Which we to men declare?
Who feels the arm of God the Lord
Displayed and made bare?
2 Messiah, like a weak plant grows,
A root from ground that's dry,
No outward beauty he assumes,
To draw the carnal eye.
3 Rejected and despis'd is he,
Through sinners unbelief,
A man of sorrows all his days,
And well acquaint with grief.
4 We hid our faces when he came,
To take our wrathful lot;
Despis'd he was, and put to shame,
And we esteem'd him not.
5 Of griefs and sorrows all his time,
For us he bore the load;
But ah, we judg'd that for his crime,
He smitten was of God.
6 But he for our transgressions
Was wounded and abus'd,
His soul for our iniquities
Most grievously was bruis'd.
7 On him was laid our chastisement,
By which our peace he seal'd;
Sharp bloody stripes he underwent,
Whereby our wounds are heal'd.
8 All we like sheep from God have stray'd,
And did our own ways chuse;
And these our sins God on him laid,
Which love would not refuse.
9 Oppress'd and wrong'd our Surety stood,
Accused of untruth;
To slaughter went he as a lamb,
And open'd not his mouth.
10 Before the shearers, like a sheep,
He dumb and silent lies,
He meekly goes thro' waters deep,
Without repining cries.
11 His soul in trav'lling anguish lies,
His pains were multiply'd;
But when the blessed fruit he sees
He is well satisfy'd.

SONG XVIII.

A THANKSGIVING *for* REDEEMING LOVE:
From Rom. v. and *Heb.* xiii.

1 WHEN we were destitute of strength
Ourselves to help and save;
For the ungodly, Christ, at length,
His life a ransom gave.
2 Scarce any for a righteous man
Will dare his life to stake;
And for a good man it were much
Such an exchange to make.
3 But God his matchless love commends,
When his most glorious Son
Dy'd for us while unrighteous,
Vile sinners, and undone.
4 Since by his blood, Christ us from sin
Doth justify and free,
Then surely from the wrath to come,
We ever safe shall be.
5 If Christ for enemies to God
Did die to end the strife;
Much more when reconciled thus,
He'll save us by his life.
6 Yea more than so, we joy in God,
Thro' Jesus Christ our Lord:
The great atonement we receive,
And so obey his word,
7 Now he that's Lord of quick and dead,
The God of love and peace,
That from the grave brought Christ our Head,
And him to life did raise;
8 Who, as the Shepherd great and good,
His life for us did grant,
And did establish with his blood,
Th' eternal covenant;
9 May he in us his work fulfil,
Till he us perfect make,
Still strength'ning us to do his will
For our Redeemer's sake;
10 And work in us what his word says,
Is pleasing him before;
Thro' Jesus Christ, to whom be praise,
And glory evermore.

SONG XIX.

MATCHLESS LOVE *in the* GIFT *of* CHRIST:
From John iii. 14. *to* 17.

1 O WONDROUS divine love to men!
When wrath 'gainst us did swell,
God took our nature, bore our guilt,
To save our souls from hell.
2 As Moses in the wilderness,
Did lift high on a pole
A brazen serpent, for stung men
To view and be made whole;
3 So Jesus Christ the Antitype,
Was lifted up on high

Upon the cross, that wounded souls
  Might look and healed be.
4 And there, he says, whoe'er believes
  In him unfeignedly,
Shall never perish in their sins,
  But live eternally.
5 God lov'd the world so, as to give
  His Son to dwell in clay,
And die, that all who in him trust,
  Might live with God for ay.
6 Good news! that Christ there twice declares,
  All who in him believe
Are safe from hell, and ever shall
  With God in heaven live;
And that his Son God did not send
  A lost world to condemn;
But by his blood he did intend
  To save condemned men
8 Believers all with Christ shall live,
  And ne'er condemned be;
The broken law he satisfied,
  Them for to justify.
9 But vengeance just for ever lies
  On all the rebel race,
Who God's eternal Son despise,
  And scorn his offer'd grace.
10 Obey Christ's call, who saves the lost,
  Serve God that's One in Three;
To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost
  Give praise eternally.

SONG XX.

God's Love *in* Christ *unalterable: From* Rom. viii. 31. *to the end.*

1 GOD's love in Christ transcends our thoughts,
  In saving men from woe;
If God's for us, and stands our friend,
  Who then can be our foe?
2 Since God for us spar'd not his Son,
  But gave him up to die;
His lesser gifts he'll not refuse,
  Nor ought that's good deny.
3 Who shall God's elect ones arraign,
  Whom God hath justified?
Or who shall dare those to condemn,
  For whom this Surety dy'd?
4 Christ dy'd for us; yea, in his love,
  He rose up for our sake,
And doth at God's right hand for us
  Still intercession make.
5 Who from Christ's love shall us divide?
  Shall trouble or distress?
Shall persecution or the sword,
  Famine or nakedness?
6 Nay, o'er all these we triumph shall,
  With the celestial pow'rs;
Thro' Jesus Christ's victorious love,
  We're more than conquerors.
7 I am persuaded, death, nor life,
  Nor principalities,
Nor finite pow'rs, nor present things,
  Nor yet futurities:
8 No height, no depth, no creature shall
  Dissolve the twisted cord
Of mutual love 'twixt God and us,
  In Jesus Christ our Lord.
9 Unchangeable is love divine,
  Time makes it not decay;
For those whom once the Lord doth love,
  He them doth love for ay.
10 From love, great mercies us thou giv'st,
  But one we'll sing of still;
Eternal thanks to God for Christ,
  His gift unspeakable.

SONG XXI.

Thanksgiving *for* God's *free love in and through* Christ, *from* Eph. i. 3, &c. Eph. iii. 18, &c.

1 BLEST be Christ's God, and Father dear,
  For all our heavenly fare;
In Christ he hath enriched us,
  With sp'ritual blessings rare.
2 In love he chose us in his Son,
  Before the world he made,
To make us blameless holy men,
  Like Christ our holy Head.
3 Predestinate us of his grace,
  By Jesus Christ did he,
To be adopted children all,
  In his own family;
4 That all the praise might still redound
  To glorious grace alone;
The Lord hath us accepted made,
  In his beloved Son:
5 In whom, thro' his most precious blood,
  We have redemption free,
Even full remission of our sins,
  That rich grace all might see.
6 In wisdom God makes grace to us
  Flow out abundantly,
That grace may be our lasting song,
  To all eternity.
7 May we be grasping with the saints,
  Christ's love to comprehend,
Whose breadth and length, and depth and height,
  Do boundlessly extend;
8 And press to know that wond'rous love
  Which knowledge all exceeds,
That from his fulness we may have
  Supply to all our needs.
9 Now unto God, who can do more
  Than we can ask or think,
According to his mighty power,
  That took us from hell's brink:
10 All glory in the church by Christ,
  To him be rend'red then,
Thro' ages all for evermore;
  Let all men say, Amen.

SONG

SONG XXII.

Our HOPE *is in* CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS, *and in being with him:* From Phil. iii. 7. &c. 2 Cor. v. 1. &c.

1 THOSE things I heretofore thought gain,
And of them made my boast,
For Christ that doth me justify,
I gave them up for lost.
2 Yea, doubtless, 'tis my fix'd resolve,
To count all things but loss,
That I the excellence may know,
Of Jesus and his cross.
3 All worldly things for him I've lost,
I them as dung esteem,
That I may Christ my treasure win,
And safe be found in him.
4 My righteousness as rags I quit,
I plead what Christ hath done;
This righteousness which God ordains,
By faith I take alone.
5 May I know Jesus in that power,
Which rais'd him from the grave,
That with him in his sufferings,
I fellowship may have:
6 And being conform'd to his death,
By dying unto sin;
A resurrection blest from death,
I may obtain thro' him.
7 Yea, now we know if this clay house
Dissolv'd were off the field,
An heavenly house we have on high,
Which God himself doth build.
8 With strong desires we therefore groan,
That to us it were giv'n,
To know that bliss, and be new cloth'd
With our pure house in heaven.
9 We walk by faith, and not by sight,
And hence we often say,
Content we would the body leave,
And dwell with Christ for ay.
10 Faith's views of Christ prompt us to seek,
And make it still our care,
That whether here or with our Lord,
Of his love we may share.

SONG XXIII.

A THANKSGIVING *for the* FRUITS *of* CHRIST'S RESURRECTION: From 1 Pet. i. 3, 4, &c.

1 FOR ever blessed be the God,
And Father of our Lord,
Whose mercy doth to us abound,
According to his word:
2 Who hath begotten us again
Unto a lively hope,
By Christ his rising from the dead,
Of faith the blessed prop.
3 For by it we are well secur'd
Of an inheritance,
That's not corrupted nor defil'd,
Nor fades by any chance;
4 Which is for us in heav'n reserv'd,
And we are kept for it,
By the almighty power of God,
Thro' faith, till we be fit
5 For that salvation glorious,
To be reveal'd at last,
Of which we wait to be possest,
When time and days are past.
6 In this blest hope we do rejoice,
Tho' for a time we need
Here to be kept in heaviness,
Thro' trials multiplied
7 Our faith more precious than gold,
By fire is tried here,
That unto praise it may be found,
When Jesus doth appear.
8 This Jesus, though unseen, we love,
In him believing still;
Which yields us joy unspeakable,
That is of glory full.
9 When Jesus comes, we shall receive
The blest end of our faith;
Ev'n the salvation of our souls,
Procur'd us by his death.

SONG XXIV.

The SON *of* GOD *manifested*. From 1 John iii. 1. 2, &c.

1 BEHOLD how matchless is that love
The Father hath bestow'd
On men, that we should be adopt,
And call'd the sons of God!
2 His image he makes us to bear,
As sons of heav'nly birth;
This dignity exalts us far
Above the kings on earth.
3 Tho' now the world doth us not know,
As Christ it never knew;
Yet God doth own us as his sons,
We're chang'd and born anew.
4 And what we shall hereafter be,
It doth not yet appear;
But this we know, when Christ shall come,
We shall his likeness bear:
5 For we shall see him as he is,
And like him shine full bright:
We then come near our glorious Sun,
From whom we have our light.
6 As Christ is holy, so must we,
All who hope for that hour;
Themselves will also purifie,
As he, the Lord, is pure.
7 Let's here, as strangers, follow peace,
And walk with one accord;
And always study holiness,
As we would see the Lord.
8 No eye hath seen, nor ear hath heard,
No heart can things above
Conceive, which Jesus hath prepar'd
For them who do him love.

SONG XXV.

The glorious TRINITY *adored, and* CHRIST'S LOVE *extolled.*
From Rev. i. 4, 5, &c. Rev. iv. 8, &c.

1 MAY we have grace and peace from God,
The glorious One in Three,
Who us created and redeem'd,
And us doth sanctify:
2 Ev'n from the Father, who still was,
Who is, and still shall be,
And from the sev'nfold working Sp'rit,
Before his Throne on high;
3 From Jesus Christ, the witness true,
And first-born from the dead,
Who of all earthly kings and powers
Is Prince and ruling Head;
4 To this great Lord, that so lov'd men,
Such loathsome men as we,
As wash us in his precious blood,
Our souls from sin to free.
5 To him, who made us kings and priests,
To God his Father high,
Be glory and dominion,
Through all eternity.
6 Behold he comes with flying clouds,
Him ev'ry eye shall see,
And unbelievers who him pierc'd,
Shall wail most bitterly.
7 But let believers lift their heads
With joy, to see and hear,
For then complete redemption
To them is very near.
8 The hosts above their homage pay,
And crowns cast to the ground,
They never cease by night nor day,
These praises to resound:
9 " O holy, holy, holy Lord,
Almighty God alone,
Who ever was, and also is,
And ever is to come!
10 All glory, pow'r, and honour still,
Thou'rt worthy to receive;
All things were made to please thy will,
And by thy pleasure live.
11 Most worthy Lamb, art thou (they sing)
To be adored thus;
Let with thy praise heav'n's mansions ring,
For thou wast slain for us."

SONG XXVI.

The LAMB *that was slain eternally exalted.* From Rev. v.

1 THE heavenly hosts and elders join,
To bow before the Lamb,
With golden harps and sweetest tunes,
They trumpet forth his fame.
2 They cry, " O Father, who shall look
Into thy secret will?
Worthy the Lamb to take the book,
And open ev'ry seal.
3 Thou'rt fit God's myst'ries to reveal,
For thou wast slain for us,
And thy blood purchas'd us to God,
Which thou shed'st on the cross.
4 From ev'ry nation, kind'red, tongue,
Thy precious blood us bought;
Well thou deserv'st our praising songs,
Who us salvation brought.
5 Unto the Lamb that once was slain,
Be endless praises giv'n,
By all that dwell upon the earth,
And all the hosts of heav'n.
6 Thou hast us ransom'd with thy blood,
And set us pris'ners free;
Thou mak'st us kings and priests to God,
And we shall reign with thee."
7 Let's join, while here, our cheerful songs,
With hosts around the throne,
Ten thousand thousands are their tongues,
Yet all agree in one.
8 " Worthy the Lamb that dy'd, (they cry)
To be exalted thus,"
" Worthy the Lamb, (let us reply)
For he was slain for us.
9 The Lamb is worthy to receive
Strength, wisdom, riches, might,
Eternal honours we ascribe
To him, for 'tis his right.
10 Let heav'n and earth unite in one
To praise the glorious name
Of him that sits upon the throne,
And to adore the Lamb."

SONG XXVII.

A view of the SAINTS *and* MARTYRS *in Heaven.*
From Rev. viii.

1 LET's view by faith the saints above,
Redeem'd from sin by Jesus' love,
Their various tribes, their sweet employ,
In raptures of eternal joy.
2 The patriarchs, with Jacob's race,
Rais'd up to heav'n by God's free grace!
With songs they praise their father's God,
Who led them home the heav'nly road.
3 Next, see a num'rous multitude,
Redeem'd from hell by Jesus' blood,
From ev'ry nation, kindred, tongue,
Who sing an everlasting song.
4 In white robes cloth'd they all do stand,
With palms of triumph in their hand:
" Salvation to God on the throne,
(They cry) and to the Lamb his Son."
5 Next these, come angels, and fall down,
Humbly adoring Three in One;
" (They cry) Amen, give glory, pow'r,
And thanks to God for evermore.
6 But whence come these in white who shine,
All cloth'd with righteousness divine?
These come from suff'rings great to God,
Their robes they wash'd in the Lamb's blood
7 The martyrs trials now are o'er,
They see God's face for evermore;

The Lamb makes sure their heav'nly bless;
They've said, He's ours, and we are his.
8 No more the heat shall then torment,
Of scorching sun they've no complaint;
The Lamb, who shines amidst the throne,
Shall be their everlasting Sun.
9 To Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
One God, who saved us when lost,
Be everlasting glory giv'n,
By all on earth, and all in heaven.

SONG XXVIII.

CHRIST'S *Victory and* BABYLON'S *Downfall.*
From Rev. xviii. and Rev. xv. &c.

1 BEHOLD, an angel doth descend
With power and glory great,
To earth he comes for a good end,
Blest tidings to relate?
2 'Great Babylon, that did enthral
'The kingdoms of the earth,
'The time is come for her to fall,
'Which calls for holy mirth.
3 'Let heav'ns be glad, with all the saints,
'Let prophets all rejoice;
'God doth avenge your long complaints;
'With praise lift up your voice.
4 'A milstone's cast by Gabriel,
'And in the sea is drown'd;
'Thus terribly shall Babel fall,
'And never more be found.'
5 Upon the sea of glass they stand,
The beast who overcome,
With harps of God into their hand,
To celebrate her doom.
6 These conquerors do meet in throngs,
And to Jehovah's name,
They pleasantly unite the songs
Of Moses and the Lamb.
7 By Moses hand, the enemy
Did sink deep in the flood;
So drown'd our sins are in the sea
Of Jesus' precious blood.
8 The conquerors with fluent tongues.
Christ's honour will proclaim,
In sweeter notes than Moses' songs,
They'll tune those of the Lamb.
9 All nations shall to thee bow down,
And worship rev'rently,
When once thy judgments are made known,
Against thine enemy.
10 The hosts of God with one consent,
Shall hallelujahs sing;
When the Lord God omnipotent,
Takes his great pow'r to reign.
11 At length will end the devil's reign,
Over the sons of men;
Let heav'n and earth rejoice and sing,
With all that dwell in them.

SONG XXIX.

The GOOD NEWS *of the* RANSOM *of* CHRIST'S BLOOD.

1 GREAT pity God shews,
To Gentiles and Jews;
He sent them his gospel, to bring them good news.
Good news to the lost,
With raking fears toss'd,
That found is a Ransom in which they may boast.
2 A Ransom of blood,
That runs like a flood,
Their sins off to carry, who God's law withstood.
News! that Christ was so kind,
When hell's pow'rs combin'd,
To rout them, he freely his dear life resign'd.
3 Blood stream'd from his side,
T' atone for our pride;
Sin was the tormentor that him crucify'd.
When we have him view'd,
With his blood imbru'd,
May we by this prospect get all sin subdu'd.
4 What sight do we see?
Christ stretch'd on the tree,
For rebels as we are, most willing to die!
Pains dreadful he felt,
O let our hearts melt
For sin that did pierce him, when he bore our guilt.
5 Since for sins of men,
God's dear Lamb was slain,
Hard must the man's heart be, that yet feels no pain
When the sun did faint,
And hardest rocks rent.
Shall we be so stubborn, as never relent!
6 Our glorious Head
Our victim was made,
To heal us when wounded, his blood all he shed.
In our place he stood,
And pour'd out his blood,
Yea, gives us free access to that healing flood.
7 Christ's feast we'll attend,
And his love commend,
We'll think on his suff'rings, till our hearts do rend
His wounds I'll not view,
Like a harden'd Jew,
But when set before me, my grief I'll renew.

SONG XXX.

The News of CHRIST'S *pierced Feet:* From Isa. liii. 7.

1 HOW beautiful upon the mount!
Were Christ's feet pierc'd on our account,
Where he was crucify'd!
His feet, tho' nailed to the tree,
Swift tidings bring to you and me,
God's wrath is pacify'd.
2 Tidings that Christ has purchas'd peace,
With treasures full of needful grace,
To supply all our wants.

SONG

Good news! that he hath purchas'd room,
For ev'ry needy soul to come,
To sit and feast with saints.
3 Were men at God's bar strictly try'd,
None living could be justify'd,
All would be guilty found.
From justice throne we sinners fly,
To Christ our bleeding Priest on high,
Where mercy doth abound.
4 In Christ's the proper mercy-seat,
Where we with God may humbly treat,
In him God's satisfy'd.
His blood hath justice reconcil'd,
Its flaming sword hath quit the field,
Justice is on our side.
5 Now God his friendliness to prove,
Invites us to a feast of love,
A rich and costly feast:
To partake of the rarest food.
Pardon and peace thro' his Son's blood,
Which angels ne'er did taste.
6 Lord, sin the murderer here stands,
That pierc'd thy heart, thy feet and hands;
For which I mourn and grieve.
Lord, give a strong courageous faith,
To doom each darling lust to death,
Sin shall no longer live.
7 This foe my Saviour betray'd,
It bound and haul'd him to be try'd,
And rais'd the furious cry,
To crucify the Lord our Head:
But, good news! he rose from the dead,
And pleads for us on high.

SONG XXXI.

The LAMB's Battle *and* Victory.

1 THE Lamb fought for me,
My foes vanquish'd he;
The lion he conquer'd, when nail'd to the tree.
The Lamb when he fought
Great victory brought;
Our freedom, from bondage to Satan, he wrought.
2 The Lamb for us died,
He was crucify'd;
Yet, when at the lowest, hell's pow'rs he defy'd.
He lay in the grave,
Our lost souls to save;
Yet rose as our Champion, most valiant and brave.
3 He fought and he fell,
Yet overcame hell;
He conquer'd and triumph'd, for such as rebel.
He rose for our sake,
And did the earth shake;
The devils and keepers to tremble did make.
4 The rocks they did rend;
Him angels attend;
He taught his disciples, till he did ascend.
He went up in might,
With chariots of light;
A cloud him received, out of his friends sight.
5 Above he did land;
Sits on God's right hand,
Our High-Priest and Sov'reign, all things to command.
There he pleads on high,
Loud doth his blood cry
For pardon to sinners, who to him do fly.
6 The Lamb's Judge of all;
The dead he will call;
All must stand before him, be they great or small.
His mercy is great;
His blood paid our debt;
He will then absolve us, when judgment is set.
7 Of Christ that did die,
But now reigns on high,
Our songs, with sweet music, we'll spread thro' the sky
With both hearts and tongues,
We'll sing the Lamb's songs,
Let ev'ry soul join us that to him belongs.

SONG XXXII.

Christ's Sufferings, *and his* Love *to* Believing Souls.

1 WHEN Jesus pour'd out blood and tears,
A sinking load of wrath he bears,
God's Justice to appease.
A bloody robe for us he wore,
His soul in pain did travel sore,
And all to bring us ease.
2 The ploughers his dear back did plow,
Their scourges here long furrows drew,
In which his blood did run.
They him expos'd to all disgrace,
They spat upon his blessed face,
His love this did not shun.
3 He bore our curse and punishment,
Shed blood till ev'ry drop was spent,
To ransom us from wrath.
Who can his love enough commend?
That saves all criminals condemn'd,
Who look to him by faith?
4 From sin and wrath thou dost relieve
The chief of sinners, who believe;
Thy wounds do them inclose:
Their souls in these thy people hide,
And there they constantly abide,
Safe from their deadly foes.
5 A skreen from wrath, I know of none,
But Jesus' righteousness alone;
Which covers all our sin.
Strict trial this can well endure,
For it is infinitely pure,
No flaw is found therein.
6 Thou, when on earth, the sick didst heal,
And to the hungry bread didst deal,
Our souls when starving feed:
More precious they are than clay;
Lord Jesus, pity souls this day,
And satisfy our need.
7 Believers are by thee belov'd;
A kingdom, ne'er to be remov'd,
Shall unto them be giv'n.
Rich crowns on them thou wilt bestow,
No matter what they want below,
They'll be made up in heav'n.

SONG XXXIII.

CHRIST's *great* SUFFERINGS *bring great* BENEFIT *to us.*

1 THE Lamb silent stood,
While men shed his blood!
Himself he gave freely, to be our souls food.
Crown'd was he with thorn,
Us'd with spite and scorn,
Yet patiently bore it, to save the forlorn,
2 Exposed he stands,
With nail'd feet and hands,
Deep pierced, long bleeding, to pay law's demands,
No man's tongue can tell
What grief him befell,
In saving lost sinners from sinking to hell.
3 He was doom'd to die
On mount Calvary,
Sore press'd he did utter his last bitter cry.
Our guilt which he bore
Squeez'd blood from each pore;
Great was his soul's torture, that made him to roar.
4 His wounds bring us peace
His pains give us ease,
From sin's pow'r and bondage they do us release.
Christ straying souls sought
Their pardon he bought,
From Satan's vile slav'ry their freedom he wrought.
5 Lord, thy love's divine,
It doth kindle mine;
O let it cause in me all graces to shine,
Dead souls to revive,
When they life derive
From thy wounds, the fountain that makes men alive.
6 I'm sinful and vile,
My hearts full of guile,
It will be free mercy if on me thou smile.
Lord, do not despise
My soul's feeble cries,
Receive a lost sinner that to thy blood flies.
7 This blood saves from hell,
And fears doth dispel,
The thunders of Sinai the Lamb's blood doth quell.
I plead thy free grace,
One smile of thy face,
Or word to me spoken, would fill me with peace.

APPENDIX:

CONTAINING,

I. A Lecture on 1 *Cor.* xi. 17. to the End.
II. A Preparation Sermon from *Jos.* iii. 5.
III. An Action Sermon from *Cant.* iii. 4.

A Lecture on 1 *Cor.* xi. 17. to the end, concerning the Institution of the Lord's Supper.

Verse 17. *Now in this that I declare unto you, I praise you not, that you come together, not for the better, but for the worse.*

18. *For first of all, when we come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it.*

19. *For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.*

IN this passage, the apostle takes occasion to reprove the great disorders and abuses crept in among them in administrating and partaking of the Lord's supper, which (as the ancients tell us) was commonly administrated with a love-feast annexed to it, which gave occasion to the scandalous disorders here reprehended.

Verse 17. We have the manner of his introducing the charge, " Now in this that I declare unto you, I praise you not, &c." Which shews his willingness to commend them so far as he could. But such scandalous disorders as they were guilty of in so sacred an institution, he could not pass without a sharp reproof. Why? they inverted the very end and design of the ordinance, which was intended to make them better, or to promote their spiritual interest, but it really made them worse. Wherefore he says, " they came together not for the better, but for the worse."

Observe 1. That Christ's ordinances, if they do not make us better, they are apt to make us worse. If they do us no good, they may do us harm; if they do not melt and mend, they will harden; and that corruptions will be confirmed in us, if the proper means do not work a cure of them. 2. It concerns us all to enquire into the success of ordinances and solemn meetings. O 'tis sad, if our meetings tend to increase our sin, instead of the increase of our grace. Let us earnestly deprecate this.

Verse 18. " For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear there be divisions among you," &c. They fell into divisions, sects, parties, and factions, in their celebrating of this ordinance; they fell a quarrelling with one another about meats and drinks in the love-feasts, or about the order of their down-sitting, or the time when they should begin, or did not stay till they all came up. The whole church did not join together, but they eat it separately; there was also uncharitableness, alienation of affections, discord and contentions among them, which very much marred their edification, and success of the gospel.

Quest. Seeing schisms are mentioned here, what is meant thereby? Who are guilty of schism, and who are schismatics? *Ans.* In scripture the word is variously taken: 1. 'Tis taken for a difference in opinions and sentiments about some points, when there is no heat of contention, or breach of communion. Such a division or schism was among the Pharisees, about Christ's curing the blind man, John ix. 16. 'tis said, " there was a division among them," originally *chidma*. And such schisms may be among orthodox divines about lesser points, and yet managed without giving offence. 2. The general sense of the word, is a dividing and breaking off from the communion of the Church in public ordinances, without cause, like those, Heb. x. 25. " Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is." And in this sense, the ancients took schism as distinguished from heresy. Augustine saith, *Schismaticos facit non deversa fides, sed communionis, disrupta societas.* 3. In this place, and commonly in other places of Scripture, as 1 Cor. i. 10. 1 Cor. iii. 3. 1 Cor. xii. 25. the word *chidma* is taken for uncharitable, contentious, and divisive practices among the professors of the gospels, without breaking off from the communion of the church; when people are chargeable with uncharitable contentions and discords, and alienation of affections from their brethren; for here they came together, and yet were schismatics.

Observe. There may be schism, where there is no separation of communion. Persons may attend ordinances together, and sit together at the Lord's table, and yet be schismatics in scripture sense, by reason of their uncharitable contentions, and alienation of affections: Whereas Christians may separate from each other's communion, and yet be charitable to one another; and this is not so much schism in Scripture sense, as to be uncharitable and contentious.

The apostle had had a report of these divisions, which he did the more easily believe, because he knew there behoved not only to be divisions but heresies also; that is, false doctrines, more dangerous than schisms; for heresies are corrupt opinions, which strike at the fundamentals of Christi-

anity and all sound religion. Heresy, according to the modern sense of the word, is an error in the fundamentals of religion maintained with obstinacy; though we cannot say the word necessarily imports such a strong sense in this place, heresy and schism sometimes being synonymous erms.

Observe 1. We have no cause to wonder that there should be breaches of Christian love in the Church, when we know such offences will come as shall make shipwreck of faith and good conscience.

Quest. How says the apostle, "Heresies must come?" What necessity is there for them? *Ans.* There is no necessity of force upon any man to broach them, any further than his own corruption, pride, vain-glory, envy, or contentious spirit, or Satan's temptations, prompt him to it. But the event is certain, because of God's decree permitting them, who by his wisdom orders them for wise ends, that they "who are approved may be made manifest," by their constant adhering to the truth against all these temptations of seducers.

Observe 2. A time of temptation and seduction is a time of trial and discovery, who are sincere and constant adherers to the truths and ways of God, and who not.

Observe 3. The wisdom of God can make the errors and wickedness of others a foil to the piety and integrity of the saints.

Verse 20. "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper."

21. "For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper; and one is hungry, and another is drunken."

The heathens used to eat and drink plentifully at their feasts upon their sacrifices; and this profane custom was creeping in among the wealthier Corinthians. Many think the apostle was pointing here at their *agapai*, or love-feasts, that in those times either preceded or followed the Lord's supper; and they are called love-feasts, because they were designed to manifest their love to their fellow Christians, both poor and rich, and the poor carried away what was left at them: And also they had them to represent our Lord's last supper, in which he eat the Paschal Lamb, before he instituted that ordinance now called the *Lord's supper*. These love-feasts were founded on no command of Christ, but came in by custom, and by the Jews who became Christians. These would needs have an appendix or appurtenance of the Lord's supper; and, in imitation of Christ's eating the Paschal Lamb before the Lord's supper, would have a feast or supper of their own to precede the Lord's supper; and having provided it at home, would needs bring it to the place where the Church met. To this feast all the poor were invited at the charges of the rich, as an expression of their perfect love and charity one towards another. But in this Church great abuses crept in, in this practice: the poor Christians were neglected and despised. The rich did either not invite them, or did not wait for them: But the rich hasted to eat what they had brought with them, and some of them eat and drank to excess, so that "one was hungry, another was drunken." The apostle inveighs against this practice, as turning a feast of charity into a debauch, and as that which made them incapable to partake of the Lord's supper. This was a scandalous irregularity, a profaning a sacred institution, and corrupting a divine ordinance to the last degree. What should have been a bond of mutual amity and affection, was made an instrument of discord and disunion.

Observe 1. Duties not done as they ought, are not done at all in Christ's account. Or a careless eating and drinking of the Lord's supper is as good as none, yea worse than not eating. So prayers may be made, yet not made; sacraments received, yet not received; alms given, yet not given, because not done in the form and manner required by God.

Observe 2. A sincere soul must and will look not only to the matter of the duty, but also to the manner of performing it.

Observe 3. It is a heinous evil for Christians to treat their fellow Christians with contempt and insolence, especially at the Lord's table: For the rich to despise the poor, this is a great evil.

Observe 4. That even in the apostolical and primitive times, great disorders and irregularities had crept into the Church; and that there is no Church without spot in this imperfect state.

Observe 5. That the apostle, notwithstanding of these, doth not direct the one part of the Corinthians to separate from the other; but he only reproves and rectifies their abuses. He doth not say, Withdraw from such persons, for they will pollute the ordinance to you. No, if they be polluted, it is themselves, and not to others He eats and drinks damnation "to himself." Every man shall bear his own burden. Wherefore, says he, "Let a man examine himself," not his neighbour. The apostle doth not encourage separation upon that ground, that there were scandalous persons admitted in Corinth, even some drunk about the time of partaking, which might be the occasion of their divided way of communicating. But he reproves their divided communicating, and charges them to come together to the Lord's supper, and tarry for one another. He indeed sharply reproves their scandalous practice, and tells them that it was most hazardful to themselves to communicate unworthily, but speaks of no danger to others. He commands them to examine themselves, and so to eat, but not to examine their fellow-communicants, which certainly he had done, if their joining with them had made them partakers of their sin and danger.

Verse 22. "What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not."

The apostle here doth condemn both the abuses of those feasts, and also their keeping them in the place where the church met. Some understand the church, of the house where the church met, and call their feasting there a profaning or unhallowing the place set apart for divine worship. Others understand it of the people or poor members there met. Why do ye despise them? by excluding them from your company, because of their poverty; and so ye put them to shame, whom God has adopted, and admitted into his family. This feast was originally designed for the poor's relief, and ye exclude them from it.

Observe 1. The despising of the poor members of the church, is a despising of the church itself; yea, Christ, the Head of the Church, as he that pincheth the little toe, paineth the whole body, and the head too.

Observe 2. With what lenity and mildness the apostle reproves these great disorders, *Shall I praise you?* It was the first time he had told them of their faults, in hopes of amendment, and therefore doth it gently; and some think this gentle way of reproof had the due effect, because no

fault is taxed in the second epistle that was reproved in the first.

Verse 23. " For I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread.

24. " And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: This do in remembrance of me.

25. " After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

26. " For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

After reproving their disorders, he reduces them to the primitive institution, and tells them how he came by the knowledge of it, seeing he was not among the apostles at the first institution. It was by revelation from Christ: and what he had received of the Lord, he communicated to them, without varying from the truth in the least, without adding or diminishing. As if he had said, " As for these love-feasts preceding the Lord's supper, *I received nothing from the Lord*; you have borrowed them from Jews or Heathens: But all that I received from the Lord concerning the Lord's supper, I here set before you." And indeed he gives a more particular account of the institution than we meet with elsewhere.

1. We have the Author of it, the Lord Jesus Christ. Obs. It is an act of Christ's royal power and authority, as King and Head of the Church, to institute sacraments. The church had no power to appoint such, but only to execute and administer what Christ appoints: And as it is Christ's ordinance, we should have a special regard to it, and not profane or neglect it.

2. We have the time of the institution, *The same night in which he was betrayed*; when he was entering on his soul-sufferings in the garden, and going next day to the cross; a night much to be remembered, being the last night before Christ's death: The night wherein he began his bitter agonies, and swate the bloody sweat for us; a night wherein he saw heaven, earth, and hell, even justice, men, and devils, drawn up in battle-array against him. A wondrous instance of his love, in spending so much of that little time he had in the world (when he seemed to have more need to mind himself) in settling an ordinance for the confirmation and consolation of his people, to the end of the world. Whatever comes of himself, his people must not be forgot.—Observe from the time of the institution, the night before his suffering, that it is very necessary, when sufferings are approaching, to have recourse to the Lord's table, which affords both an antidote against fear, and a restorative and cordial to faith. Wherefore Christ, for our example, communicated with his disciples the night before he suffered.

3. We have the sacramental elements, or the memorative, significative, and instructive signs, bread and wine.

4. The things signified thereby, the body and blood of Christ, his body broke and blood shed, together with all the benefits which flow from his death and sacrifice.

Observe 1. There is no transubstantiation as the Papists absurdly imagine. Why? Paul calls that which is eaten *bread*, five times over in this passage: and even after what the Papists call consecration. A plain argument that the apostle knew nothing of their monstrous doctrine, which makes the bread, by the words of consecration, to be changed into the substance of Christ's body, only the accidents of bread remaining; which affronts and destroys the nature of a sacrament, and gives the lie to our senses. It is called his body, because it was a sign and representation of it, not his real body to be sure; for then it would follow that Christ eat his own body while alive, and that his disciples did the same; yea that they devoured that body over night which hung upon the cross next morning, with a thousand such like absurdities. But whether the Papists will or not, they must admit of a figurative expression in this passage; for when Christ says, *This cup is the New Testament in my blood*, they must mean that which was in the cup, and not the vessel that held it: and this is the ordinary sacramental dialect, concerning circumcision and the passover. Circumcision is called God's covenant, Gen. xvii. 28. *i e.* the sign of it. Also the Lamb is called the passover, Exod. xii. 11. *i. e.* the sign of it. It is true the Heathens laid it to the charge of the primitive Christians, that they ate human flesh; but falsely, as appears by the apology made for the primitive Christians, by Tertullian and others; which apology had been false, had they daily eaten the flesh of Christ in the sacrament. It hath been always reckoned a most detestable thing to eat human flesh, and much more is it to eat the God we worship, and devour him whom we pretend to adore.

Observe 2. That both bread and cup are used together, which shows the unwarrantable usurpation of the Papists, in depriving the laity of the cup. It is directly contrary to Christ's institution; for our Saviour (as it were) foreseeing the Papists encroachment in this matter, is more express in his injunction concerning the cup, than the bread, in these words, Matth. xxvi. 27. " Drink ye all of it;" and their obedience is recorded of the cup, and not of the bread, Mark xiv. 27. " And they all drank of it." Now, why is Christ so express in this? Surely it was, because he foresaw in the after ages this ordinance would be dismembered, by the prohibition of the cup to the laity, and that by the Popish councils and cannons, with an express *non obstante* to the command of Christ.

5. We have the sacramental actions, both on the minister's and people's part.

For the first. Our Lord took the bread, he blessed it, he brake it, he gave it to his disciples. 1. The taking of bread signifies God's chusing, setting apart, and appointing Christ to be a surety and sacrifice, and laying on him the sins of his people. 2. The blessing signifies his qualifying and furnishing Christ with all gifts and graces needful for the discharge of his mediatory offices, and for answering his people's exigencies. 3. The breaking signifies all Christ's breakings, bruisings, and woundings, both in soul and body, which were for our sins, in order to satisfy divine justice, and procure salvation for us. 4. The giving signifies his offering, giving, and actually bestowing Christ and all his benefits on us. There is no promise reserved, no blessings excepted or kept back; all is theirs.

2. The actions on the communicants part, are to take, to eat, and drink in remembrance of Christ.

Quest. What is meant by taking this bread? *Ans.* It is the accepting of Christ as he is offered to us; a receiving the atonement, approving of it, consenting to it, coming up to the terms on which the benefit is proposed to us. It is an accepting of Christ's grace, and submitting to his government. Believing on Christ is expressed by taking or receiving of him. Well, then, when we are bid take this

bread, we are bid take Christ, and all the benefits of his purchase; and that sincerely and honestly, without dissimulation; entirely, fully, and without exception; with close and particular application, saying, "My Lord, and my God;" with thankfulness and praise for such a glorious Surety, such a rich purchase, such a free covenant, and such suitable promises; with humility and self-denial, renouncing all confidence in our own preparations, or qualifications of any sort, saying, "In the Lord only have I righteousness and strength;" and with full assurance of faith, looking on the bread, as the Lord's seal and pledge of our interest in, and title to the blessings of the covenant; and as a token from Christ that his body was broken for us; believing that Christ and all the blessings of the covenant are herewith given to us, as really as Christ gives the bread into our hands.

Quest What is meant by eating this bread? *Ans* It signifies our feeding by faith upon Christ and his benefits, which is done by our believing the report concerning Christ and his purchase, and making a particular application of Christ and his benefits unto our souls and their various necessities and exigencies: And particularly this eating signifies, 1. Our union with Christ. 2 Our satisfaction and complacency in him. 3. Our receiving strength and increase of grace from Christ. 4. Our taking infeftment and possession of Christ and his purchase as our inheritance, and receiving this outward sign as a pledge of the whole.

As to the words concerning the cup, "This cup is the New Testament in my blood, shed for many, for the remission of sins;" it is a figurative speech, signifying that the wine in the cup, as representing the shedding of Christ's blood, is a sign and seal of Christ's Testament or Covenant of Grace, confirmed by his blood.—From which we may observe, 1. That every worthy communicant doth here get a copy of Christ's Testament put into his hands, with all the legacies and blessings it contains, such as pardon of sin, peace with God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, grace, and glory. Which Testament, if we take hold of, and acquiesce in the method of salvation contained in it, and can prove our relation to the Testator by faith and regeneration, we are children and heirs, and have an interest therein.—Obs. 2. What it was that purchased the New Testament to us, even Christ's blood; there is never a time we read or hear of the New Testament, but we should mind the blood of Christ. Had it not been for the blood of Christ, we had never had the New Testament written, and had it not been for the New Testament, we had never known the meaning of Christ's blood shed.

6. We have the ends of the institution, 1. To keep up the "remembrance of Christ." Christ knew how apt our base hearts would be to forget him amidst a throng of sensible objects as we here converse with; and how much our forgetfulness of Christ would be to our prejudice and disadvantage; and therefore he appoints this ordinance, to bring Christ, his death, and love, to our believing, affectionate, and thankful remembrance. 2. "To shew forth his death," *i. e.* to declare, publish, and proclaim it. It is not barely, in remembrance of Christ, of what he hath done and suffered, but also to celebrate, publish, and proclaim his gracious condescension, his love and favour to lost sinners. We declare his death to be our life, and the spring of all our comforts and hopes. We glory in this atonement and sacrifice, and spread it before God as our only ransom. We set it in the view of our faith for our quickening and comfort. We own it before the world, as the only ground of our hope; and that we are the disciples of a crucified Christ, who trust in him alone for salvation and acceptance with God.

7. We have a mandate or charge given for the celebration of this ordinance, and for doing it frequently. Our Lord's command is twice repeated for security, "This do; this do ye." It was our Lord's will that we should celebrate the memorial of his death and passion. It is the will of our sovereign Lord and Lawgiver, the express command of a Saviour; yea, of a dying Saviour. A command of love; and it is such a command as, if we duly observe it, will be a blessed means to enable us to observe all the commands of God the better. It is such a command as whosoever lives in the wilful neglect of it, cannot be called a Christian, but will be treated by Christ at the great day as an enemy, and despiser of his dying love. Wherefore it is our duty not only to communicate and partake of this ordinance, but we must do it often. We cannot maintain bodily health and strength without frequent meals, so neither can we maintain soul-health and strength without this spiritual diet frequently taken and received. The ancient churches celebrated this ordinance every Lord's day. Let us be thankful that we have this spiritual meal more frequently tendered to us than formerly. O for sharpened appetites for our food!

8. We have the perpetuity of the ordinance. It is to be celebrated till the Lord come the second time, without sin, for the salvation of them that believe, and to judge the world. Obser. 1. That the Lord's supper is not a temporary, but a standing and perpetual ordinance. 2. That there is no need of sacraments in heaven; for Christ is there bodily present. Faith is then changed into vision, and hope into fruition. Here we hold communion with him by signs and symbols: but above, we will see him as he is, and enjoy him perfectly. The day will then break, and all the shadows will flee away.

Verse 27. "Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."

28. "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup."

29. "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

The apostle having declared the original institution of the Lord's supper; he comes now to instruct the Corinthians in the right use of it, and to beware of profaning and abusing this ordinance, as they had done.

Observe 1. The sin which he warns them of, viz. "Eating and drinking unworthily." *Quest.* What is this? *Ans.* It is not a weak faith, or weakness in knowledge, or want of perfect holiness, or freedom from sin, that will denominate a person an unworthy receiver; for this ordinance was not instituted for angels, but for men who are imperfect and sinful: But it is to come ignorant, without due preparation, without faith, without repentance, self-examination; without resolution against sin, and without reconciliation to God, or to our neighbour.

Observe 2. The guilt and heinousness of this sin, they are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, *i. e.* It is an accession to the guilt of shedding the innocent blood of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—It is an implicit approbation of the Jews act in crucifying Christ.—It is a trampling Christ's blood under our feet.—It is a crucifying Christ

afresh, and harbouring the traitors and enemies of Christ in our bosom.

Observe 3. The danger of it, eating and drinking damnation to ourselves, *i. e.* They provoke God to inflict sore judgments on them, temporal and spiritual judgments here, and eternal judgments hereafter. The meaning is not, that this sin is unpardonable, but that it deserves damnation, and will bring it on, without repentance, and flying to the blood of Christ for cleansing. Every sin is in its own nature damning, and therefore such a heinous sin, as profaning this holy ordinance, must surely be so. But timorous and fearful believers should not be discouraged from attending this holy ordinance by the sound of this word, as if they bound upon themselves the sentence of damnation, by coming to the Lord's table unprepared. For hearing and praying unworthily, incurs damnation, as well as communicating unworthily. But this sin, as well as others, leaves room for forgiveness upon repentance.

Observe 4. That unworthy receivers of the Lord's supper do contract great guilt, and incur great danger to themselves. And therefore they should be much concerned to guard against this heinous and dangerous sin; and cry with the Psalmist, " Lord, deliver us from blood-guiltiness."

Observe 5. It is only judgment to himself, it is not to another that receives with him. For if a wicked man's presence at the sacrament should pollute the ordinance to a worthy receiver, then Christ and his eleven apostles were defiled by the company of Judas at the passover, at which he certainly was, and, as many think, at the Lord's supper also. Which is absurd.

We have in verse 28th, the duty required for preventing the sin and danger of unworthy communicating, and that is the great and necessary duty of self-examination. It is a metaphor taken from goldsmiths, who try the truth of their gold by the touchstone, the purity of their gold by the fire, and the weight of it by the scale. We have here, 1. The person examining, " Let a man examine." 2. The person examined, it is *himself*; he is to call himself to the bar of conscience, and put questions to himself, 1. Concerning his state, whether he has a right to come or not. 2. His sins and short-comings. 3. His wants and necessities. 4 His ends and designs; whether it be to obey the charge of his dying Saviour, to shew forth his death, renew and seal his covenant with God, get nearness and communion with him, nourishment to his soul, and to supply his wants. And, 5. Concerning his graces and qualifications, particularly as to knowledge, faith, repentance, fear, love, thankfulness, holy desires, and new obedience.

Observe 1. It is not enough that a minister examine us before partaking. We must examine ourselves, for we only can try our own hearts and thoughts, which a minister cannot.

Observe 2. Our main concern before partaking is about ourselves—It is not about examining others, but about examining ourselves that we are to be employed. It is not what he or she is that is to communicate with us; but what I am myself.

Observe 3. It should therefore be our singular care, before communicating, to examine ourselves, and commune with our own hearts, as to our right to, and fitness for the Lord's table.

We have in verse 29th, the true cause of unworthy communicating, " Not discerning the Lord's body;" *i. e.* not making a distinction between this bread and common bread; betwixt the Lord's body and the body of a mere man;—not prizing nor esteeming the body of a crucified Jesus, as the meritorious ground of our justification.

Verse 30 " For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."

Some were punished with sickness and weakness, and some with death, for their irreverence in approaching to the Lord's table.

Observe 1. That careless and irreverent partaking brings on temporal judgments, as well as spiritual and eternal.

Obser 2. That God may punish his own people with temporal judgments: For severals of those so punished were in a state of favour with God, as appears from the word *sleep*, the death of the wicked being hardly called sleep in any place of scripture; and from verse 32 they were *chastened of the Lord, that* they might *not be condemned with the world.* Now, divine chastening is a sign of divine love.

Obser. 3. That the holiness of an ordinance, or the habitual holiness of a person, will not exempt him from God's displeasure and the infliction of temporal judgments here in this life, if he do not by actual preparations sanctify the name of God in the duty and ordinances of his worship.

Obser. 4. That God punishes his people now to prevent their eternal woe.

Verse 31. " For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."

If we would examine, try, censure, and sentence ourselves, and so come to the Lord's table, we would escape the castigatory punishment, and condemnatory sentence of God. Obser. 1. That as it is our duty often to examine and judge ourselves, so self-judging will preserve us from the condemnation and judgment of God. 2. That these who through weakness of understanding are not capable to examine themselves, are by no means fit to partake of this ordinance.

Verse 32. " But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."

The nature of these judgments, or afflictive evils, which do befal the children of God in this life, they are chastenings, " we are chastened of the Lord." To be chastened has a double aspect, first upon our privilege, it denotes our relation, as children to God our Father. Chastenings are a part of his childrens portion; yet in that we are chastened, it taxes us with weakness; we are foolish and unruly, and therefore so long as we are here, must always go with a rod at our back. Christ, who was also a Son, was chastened, " The chastisement of our peace was upon him;" but his were judiciary chastisements, not as a child, but as an enemy, a malefactor, in our stead. Observe, The merciful design of God in chastening his children, is to prevent their condemnation. When therefore at any time we are under chastisement, let us justify God, and condemn ourselves, seeing his chastisements are designed to prevent our condemnation.

Verses 33, 34. " Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home: that we come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come."

The apostle closes all with a caution to beware of the irregularities they had been guilty of, and to rectify them, that they come not together to condemnation. Obser. 1. That our holy duties through our own abuse may prove

matter of condemnation. Christians may keep sabbaths, hear sermons, perform prayers, attend sacraments, and only aggravate their guilt, and bring on a heavier doom on themselves, Obs. 2. We have great need to see that we come to God in due order.

Lastly, He tells them, that as to the other points of church order, he would determine them when he came among them: " The rest will I set in order when I come." Such unchristian disorders may arise in the church, as will require the presence and coming of an apostle to correct and reform them.

A PREPARATION SERMON

BEFORE THE SACRAMENT.

Joshua iii. 5.—*Sanctify yourselves, for to morrow the Lord will do wonders among you.*

IN this chapter we have the history of Israel's passing thro' Jordan to Canaan; and a very memorable history it is; for long after they are bid to remember what God did for them between Shittim and Gilgal, Micah vi. 5. " that they may know the righteousness of the Lord." Shittim was the place where they decamped, and Gilgal where they next pitched. See Joshua iii. 1. compared with Joshua iv. 19. He orders them to march up to the river side, where they came and lodged, though they were unprovided of means to pass in the ordinary way. Though they had neither boats nor bridges, yet they go forward in faith, trusting God's power and promise. It was told them, Joshua i. 11. that they should pass it. We must go in the way of our duty, though we foresee difficulties, trusting God to help us through them when we come to them. The people are directed to follow the ark, verse 3. whe borne by the priests and Levites, to teach us closely to attend ordinances, if we would have the marks of God's favour and special presence.

In the text we have two things, 1. A command. 2. Reasons given for it.

As to the first, " Sanctify yourselves." The word *sanctify* has divers acceptations in scripture. Sometimes it is applied to God, we are commanded to *sanctify the Lord,* i. e. to think and speak reverently of him, or humbly to worship him. At other times we are commanded to *sanctify ourselves,* and then it imports several things; 1. Our separating or setting ourselves apart to some holy use. 2. Our cleansing ourselves from all ceremonial pollution. 3. Our preparing ourselves for some solemn or sacred action, by the use of some sacred rites or ceremonies, such as legal washing, &c. 4. Our putting ourselves in a suitable frame for attending on God's worship. 5 Our purifying ourselves inwardly from sin, and adoring ourselves with holiness. I might cite scripture for all the significations of the word, as Exod. xix. 22. Josh. vii. 13. 1 Chron. xv. 12. 2 Chron. v. 11. xxix. 5. xxx. 3. &c. I shall take it here as comprehending something of all these senses, especially the people's preparing themselves to attend the ark, and the discovering of God's power, glory, and goodness, with a suitable sorrow and awful frame of spirit, befitting such a great occasion.

II. We have the reasons for it, " For to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you." See how magnificently he speaks of God's works, he calls them wonder; and indeed these were so; the dividing of the waters of Jordan, and making them to stand upon a heap, and then to run back, turning fluids into solids, and causing the Israelites to walk through the rapid river upon solid dry ground. All these were great wonders of God's power and goodness towards Israel. Now, says Joshua, since God is about to give you such uncommon instances of his power and favour, sanctify yourselves, compose your minds by meditation, prayer, and abstractedness from the world, that ye may be in case for a careful and religious observation of his wonderful works, and to receive the discovery of his glory, and the communications of his goodness, that so ye may give God all the glory, and take to yourselves the comfort of his wondrous works and gracious appearances.

Doctrine. When God is about to make wonderful discoveries of his glory and goodness to his people, then they should make solemn preparation for observing and receiving of the same. For confirmation thereof, see Exod. xix. 10. 11. " And the Lord said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes; and be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people, upon mount Sinai." Or, 2*dly,* When God sets tryst with a people, they should prepare themselves to attend him, 1 Sam. xvi. 4, 5. " And Samuel did that which the Lord spake, and came to Bethlehem; and the elders of the town trembled at his coming, and said, comest thou peaceably? And he said, peaceably: I am come to sacrifice unto the Lord; sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice.

Method I. When it is that the Lord makes such wonderful discoveries of himself to his people.

II. Wherein the preparation for waiting on this wonder working God doth ly.

III. The properties of this preparation.

IV. The necessity of it.

V. And lastly, I shall make application.

1. As to the first head, When is it that the Lord makes glorious and wondrous discoveries of himself to a people.—1. When, notwithstanding of grievous sins and provocations, he averts threatened and impending judgments, and comes to them in a way of mercy; as, when he threatens famine and scarcity, he sends fruitful seasons and plenty of bread; when he threatens the noisome pestilence, he removes it and sends health: when he threatens a bloody sword, he sheaths it up, and sends peace and safety.

2. When he is pleased to quell the church's enemies and persecutors, to deliver his people from their oppressions, and give them the freedom of their assemblies, and of observing God's institutions in purity.

3. When he pours out a spirit of reformation on all ranks and degrees, so that people generally turn to the Lord, prize ordinances, prayer, family-worship, and appear against vice.

4. When God pours out his Spirit on the assemblies of his people, so that the preaching of the gospel is attended with life, power, and success, to the melting of hearts, and converting of souls.

5. When he discovers a Redeemer to a lost sinking soul; when a poor self-condemned sinner, that was at his wit's

end, gets a sight of the possibility of salvation through the satisfaction of Christ.

6. When he sets forth Christ crucified before our eyes in the sacrament; when he displays therein the wisdom, justice, love, and goodness of God to sinners, in a most lively manner.

7. When he returns and makes his people's sky break after a long night of desertion; when he makes light to arise and shine to them that were in darkness, and opens the door of his presence-chamber.

8. When he gives them the victory over satan's temptations and assaults after long-sufferings and conflicts, and and speaks to them as to Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 9 "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

9. When he meets with them in ordinances, looses their bonds, frees them from their straitenings in duty, and enlarges their hearts in prayer, and enables them to pour forth their complaints and requests before the Lord.

10. When he comes with a return to their prayers; particularly, 1. By lifting on them the light of his countenance; or, 2. By giving them a view of their covenant-relation to God; a well-grounded hope of heaven; and new strength to grapple with sin, perform duties, and bear trials.

11. When he comes and gives a glorious discovery of his greatness and majesty, so as to fill them with awful fear and reverence of God, and makes them cry, "Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him?" O the unspeakable distance that is between God and us! God is glorious, and the creature is nothing.

12. When he comes and gives the soul a glorious discovery of the holiness and purity of God, in his nature, his law and his works, as he did to Job, making him cry, *Behold I am vile:* and to Isaiah, *Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips.*

13. When he gives a glorious discovery of the goodness and mercy of God, particularly in these instances. 1. The glorious contrivance of our redemption, by sending Christ to save us. 2. In pardoning guilty sinners so many crimes, and making them cry, as Micah vii. 18. "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy."— 3. In taking rebellious traitors and enemies to God to be children of God, and favourites of heaven. In exalting them above angels that never sinned, and providing glorious mansions for them.

14. When he comes in the ordinances, and quickens the dead and languishing graces of his people; as, 1. When he melts their hard hearts into the exercise of repentance and mourning for sin. 2. When he comes and actuates their faith, enables the weak sinner to go out to Christ, cast his soul and lay his burden on him, and wholly to look to him, and lean on him for pardon and salvation. 3. When he comes and makes their hearts burn with love to himself, and to precious Christ the Mediator, while he talks to them, and opens up the scriptures. 4. When he draws out the desires and pantings of the soul towards himself. 5 When he quickens the spirit of prayer, and elevates the heart for praise, and enables the soul for every duty.

II. As to the second head, Wherein this preparation and sanctifying of the heart for waiting on God in ordinances doth lie. *First,* It supposes, 1. That we are naturally unfit and unprepared for approaching to God. 2. It supposes a work of God's grace and Spirit on the heart: he only fits the soul for spiritual things. "It is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. The preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord," Prov. xvi. 1.

Secondly, It directly imports these things: 1. The soul's being in a gracious state, translated from nature to grace by the Spirit of God, and that the soul is reconciled to God by the blood of Christ, and a work of sanctification begun; without this we cannot be accepted.

2. It lies in bringing our hearts with us, and engaging all the powers and faculties of our souls to attend God in duty, Psal. lxxxvi. 11. "Unite my heart to fear thy name;" and, Psal. cxix. 10. "With my whole heart have I sought thee."

3. It lies in our having right thoughts and uptakings of that gracious God whom we approach to; 1. That we believe that God is, and is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him. 2. That he is incomprehensibly great and glorious, fills the heavens and the earth with his presence, and that great fear and reverence is due to him. 3. That he is glorious in holiness, and of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity. 4. That he is spotless in justice, and will by no means clear the guilty. 5 That he is omnipotent in power, for protecting his people, and destroying his enemies. 6. That he is matchless in clemency and mercy, easy to be intreated, and ready to forgive through Christ. 7. That he is faithful, and keeps covenant for ever.

4. It lies in having humble and low thoughts of ourselves, as unworthy to approach to God, or receive any token of his favour. The soul that is sanctified and prepared for approaching to God, hath a deep sense of former sins and miscarriages, wonders at God's patience, that the earth has not opened its mouth to swallow it up ere now.

5. It lies in cleansing and purifying ourselves, by searching for and throwing out all these sins and evils that unfit us for converse with God. If we would have God to accept us, we must regard no iniquity in our hearts: particularly, 1. We must cast out pride and self-conceit. If we have a good opinion of ourselves, our duties and performances, God will not accept us; we must count all but loss and dung for Christ. 2 Worldliness, and thoughts about earthly things. 3. Unbelief and doubtings concerning the truths of God— 4. Malice and revenge. 5. Vain and wandering thoughts, and seek to have our hearts fixed, Psal. lvi.

6. It lies in our retiredness and abstractedness from the world and earthly thoughts. In the temple, for as much flesh as was used there for the sacrifice, not one fly was seen stirring; which teacheth us to drive away the flies of worldly thoughts in God's presence, that they do not spoil nor corrupt the sacrifice, as that grievous swarm of flies did every thing in the land of Egypt, Exod. viii. 24. Do as Abraham, when he went to approach God and do sacrifice on Mount Moriah, Gen. xxii. 4, 5. "When he saw the place afar off, he said to his young men, abide you here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship." He knew that if they had gone along with him, they would so distract him with their clamour, that he could not offer sacrifice with that freedom and tranquillity of spirit requisite.

7. It lies in examining the principles from which you act, and ends to which you move in duty. The principles must be faith and love; the belief of God's command, and the love of Christ, must constrain you to duty. Your ends must be, to glorify God and enjoy him; not as the Pharisees.

to be seen of men; not legal ends, to get a reward. Selfish and legal ends are as a dead fly to spoil the ointment and make duties unsavoury to God. O for right principles, pure and spiritual ends!

8. It consists in labouring to get the heart in a suitable frame for converse with God; as, 1. In a humble and self-denied frame. 2. In a spiritual and heavenly frame. 3. In a fixed and stayed frame, calling in all straying and wandering thoughts, breathing out that prayer, Psal. lxxxvi. 11. 4. In a loving and affectionate frame; for God is love, and love is the cement between God and the soul in duty. 5. In a cautious and watching frame; guarding always against every thing that may creep in, to indispose you for communion with God, and mar your access to him. 6. In an active and lively frame; all the spices should flow out, all the graces should be in exercise.

9. It lies in wakening our souls, which are naturally dull and drowsy, to activity and liveliness in duty, as David, Psalm lvii. 8, 9. "Awake up my glory, awake psaltery and harp: I myself will awake early." Psalm ciii. 1. "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless his holy name." Be stirred up, all that is within me; there must be a stirring up our souls to take hold of God, Isa. lxiv. 7. Put forth your spiritual strength to the utmost; pray with the most fervent importunity: praise with spiritual elevation of heart; love God with the most sublime affections, and do all in some proportion to the greatness of that God with whom you have to do, as Psalm cl. 2. "Praise him according to his excellent greatness."

10. It lies in our earnest prayers to God to sanctify us, for we must put it back on him, and pray for the sanctifying influences of his Spirit, for the subduing of sin, quickening grace, and perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

III. As to the third head, The properties of this preparation: 1. It must be timeous preparation. The Jews took time to prepare for approaching God in the passover; they had the Lamb four days before in their houses, tied to their bed posts, that, hearing constantly its bleating, they might look back to Egypt, and remember the sorrows and bondage they endured there, and be thankful for their redemption; and especially for their deliverance from the destroying angel that night he passed over their houses, which were sprinkled with the blood of the lamb; and that they might look forward to the Messiah, and remember the bitter agonies and sufferings he was to endure for their sins.

2. Inward preparation. It must ly mainly in the heart; a grave decent carriage is needful indeed, but God looks to more than the outward appearance, even to the heart.

3. Conscientious preparation, doing all as in the sight of God, before whom all things are naked and bare. Study to have single ends and aims, to glorify God, and obey our Lord and Saviour's call.

4. Diligent preparation, not dealing with a slack hand, but applying your souls with the greatest activity to the work in hand, believing that your salvation depends on it.

5. Humble and self-denied preparation, trusting in nothing in yourselves but in Christ: depending on God that he would fit and prepare your hearts, and accept graciously for Christ's sake.

6. Universal preparation, be mindful of all the parts of it, especially of examining yourselves with respect to your state, your sins, your wants, your knowledge, faith, repentance, love, and new obedience.

IV. As to the fourth head. The necessity of this preparation. 1. Because of the falseness, sluggishness, and deceitfulness of our hearts; they love to wander from God, and are bent to backslide in duty, as the wise man says, Eccles. x. 10. "If the iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, then must he put to more strength." Labour to heat the iron, seeing a blunt iron, if hot, will pierce more easily than a sharper, if cold. Warm your hearts with the love and sufferings of Christ.

2. Because it is the heart God mainly seeks in duty, Prov. xxiii. 26. "My son, give me thine heart;" he says as Joseph concerning Benjamin, "Except your brother be with you, I will not see your face." If the heart be not brought to him, there can be no acceptance.

3. Because God is well pleased with them that do so, as with Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xix. "Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God." And he is highly displeased with those that do it not, as with Rehoboam, 2 Chron. xii 14. "And he did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek God."

4. Because God, whom we approach to, is an infinitely holy and pure Spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit and in truth.

IMPROVEMENT.

Inference I. See hence the cause why so few get discoveries of God's glory, and wonders of mercy, in the ordinance, but meet with an hiding God; they do not sanctify themselves, and prepare their hearts in a suitable manner.

I. Use of reproof to severals: 1. To those who approach God under the power of wandering and roving thoughts, their minds are not fixed, sanctified and prepared. 2. To those whose minds are going after their covetousness, when their bodies only are presented before God. 3. To those who are hypocritical and formal in their approaches to God. 4. To those whose hearts are dull and drowsy in God's service.

III. Use of trial. It concerns you upon this occasion to examine if your hearts be sanctified and prepared for approaching God to-morrow. It is highly necessary now to examine your souls, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat." I fear there are many unsanctified and unprepared hearts among us. And, in order to assist you therein, I shall give some remarks, both negatively and positively.

I. Negatively marks of unsanctified hearts. 1. The ignorant heart that knows not Christ, nor has any uptaking of the way of salvation through his righteousness. Such are unprepared, and incapable of gracious communion with God. See how the promise runs, Jer. xxiv. 7. "I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God; for they shall return unto me with their whole heart." 2. The unbelieving heart is unprepared. 3. The impenitent heart. 4. The heart that harbours Christ's enemy. 5. The heart that hath no love to the friends of Christ. 7. No hungering and thirsting after Christ and his righteousness. 8. That hath slight thoughts of his ordinances. 9. Indifference about the success of the ordinances. 10. That resists the motions of the Spirit. 11. The heart that is drowsy, and at no pains to waken itself. 12. That is a stranger to itsels, and to self-examination. Such hearts are unsanctified and unprepared for approaching to God to-morrow. 2.

Positive marks of hearts in some measure sanctified and prepared. 1. Hearts sensible of their depravity and sinfulness. 2. That are sensible of their need of Christ. 3. Hearts filled with revenge against sin. 4. That are humble and lowly. 5. Hearts troubled for heart-plagues and sins. 6. Hearts that consent to the well-ordered covenant in all its articles. 7. Hearts that aim at communion and fellowship with God in every duty. 8. Hearts that hold on in close pursuit after Christ, notwithstanding discouragements and disappointments, as Mary Magdalene, who would not leave the sepulchre, when others left it. 9. Hearts that are unsatisfied with the best means and ordinances, if God be not found in them. 10. Hearts that are applying themselves to every duty, in Christ's strength, saying, without Christ I can do nothing. 11. Hearts that are troubled when they drive heavily in duty, and are weary of their remissness.— 12. Hearts tender of the peace of God, afraid of sin, and grieving the Spirit. 13. Hearts concerned about the success of this ordinance, both with respect to themselves and others. 14. Hearts concerned for want of sufficient preparation, praying, with Hezekiah, for pardon and acceptance, though not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary, 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19.

IV. Use of exhortation. O communicants, sanctify yourselves against to-morrow, that the Lord may come down and do wonders among you, wonders of mercy for your souls.

Motive 1. Consider that the near approach you are to make to God at his table to-morrow, is the nearest approach you can possibly make on this side of death. Consider what preparation God required of the Israelites for receiving the fiery law at Mount Sinai, Exod. xix. 10, 11. "God commanded them to sanctify themselves, wash their clothes, and be ready against the third day, for upon that day the Lord would come down upon Mount Sinai, in sight of all the people." What awful fear and trembling do you imagine was there among them, when God came down in a thick cloud, when the trumpet began to sound, the thunder to crack, the mountain to smoke, and the earth to tremble under the weight of the great God descending on it. Well, ye should be under the same awe of God in this solemn ordinance as they were. It is true, he comes not down with such terror, to give a fiery law as on Mount Sinai, but to deliver the gospel of peace from Mount Sion. But mind, it is the same God that speaks, hath the same majesty, the same authority; and therefore you should prepare as carefully, and be as humble before him, as the Israelites were. Were God to come down among you to-morrow in terrible majesty, should a thick cloud fill this house, and lightning break out, and should you hear the thunder of his voice, "I am the Lord, thou shalt have no other Gods before me," certainly such a dreadful glory would make your hearts tremble within you, and the earth tremble beneath you. Well, then, God is come down as really among you as among the Israelites, hear him with the same reverence, and be as intent upon adoration as they were. Let not his gracious and familiar way of condescending to deal with you, tempt you to come with less preparation and reverence.

II. Consider the nature of that God you are to approach to. 1. A great and mighty God, Psal lxxxix. 7, 8. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him. O Lord, God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee, or to thy faithfulness round about thee?" Would we feast with a great King with filthy hands and garments? Joseph prepared himself, by shaving himself and changing his raiment, before he went in to Pharaoh; and wilt thou not prepare thyself, by putting thy soul in the holiest dress and humblest posture, when thou art to go to the King of heaven and earth? 2. He is a jealous and omniscient God, most jealous of his honour, and will come in to see the guests, Matth. xxii. 11. and then he will spy every unprepared and unsanctified guest; he notices the state of your souls, the frame of your hearts, the ends of your communicating, and your preparation before hand. O then sanctify yourselves, before you come to the feast. 3. He is a pure and holy God; he cannot hold communion with unholy persons, he will be sanctified in them that come nigh him, Lev. x. 3. he will be attended as a holy God, in a holy manner. Did a holy angel set tryst with you at a certain place, against such an hour, would you not prepare with all seriousness and solemnity to attend him! Oh! but it is the God of angels that trysts with you here, even the God before whom the angels adore, and cover their faces and feet with their wings, and cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty." If the linen on the communion table, or vessels that hold the elements were foul, ye would be ready to exclaim against it; and no doubt there ought to be observed an outward decency in this respect; Christ would have the very room in good order where he was to eat the passover. But O it is a small crime to have a foul cloth or vessel for outward elements in respect of what it is to have a foul heart, or an unprepared soul to entertain a holy God, and to receive the body and blood of Christ.

3. Consider that God's people used always great preparation before their solemn approaches to Him, Gen. xxxv. 1.—5. Where we see how solemnly Jacob prepared himself and his family, when by God's command he was going up to Bethel to sacrifice unto the Lord. "They change their garment, wash and make themselves clean, and put away their strange gods." How much more ought we to prepare, when we got not only to Bethel, God's house, but to God's table, by changing our garments of sin, and putting on Christ's righteousness by faith, and putting away and mortifying our lusts and idols of jealousy! We see also the Psalmist's preparation for approaching to God, Psal. xxvi. 6. "I will wash my hands in innocency, so will I compass thine altar, O Lord." The Jews had great preparation for the passover, and so should we for the Lord's supper, that is come in its room. Wherefore we find the primitive Christians used to sit up whole nights at prayer before the Lord's supper, which they called *vigiliæ*.

4 Consider that the matter of this sacrament requires solemn preparation. Solomon directs us, when we are to eat with a ruler, to consider what is set before us, Prov xxiii. 1. There are here the symbols of Christ's body and blood, rare food! It is a great sin to abuse common meat and drink, or to partake of these without some serious thought before hand. We would have vessels clean to hold our ordinary food; but here is soul-food, heaven's dainties, the jewel of heaven. Christ's body in the sacrament must be wrapt in a clean soul, as well as his body by Joseph of Arimathea was wrapt in clean linen, and laid in a new tomb.

5. The duties to be performed at the Lord's table require preparation; viz. Covenanting with God, renewing our baptismal vow, expressing our love to Christ, feasting on a broken Christ.

6. You are naturally unfit for this ordinance; naturally

you have neither habitual nor actual preparation, being dead in sins and trespasses, leprous, loathsome, carnal, and earthly-minded. Wherefore we must be quickened and purified, before we can hold communion with a holy God.

7. Because communion with God would be altogether disagreeable to an unsanctified soul, he would weary of it, and take no pleasure in it.

8. Because of the great advantage of this preparation, God will come to-morrow, and work wonders of mercy for such as sincerely aim at preparation. O then sanctify yourselves. *Quest.* What are these wonders of mercy. *Ans.* 1. He will raise dead souls out of the grave, and put life in them. 2. He will warm cold hearts, and put spiritual heat in them. 3. He will soften hard rocky hearts, and make them tender and sensible. 4. He will cleave the rock, and make waters gush out of it, the waters of penitential tears. 5. He will cure the paralytic trembling hand, that could hardly be stretched out, or grip to any thing. He will enable the weak soul to grip fast to Christ, and subscribe his name to the marriage-contract. 6. He will strengthen the feeble knees and lame feet, and make the soul to run on in the way of his commandments with an enlarged heart. 7. He will kill strong Goliaths and lusts, that defied the armies of the God of Israel. 8. He will fix a wandering heart, and fix it on God and things above 9. He will heal a wounded conscience by the balm of Gilead 10. He will brighten a dark cloudy mind, and resolve all the doubts and fears of a believer. 11. He will give a sight of the king in his beauty, a view of the smiles of Christ's lovely face. 12 He will give a seal of the pardon of all your sins. 13. He will give a Pisgah-view of Canaan, a sight of the promised land. 14. He will feast the hungry, and fill them with the dainties of heaven. O these are rare wonders of grace that Christ will work for the prepared soul, Oh, preparation is your seed time, receiving is your harvest. Now, as a man soweth so shall he reap; " he that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully," 2 Cor. ix. 6. It is in the duty of partaking, as in the duty of praying; the more prepared a man's heart is to pray, the greater is his return from heaven, Psal. x. 17. " Thou wilt prepare their hearts, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear." So it may be said in the case of receiving, thou wilt prepare the heart, thou wilt cause thine hand to give. When God prepares a man's heart for duty, it is a token he hath a hand prepared for mercy. Hence the Lord makes that gracious promise, Psalm lxxxi. 10. " Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." *q. d.* I will enlarge my hand, as you enlarge your heart. He saith, as Joseph to his steward, Gen xliv. 1. " Fill the mens sacks as much as they can carry " So as Joseph's brethren prepared sacks in number and largeness, so did they carry corn away; and as you bring prepared hearts to the ordinance, so shall you reap benefit thereby.

6. Because of the great danger in coming unprepared. If you do not sanctify and prepare yourselves, God will come and do wonders of judgment, wonders of wrath among you. 1. He may inflict bodily diseases; as, 1 Cor. xi. 30. 2. He may send untimely death 3. He may smite with desertion from God. 4. He may send darkness on the mind 5. He may smite with deadness and impenitency on the heart. 6. With decaying and withering on the gifts and graces. 7. He may send leanness and barenness on the soul. 8. He may smite with formality and lifelessness in duty. 9. With searedness on the conscience, so as it shall challenge for no sin. 10. He may send horror and terror on the conscience, so as to make it a Magor-Missabib. 11. He may let satan loose against you with temptations, atheistical and blasphemous thoughts. 12. He may send you to hell from the communion-table, as Matth xxii. 12, 13. " And he said unto him, friend, how camest those in hither not having on a wedding-garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into utter darkness."

Quest. How shall I get my heart sanctified and prepared so as I may expect the Lord will come and do wonders of grace for me to-morrow. *Ans.* There is a twofold preparation, habitual and actual; you most study both, and habitual preparation in the first place. *Quest.* What is habitual preparation? *Ans.* It hath several ingredients in it. 1. A covenant relation to God in Christ. 2. A principle of spiritual life. 3. A state of peace with God 4. The imputation of Christ's righteousness. 5. An universal change by regenerating grace. 6. The inhabitation of the Spirit. 7. A holy conversation. 8. The lamp of a profession. *Quest.* 2. What is actual preparation for the Lord's supper? *Ans.* 1. Sequestrating ourselves from the world. 2. Self-examination. 3. Humiliation for sin. 4. Renewing of our personal covenant with God in Christ. 5. Reformation of what is amiss. 6. Exciting of all the graces to a lively exercise. 7. Meditation on the death and sufferings of Christ. 8. Earnest prayer to God for preparation and assistance in the work; and, after your utmost preparation, you must lay no stress thereon, but cast yourself wholly on Christ for assistance, saying, " It is only in the Lord I have righteousness and strength." We ought to be denied to ourselves, and to look with David to the Lord both for assistance and acceptance, Psalm lxxi. 16. " I will go in strength of the Lord, I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." You ought to imitate king Asa, who, though he had a great army to fight against the Ethiopians, yet cried to the Lord, and trusted in him alone for help, as you have it recorded, 2 Chron. xiv. 11. " And Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power; help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go out against this multitude." So let every communicant say, " Lord, all my strength and preparations are nought, I have no power for celebrating this feast, help me, O Lord my God, for I rest on thee, and in thy name I go to this great and weighty ordinance." And if you come forward to-morrow in this self-denied and sanctified frame, you have ground to expect that the Lord will do wonders of grace and mercy for you.

ACTION SERMON.

From Canticles ii. 4.—*He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.*

THE whole of this song is an allegorical description of the mysterious union and communion betwixt Christ and his Church, under the persons of a bridegroom and bride, which is a frequent metaphor made use of in Scrip-

ture. The forty-fifth psalm is an abridgement of this song. In this chapter Christ and the Church seem to strive who shall outvie each other in their commendations. Christ first commends the Church, and then the Church extols Christ. She compares him to the "apple-tree among the trees of the wood," verse 3. Christ is a fruit-bearing tree, but the children of men are barren trees. And O but his shadow is refreshing, and his fruit sweet to a believer But as if the shadow and fruits of an apple-tree were too low a simile, to set forth his excellency and goodness, she tells us of the entertainment he gives her in the banqueting-house, in the text;

Where we have, 1. The place which the Spouse was brought to, "the banqueting-house," or house of wine, *i. e.* of feasting, because wine is a principal part of feasts; by which we are to understand the order, or means, whereby Christ conveys his graces and blessings to believers; and there is none of all the ordinances of the gospel that may more fitly be called the banqueting or feasting-house, than this of the Lord's supper, which is the great gospel-feast wherewith Christ entertains his people on earth. Ordinances are called his banqueting-house, because of the great plenty, variety, and riches of the blessings he thereby communicates to his people.

2. We have the person that brings her into this banqueting-house, and that is Christ, "HE brought me;" which shews, 1. Our want of right to these blessings of ourselves. All our right is in Christ. 2. Our impotency to come to the feasting-house; he must give us both strength and preparation of soul. 3. The freeness of his grace in bestowing these blessings on us.

3. The manner how she is brought in, and that is under a *banner*, standard, or ensign. It is a military word; banners or ensigns are used in camps and armies. Psal. xx. 5. "We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God will set up our banners." Her march or entry into this feasting-house was joyful and triumphant, such as that of people under a displayed banner; or colours lifted up. Colours are useful to draw, invite, engage, and lead people after their captain; and the lifting up or displaying of colours is a sign to invite and direct those of such a party or side, to come to such a place, or march such a way. Now, what is the device or motto of Christ's banner? not like those of other generals, a lion, an eagle, &c. but LOVE. The love of a crucified Jesus is like a banner lifted up and displayed in the gospel for inviting and engaging sinners to come to him. Love is the banner that Christ lifts up and displays this day, to engage you to come to him, and list yourselves under his banner. Love is that which leads to the banqueting-house, and furnishes provision and entertainment for us there.

Observe I. That Christ has rich feasts in the ordinances for entertaining his people's souls.

II. That the banner which Christ displays for drawing us to him is LOVE.

As to the first, I shall shew, 1. That Christ in the ordinances doth provide feasts for his people's souls. 2. That the Lord's supper in particular is one principal feast that he prepares for them. 3. Why he prepares such a feast. 4. Shall apply.

As to the first, it is evident, 1. From God's promise to his people, Psal. xxxi. 8. "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures." Isaiah xxv. 6. "And in this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined." This promise is concerning the gospel times. From Prov. ix. 2. where *Wisdom*, i. e. Christ, is said to have "killed her beasts, mingled her wine, and furnished her table." And, to name no more, from Luke xv. where the father prepares the fatted calf for his penitent prodigal.

2. From the experience of God's people, as of David, Psalm iv. 6.--lxiii. 5.—and lxv. 4. and particularly from the experience of the church in the text, God's people can set to their seal to this truth.

As to the second head, that the Lord's supper is one principal feast, which the Lord prepares for his people. Wherefore it is called, *the table of the Lord*, 1 Cor. x. 21. It is called *a feast on the sacrifice of Christ*, 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. *A wedding-feast*, Mat. xxiii. 4. In these places the Lord's supper is principally pointed at. I shall here shew wherein the Lord's supper resembles a feast; yea, it is not an ordinary feast, it is a rich, royal, and magnificent feast.

1. At a feast there is rich and noble provision. So here there is more than bread and wine, even the body and blood of Christ. "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed," John vi. 55. What bread and wine affords to the body, viz. strength, comfort, and nourishment, the same doth the body and blood of Christ, received by faith, yield to the soul. Here is spiritual food to the hungry soul, bread that strengthens man's heart, and wine that cheers the fainting spirits. Behold here is wisdom's gates, and wisdom's feast. It is good for us to be here, good to wait at her door-posts. Here the breasts of consolation are drawn forth, here we may suck and be satisfied. Here the fountain of life and the wells of salvation are opened, the stone rolled from the well's mouth. Here is the hidden manna, angels food, bread from heaven, yea the fruits of the tree of life, that grows in the midst of the paradise of God. Here is the water of life that springs from beneath the throne of God and the Lamb, clear as chrystal; if you get but one drop of it, it shall be an everlasting spring to your soul, so that you need not thirst after carnal comforts and enjoyments.—Here are the grapes of Canaan, the fruits that grow in the land of promise; yea clusters of these grapes are at this feast, the first fruits of heaven. In a word, there is at this spiritual feast for the soul to feed on, Christ crucified, and all his benefits and purchase: And are there not many dishes and delicacies here?

1. Here is pardon of sin sealed to a believer. O! is not this a rare feast and excellent cheer, Matth. ix. 2. "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." Here you get Christ's blood, which was shed for many, for the remission of sins. Here we clasp about a crucified Christ as the great propitiatory sacrifice for our sins, and accept of him as the Lord our righteousness; and thus we receive the remission of sins. Here God saith to a believer, as Nathan to David, 2 Sam. xii. 13. "The Lord hath put away thy sins; thou shalt not die." Here we hear the voice of joy and gladness, which hath made many a broken bone to rejoice. Is there any thing more sweet than pardon to a condemned man near the place of execution? And what can give more joy, than a free discharge to a sinner arrested by justice, and drawn to hell's door to be cast into that prison for debt, out of which there is no redemption.

2. We have peace and friendship with God; O rare dish! not only to be freed of a burden of debt, that would

have weighed us down to hell; and for which millions already have been carried thither, and are roaring under it without hope; but also to be received into special favour with God: For in this sacrament a covenant of peace and friendship is sealed and confirmed. O must it not be a sweet cordial, for an enemy, a rebel, to be owned as a special favourite of the King of heaven, so that the soul may send a challenge to hell and earth, and bid defiance to men and devils, Rom. viii. 33, 34. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that it is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." And you may say with David, Psalm iv. 8. "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: For thou, Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety." Come life, come death, I am safe; my conscience is disburdened, and I am at ease.

3. Adoption is another of the dishes at this feast. You are not only made a friend, but a son and heir; and in this sacrament you get sasine and infeftment of the children's privileges, relation and inheritance. And here God saith, I will be a Father to thee; and, son, thou shalt be ever with me, and all that I have is thine. Thou shalt have my blessing and love, the smiles of my face, the kisses of my mouth, and the arms of my grace to support and preserve thee. Thou shalt have my Son for thy elder Brother, thy Priest and Advocate; my angels to be thy guards; my providence to be thy protector and manager: Thou shalt have manna in the wilderness, and water out of the rock. Thou shalt be my heir, and joint heir with my eternal Son and First-born. Thou shalt have heaven for thy home, Christ's throne for thy seat, and a kingdom for thy portion; an honourable maintenance while here, and an incorruptible inheritance hereafter.

4. Another dish is peace of conscience. This is one of the precious legacies which Christ leaves in his Testament, which is here sealed, John xiv. 27. It is here Christ speaks peace to his people and to his saints, here he breathes peace upon them, as in Luke xxiv. 36. Do doubts and fears arise within you, that hinders you to believe the good news, as with the disciples; so there is that in this sacrament which may check all these fears, Luke xxiv. 38, 39. "Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet that it is I myself; handle me and see," &c. O but the prints of the nails may calm the doubting conscience, and quiet thy fears.

5. Supplies and strength to our weak and decayed graces. Here Christ's store-house is opened, and we may get grace for grace out of his fulness; here the smoaking flax may be kindled into a flame, and the bruised reed find support; here you may get weak faith strengthened, cold love enflamed, weak desire kindled, repentance renewed, hope made lively, the soul fitted and fortified for trials and sufferings, and prepared for passing through the valley of the shadow of death: Yea, in a word, you may get all your wants supplied, all your grievances redressed, and maladies remedied. Here you may get a meal that will both satisfy, and beget a stomach in you, that will prove life to your souls, and poison to your lusts. It is here the empty soul is filled, the starving creature fed, the poor beggar enriched, the hard heart softened, the cold heart warmed, the dead soul quickened, the paralytick hand cured, the blind eye enlightened, the thirsty heart satisfied, the feeble knee strengthened, the straightened heart enlarged, the wandering heart fixed, the creeping desires elevated, the cloudy soul brightened, and the doubting soul resolved. O are not these gracious and blessed changes! Here you may get strength against your strong lusts and temptations, and furniture for every duty, so as you may pray with enlargement, hear with comfort, praise with elevation of mind, and meditate with delight.

6. Here is Christ's gracious presence, and a sight of his countenance: That is a rare delicacy in this feast, that satisfies the soul, Psalm xvi. ult. "In thy presence is fulness of joy," that was the Psalmist's heaven upon earth. It is here Christ trysts with his people, here he walks with them, and is held by them in the galleries; here he visits them, and holds communion with them, intimates his love, and kisses them with the kisses of his mouth. Here they see the King in his beauty, here the saints have beheld the beauty of the Lord, Psalm xxvii 4. O this is worth our while. O let it be our errand this day to meet with Christ, and see his blessed face. God's people in all ages have placed their happiness here. Abraham rejoiced in a sight of Christ, though afar off, at 1900 years distance. The wise men thought it worth their while to undertake a long journey from the east to see him, though but new born. Old Simeon desires to see no more on earth, after he gets a sight of him, though a child. Zaccheus ran and climbed up a tree to see him, though despised of men. O now he is shining in glory, shall we not desire a sight of him? David desired it as his "one thing," Psal. xxvii. though he then wanted his throne and kingdom. The Spouse seeks it as her one thing, Cant. iii. 3. "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?" O but a sight of him would make your face to shine, a sight of him, in his love, in his dyed garments, treading out the wine-press alone.

7. Another dish is, the comfort of his Spirit, and the clearing up your interest in Christ and glory, a sight of heaven and your names written in the book of life, so that all your fears may be scattered, objections answered, doubts resolved, and likewise the evidences of your graces cleared up to you, so that, though you doubted before if you had faith, yet now you may be enabled to say with the poor man, "Lord, I believe." You doubted before of your love, but now you may say, with Peter, "Lord, thou that knowest all things, knowest that I love thee." You doubted before of your interest in Christ, but now you can say with Thomas, "My Lord, and my God;" with Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth;" and with Paul, "I know in whom I have believed."

Thus I have shewn you some of the rich provision and noble entertainment prepared in this banquet before you: yea, you see it is not only rich provision, but there are choice rarities here, hidden manna, angels food; yea, not only choice, but plenty and variety, food adapted to our souls, nature, and faculties; food to nourish, strengthen, delight and refresh the soul. Here is food suitable to all the faculties, light to the mind, peace to the conscience, satisfaction to the will, and food for all the affections. Here love may satisfy itself in clasping the desire of all nations. Delight may here bathe itself in the rivers of pleasure. In a word, what can the soul need but is here? For Christ is made of God to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Here is precious blood to purge away our deep guilt; here is perfect righteousness to cover our naked soul; here all things are given us richly to enjoy, here hope may feed, on the great and precious promises.

2. At feasts there used to be lavers for the guests to wash in, as at the marriage-feast in Cana of Galilee, where were

six water-pots set for purification, John ii 6. Doth sense of defilement scare you from partaking? Behold here is a fountain opened, Zech xiii 1 O come and wash in it, that ye may be fit to compass God's altar, and sit down at his table.

3. At banquets there uses to be mirth and chearfulnesss; so here, when prodigal sinners first return to their Father, he hath mirth and music to entertain them. See Luke xv 24. The tidings of Christ's purchase, and the promises, are the best music and melody in the world: The news of what he hath done and suffered, ought to fill your hearts and lips with the high praises of God, and thankful admiration of Christ and redeeming love. O believers, consider, you are not come like mourners to a funeral, but like children to your Father's feast, a royal feast, "I will bring them to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer, saith the Lord:" So that ye may eat this bread with joy, and drink this wine with a merry heart, in hopes of God's accepting you and your sacrifice, Ecclesiastes, ix. 7.

4. At feasts there is the master of the feast, to bid the guests welcome, as ready is the Father to welcome the prodigal child. Christ is the Master of this feast; he hath sent forth his servants, to call and invite you to the feast, and now he is come to the table to bid you welcome, as Cant. v. 1 "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved"

5. At feasts there are servants to attend the guests, here the ministers are stewards and servants to attend Christ's guests at this feast: And their work is to direct you to the table, to give every one their portion of meat in due season. God grant we give not the childrens bread to dogs, and them that have no right to it. We know not the heart; ye all have professed yourselves to be children, O do not mock God and his servants.

6. Here is a blessing craved by the Master of this feast; yea, he has commanded, and will command the blessings, and his servants are to pray for the virtue of that blessing to this table.

7. At a feast there is good company. O there is rare company at this feast. "The King sits at his table," Cant. i. 12. even the King of glory. Christ himself is there present, and the Father also; for in this feast we have fellowship with the Father and the Son, through the holy Spirit. Here the children of God, yea the glorious saints above, sit at this table, and share with us in this feast. It is true, they sit at the upper end of the table, and we at the lower end. They have better appetites, better music; they feed on a naked Christ, we by signs and symbols; but we have all the same cheer. O what a great and good company is here! We read of Belshazzar that made a feast for a thousand of his lords, Dan. v 1. But here is a feast for many thousands, yea, to all believers, Jews and Gentiles, an open free feast, Isa. xxv. And we read that Ahasuerus made a feast to all his princes and servants, which lasted one hundred and eighty days, Esth. i. 4. But here is a feast which lasts to all eternity.

III. As to the third head, why he prepares such a feast for his people? *Ans.* 1. To be a solemn memorial of his love to sinners, in suffering and dying for them; and this memorial is to be kept up through all generations till Christ's second coming. Just so the passover was a commemorating feast to the Israelites of their protection and deliverance from the bondage of Egypt.

2. To discover his infinite riches and goodness to poor sinners. So Ahasuerus, Esther i. 3, 4 "made a feast to all his princes and servants, to shew them the riches of his excellent majesty"

3. To express the joy and satisfaction he hath in the believer's coming to him. The Father of the prodigal evidenced his joy for the return of his Son (who was dead and now alive, lost and found) by a feast and music. O believers, this is the day of the gladness of Christ's heart, glad is he to see his prodigals returning, and this feast is the welcome home.

4 To express his love to believers, and that he might have opportunity of nearer communion and fellowship with them At feasts, people have great freedom and familiarity with one another, mutual expressions of kindness, communicating of secrets, rejoicing in one another. O but many a poor soul has been ravished with Christ's love here, and with the wine of his consolation; he hath made rare discoveries of his love to them.

5. To ratify and confirm the covenant between God and us It was usual in the eastern countries to ratify contracts and covenants, by eating and drinking together So was it in the covenant made between Isaac and Abimelech, see Gen. xxvi. 28, 30 And so it was a federal rite between Laban and Jacob, Gen xxxi 46. between the Israelites and Gibeonites, Joshua ix 14. between David and Abner, 2 Sam. iii 20 Consider then, this is a covenanting feast, here a solemn bargain between God and us is sealed and ratified. What is the bargain? See the tenor of the covenant, Acts xvi. 31. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Here we engage to believe in Christ, and Christ engages to save us Here God promises to be to us a God, and we promise to be to him a people Here God promises and seals the benefits of the covenant on his part, and we promise and seal the duties of the covenant on our part. Here God's giving the signs is a seal on his part, and our taking them is a seal on ours. Here Christ gives us his soul and body to save us, and we give our souls and bodies to serve him Here God binds himself to be faithful, and we bind ourselves to be constant. Yea, we here swear allegiance to Christ over his broken body and shed blood.

6. To be a cordial to his poor fainting ones, and for strengthening the weak and feeble of his people. Many of his people are sore cast down, and have dwelt long with fears and horrors; and this is relief to them, here Christ smiles, and speaks peace. Others are weak in grace, here he brings them supplies; here the decayed have renewed their strength; here the lame have been made to leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing.

7. To fortify and encourage against all difficulties and trials we may meet with in Christ's service We are to look for reproaches and persecutions, if we hold fast by Christ. Satan and the world will not be idle, see Heb. x 2› Here is a meal and cordial to hearten us for it; and some have met with that in this feast which hath made them chearfully venture on sufferings, and resolve never to leave Christ. An hour of sealing animates the soul for an hour of suffering. If the Redeemer smile on us, and his love be shed abroad in our hearts, we can bear any thing, suffer any thing, lose any thing, and not be discouraged O then come, and take in provision against the evil day, for ye have a wilderness to go through. Elijah was excited to take a double meal, for his journey was long. So if you would have strength for your journey, O here you may have it; here is food more subsisting, durable, and nourishing than Elijah's cake and

cruise of water, of which he ate and drank, and in the strength of that meal went forty days and forty nights, unto Horeb the mount of God, 1 Kings xix. 6, 8. What bread and wine afford to the body, the same doth Christ's body and blood in the sacrament, received by faith, afford to the soul, viz. strengthening, comforting, nourishment And who but a madman would be so cruel to himself, as to deny his faint body its stated meals and relief? O may it not hearten you, that whatever your straits, bodily wants, or necessities are, and however he may be despised, you have a great King that honours you, owns you, takes you to feast with himself here, and will shortly call you to the marriage supper of the Lamb above.

8. To wean you from the vain pleasures and comforts of the world, and from sensual delights; and to make you long for that glorious and full feast above. This is a foretaste of it, and should stir up a hunger for it; for this feast is the first fruits of heaven.

Improvement I. I infer what a horrid calumny it is, that is raised against the ways of Christ by the devil and the world, that they are sad and melancholy, of purpose to fright men from them. No, you see Christ has royal feasts for his people, the world knows little of. A believer would not give a crumb of this spiritual feast for many days of worldly feasts.

II. Admire his condescension, that the Lord of glory should make such a feast for beggars, see Luke xiv. 21. Poor worms, vile sinners, will he calls us, that deserve not a dog's crumb beneath the table, to come and sit down with the children at the table? O what are we that he should deal so with us, sinners vile as the mire, and black as hell. You have far greater cause to wonder at this privilege than Mephibosheth, 2 Sam. ix. 7. "David said to him, I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father, and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually." Observe his answer, "What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?"

III. How unexcusable are they who slight this feast, that has cost Christ so dear, more than ten thousand kingdoms? He has made all things ready, and ha been calling sinners to come. Consider how grievously the King took it, when he made his marriage-supper, and those that were bidden would not come, Luke xiv. 24.

IV. *Exhortation.* O communicants who have been preparing for this feast, come away to the marriage, all things are ready on Christ's part. *Object.* But how shall I get access to the banqueting-house? *Ans.* Employ Christ to bring you in. It is he alone that brings his spouse in. You may come to the table, and get the outward elements, but unless Christ bring you in to the banqueting-house, ye will not be taken in. It is only Christ can give you appetites, and clothe you with the wedding-garment; it is only he that can quicken the dead soul, and strengthen the weak, "I can do all things through Christ strengthening me," saith Paul. He only can send the Comforter, the north and south gales of the Spirit. He only can remove the burden of sin, and take away the heart of stone, dissolve doubts, and scatter clouds. O look and long for him then to bring you in, and say with those in John xi. 56. "What think ye, will he come to the feast?" Will he bring me into the banqueting-house; will he touch my heart and take me by the hand? Poor sinner, I will tell you whom he will bring in. It is true, it is not every one; many come thronging to the feast that have no ground to expect to be taken in. But there are some he will bring in, and they are these: 1. The hungry and thirsty sinner, that is longing for a meeting with Christ, sensible of his needs and wants, and crying, O a crumb from his hand, a drop from his wounds, a seal of pardon from that table, else I die. These have a promise to be filled. 2. The poor broken hearten humbled soul, that has a deep sense of his own nothingness and unworthiness, saying I am not worthy that Christ should come under my roof, and far less worthy that I should come under Christ's roof, my sins are so many and great. Is there any standing afar off with the publican, afraid to come to the holy table, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner," Christ will come to such, Isa. lvii. 15. "He will revive the spirit of the humble, and the heart of the contrite ones." 3. The poor praying and wrestling soul, that has been putting up many a petition, sigh and groan for access, saying, "O that I knew where to find him!" O when wilt thou come unto me, how long wilt thou hide thy face? O have ye been storming heaven with your cries last week, last night, and this morning? Have ye been knocking for the opening of the door of the banqueting-house? He will come and bring such in. 4. All the friends and lovers of Christ will be taken in. O sinner, art thou such, see thy warrant and thy welcome, Cant. vi. 1. Oh, say some, I cannot be a friend to Christ; but I wish him well, and his people and interest. I cannot say I'm a true lover of Christ; but I find my heart glowing and warming with desire to him, and I would give all the world I had these glowings kindled into a flame. Take courage, poor soul, Christ will not quench the smoaking flax, he will blow it up into a flame, and take thee in. 5. All sincere covenanting souls, that have been yesternight and this morning honestly consenting to the bargain offered in the gospel, content to close with Christ as he offers himself, to renounce their idols and lusts, and to give Christ their hearts. Is there any soul willing to open to Christ; O then he will take you in, Rev. iii. 20. "If any man open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." O poor sinners, that never opened your hearts to Christ, be persuaded to open to a bountiful Lord; open your hearts to him, and he will open his banqueting-house to you. O sinner, hast thou no need of Christ's dainties? Art thou not a poor, perishing, starving soul, a famished prodigal, and needest thou not the bread of life? Christ is at the door with variety of blessings, and ready to open his banqueting-house to you, O will ye open to him? Consider that if ye do not accept of Christ, he may pass such a sentence against you, as in Luke xiv. 24. "For I say unto you, that none of these men which were bidden shall taste of my supper." Oh, will it not be dreadful to see the saints sitting at the royal feast in heaven, and you yourselves shut out, like a company of starving beggars standing about the doors where the marriage-supper is kept? They see the lights, and behold the rich dishes carried up; they hear the mirth and music of the guests, but not a bit comes to their share.

But as for you that are content to accept of Christ on his own terms, come away to the marriage-supper, Christ the Master of the feast invites you, and will make you welcome. And in coming to this feast, observe the following directions.

1. Come with holy awe and reverence of God, the Master and Maker of this feast. If ye were going to a prince's

table, you would have some awe upon your spirits; mind the Master of this feast is a glorious, holy and jealous God, that will not be mocked.

2. Come with a pure heart and clean hands, wash your hearts in the tears of true repentance, cleanse them of all filth, through the blood of Jesus, which cleanseth from all sin, otherwise you will affront the Master of this feast. Should a beggar that has been wallowing in a puddle, intrude himself in that condition into a prince's company, sit down at his table, and dip his besmeared hands into the same dish with him, how would he take it? O come not with filthy rags and filthy hands to this holy table, but repent of every sin, renounce every sin, and resolve against every sin.

3. Come with a holy fear and jealousy over yourselves, afraid that you be not ready. Cry, Lord, let me not wrong Christ or my own soul, this day! O let me not betray the Son of God with a kiss! O let me not murder Christ or my own soul, contract blood-guiltiness, or drink damnation! O what if I want the wedding-garment when the King comes in to view the guests!

4. Come with a broken and bleeding heart to view the slain Lamb. O will not the dying groans and bleeding wounds of Christ move you? When you see him stretched out and nailed, will ye not cry, O behold my Saviour that was nailed for me, dying with love in his heart, and smiles in his face; O it was my sins drove in these nails. Remember, the sun vailed his face in the time of Christ's sufferings, fainted at the sight, and could not look! O vail yours, retire inwardly, and take amends of sin, the cause of his sufferings.

5 Have on the wedding-garment; viz. Faith in a Redeemer's righteousness. Come relying on him for acceptance, and look to him for strength and furniture; look up to him, O dead soul, for life and quickening. How unseemly will it be to see a company of dead corpse set down to the feast of the living God? O be acting faith in a lively manner on Christ, for faith is the life of all: O come reach hither thy finger, and behold Christ's hands, reach hither thy hand, and feel the prints of the nails, and mark of the spear, and cry with Thomas, " My Lord and my God; here will I rest, and here will I stay." In the clefts of his wounds my soul shall take shelter, where justice shall not reach me.

6. Come with love, for it is a love-feast. O love Christ, that is both the Master, the Maker, and matter of the feast. Christ's heart is burning and bleeding with love to you, O let yours do so to him. Without love ye have nothing to do here. Come also with love and charity to all men, be ready to forgive every one, as ye would have God to forgive you.

7. Come with panting and thirsting desires, to see and meet with Christ, saying, I care not who be here, if Christ be absent. O the desire of my soul is towards him and the remembrance of his name

2. Come with expectation, depending only on Christ's merits, God's promises and free mercy in Christ, greedily expecting something from Christ this day, as the poor cripple man did from Peter and John, Acts iii. 4, 5. " And Peter fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them." We ordinarily receive little, because we expect little. O raise your desires and expectations, for you come to a merciful and a liberal God, that will not let the expectation of the poor perish, Psalm ix. 18.

9. Come resigning yourselves to Christ. Give up your hearts to Christ, saying, Lord, I have no sacrifice to bring but my heart. O that it were a thousand times better than it is, it should be thine; Lord, accept of the poor sacrifice.

10. Come with admiration and praise. O the high praises of God shall be in our mouths: wonder and praise God for the contrivance of our redemption, and for making choice of such a Redeemer. O wonder and praise our Redeemer for leaving his throne of glory for a manger; yea, for a cross and a grave, and all for the sake of us. Say, " Lord, what am I, that thou shouldst part with thy glory, yea, with thy blood and life for such a wretch as I am? O how am I ashamed, that I love thee no more; my heart is cold, my tongue is slow, I cannot love, I cannot praise. O let heaven and earth, angels and men, join and extol his free grace and wondrous love." If ye come in such a frame, you will be taken into the banqueting-house, and his banner over you will be love. And this leads me to speak a word to the *banner of love.*

Christ upon the cross hath lifted up a banner of love, he hath declared himself willing to receive every soul that will come under his banner, and list himself to fight under his colours. As ye are professing to leave the devil's standard, and come to Christ, by taking your sacrament, (which used to be a military oath among the Romans) and swearing allegiance to Christ; O mind ye are not to draw back, but to follow the Captain of your salvation, and fight against the devil, the world, and the flesh. If ye perjure yourselves, and return to your old ways, saying, welcome, drunken cups, bloody oaths, lying, &c. ye will incur all the curses of the law, and vengeance of the gospel also. O ye will sink deeper into hell than others, and ye will be made to cry, would to God I had been the son of a Pagan or Mahometan. Wherefore own and stand by the banner of Christ; and to encourage you to stedfastness, keep in mind that you have, 1. A noble General, who hath already conquered, and is ready to join you in the fight. 2. A noble cause; it is the Lord's battle, they are God's enemies, and enemies to your souls also. 3. You have noble weapons, the shield of faith, sword of the Spirit, &c. they are impenetrable and full proof. 4. Noble pay, a white stone, a crown, and a new name, grace here, and glory hereafter. 5. Ye are sure of victory, if ye fight valiantly, for Christ will fairly bring you out of the field at length.

A banner is a sign of union; it signifies that all who resort to it, are united in one company, under such a captain: O then study union among yourselves. Let the consideration of Christ's love move you all to be united and to love one another. O shun division, discord, slandering and backbiting; ye are soldiers of one company, and under one Captain, and if you divide, enemies will reap advantage. Again, a banner is a sign of protection, and love is the banner that engages Christ to protect his people; as long as Christ loves his people, he will protect and defend them. O then mind your work in evil times, flee to Christ's love, and abide in this love; keep your souls in the love of God, clear up the evidences of Christ's love, and so you may look to him for protection and through-bearing in the worst case; men or devils shall do you no hurt, while his banner over you is love. *Lastly,* A banner displayed signifies victory: When conquerors won a city, they displayed their

colours on the walls; O has Christ this day won your hearts, conquered your enemies and lusts, and displayed his banner thereupon. O it is love that engaged him to make such a conquest. Be faithful to your friendly Conqueror, and let not these enemies and rebels get into the city again. O hold out the city, and fight valiantly under Christ's banner; be not cowardly, do not basely surrender the fort that Christ hath won; he has won it, let him wear it, let him possess the throne for ever. Say to Christ, as the men of Israel said to Gideon, Judges viii 22. " Rule thou over us, for thou hast delivered us out of the hand of Midian " O but Christ has delivered you out of the hands of satan; submit therefore kindly to his government and laws, own him as a King as well as a Priest; surrender willingly the keys of your hearts to him, and keep your heart for him.

A
TREATISE
CONCERNING
THE SANCTIFICATION
OF THE
LORD'S DAY.

WHEREIN

THE MORALITY OF THE SABBATH,

OR THE

PERPETUAL OBLIGATION OF THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT, IS MAINTAINED AGAINST ADVERSARIES;

AND

THE RELIGIOUS OBSERVATION OF THE LORD'S DAY,
OR FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, AS OUR CHRISTIAN SABBATH,
IS STRONGLY PRESSED BY SCRIPTURE-ARGUMENTS.

CONTAINING ALSO

MANY SPECIAL DIRECTIONS AND ADVICES

FOR THE

Better Performing the most necessary and comprehensive Duty of Sabbath-Sanctification.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED (BY WAY OF APPENDIX)
MEDITATIONS FOR THE SABBATH-DAY,
Taken from the AUTHOR'S Manuscripts, never published before.

PROPER FOR FAMILIES.

REV. i. 10. *I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day.*

BY
THE REVEREND JOHN WILLISON, LATE MINISTER
OF DUNDEE.

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1816.

A TREATISE, &c.

PREFACE.

THAT wise king Solomon observes, Eccl. iii. 1. "To every thing there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven" And if there be a time and season allowed for every thing and purpose, even the meanest things and purposes in the world; surely an infinitely wise God will allow a proper time and season for the best things and purposes, and particularly for his solemn worship and service, which is the most necessary and excellent purpose in the world. It is not enough, that we give God, from whom we have all our time, a share of every day for his service, no, we owe him also some whole days for his solemn and public worship: Yea, it is agreeable to the dictates of the light of nature, and of sound reason, that one whole day of every week should be dedicated to him for that end.

All nations through the world have had their seasons and set times for devotion and sacrifices. The heathens, who worshipped dumb idols, had their festivals and holy-days, and particularly one day of the week, which they esteemed more sacred than the rest. The Turks, who have taken up with the most unreasonable delusions and impostures, do still retain the impressions of the rationality and equity of this thing, that there should be a certain day of the week set apart for the solemn worship of God. Indeed the light of nature, without some other help, could not have determined men universally to dedicate the seventh day of their time to God; more than the sixth or eighth: But seeing the wise Creator of the world, and author of time, thought fit from the beginning, to measure time by days, and parcel out these days into such remarkable periods as weeks, or the revolution of seven days, to be constantly observed all the world over; it is most consonant to reason and equity, that one day of each week should be holy to the Lord.

But, besides the light of nature, we have the light of revelation for this point; God hath expressly appointed in his word, one day in seven, to be kept holy for his solemn worship; neither hath he left the particular day to mens own choice but hath chosen it for them. And now, in the New Testament, he points out the first day of the week to be the Christian Sabbath to the end of the world, as is made evident in the following treatise.

The Jews have their *Saturday* Sabbath, which they glory in, and call the Queen of the week: The Mahometans keep the *Friday*, as being Mahomet's birth-day. The Parthians and some other Pagan nations observe Tuesday, and esteem it above all other days of the week. But it is the discriminating badge of the professors of Christianity, through all the world, to celebrate the first day of the week being Christ's resurrection-day, and hence called the Lord's-day. Now, though the Jews and some few others plead that the seventh day from the creation is unalterable by virtue of the fourth command, it is shewed in this treatise, that the words of the fourth command are so framed, that they may be applied to any day of the week that God doth please to pitch upon for the Sabbath, whether it be the first or last of the seven days. For when it is said, "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God;" it doth not mean the seventh day from the Creation, but any seventh day after six days labour which God pitches on; upon which account it is not called that seventh day, but the seventh day. Neither is the seventh day mentioned in the first words of the command, which contain the substance of it; for it is said only, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy," not the seventh day. Nor is the seventh day mentioned in the last words of the command, which contain the formal reason of it; for it is said only, "The Lord blessed the Sabbath-day and hallowed it," not the seventh day.

As to the first day of the week, our Christian Sabbath, the great Lord of our time hath appropriate this day to himself, marked it with his seal, and hath put his name upon it, calling it, Rev i. 10. *Hemera Kuriake*, the Lord's day; even as he calls the holy supper, 1 Cor. xi 20. *Deipnon Kuriakon*, the Lord's supper; because the one was his institution as well as the other, and set apart for keeping up his memory, and shewing forth his glory. Wherefore no true Christian, or lover of our Lord Jesus Christ, will be indifferent about the keeping of this holy day: For as the holy observing of this day is an open and visible owning of the Lord Jesus (whose name it bears) for our Lord and Master; so the neglect of this day is a plain disowning of him, and an open slighting of the benefits of his resurrection. O that men would think on this, and consider what they do, when they neglect or contemn the Lord's day!

Though the way of Sabbath-sanctification be the good old way, appointed by God ever since he created man upon the earth; yet there is no way more hated, no duty more opposed by Satan and wicked men: Which we need not be surprised at, seeing it is a special fence to all religion, and a great bulwark against the torrent of impiety that runs in the world. And that true piety is so low in most places, and vice and immorality so generally prevail, is mainly to be imputed to the abounding neglect and contempt of the holy Sabbath: For common experience doth testify, that where

the Lord's day is more strictly observed, their Christian knowledge, piety and morality, do prosper most; and where the Sabbath is disregarded, there all these do decay. The consideration whereof should excite all the lovers of God and holiness, to use their utmost endeavours to support the credit and maintain the dignity of the Sabbath against all its enemies.

This consideration hath moved me to contribute my mite upon this excellent subject in the following treatise, which is partly controversial and partly practical; for confuting the enemies of the Sabbath, and for instructing all in the divine warrant for sanctifying this holy day, and in the right manner of doing it. There are two essential things in the Christian religon, which all should make conscience of; sincerely to believe its truths, and faithfully to practice its duties. The first of these hath great influence upon the second; for, if the Christian truths be not firmly believed, the Christian duties will be ill performed: Now, the best means for promoting both the Christian faith and Christian practice, is the sanctification of the Lord's day.

Had it not been for the observation of the Sabbath, the truths of Christianity had been quite razed out of the minds of the most part: For as the Lord's day, of itself, is a bright and lively memorial of our redemption by Jesus Christ: so upon this day we constantly have sounded in our ears the truths of that religion which Christ and his apostles delivered into the world, and the excellency of them inculcate upon us. And as the observation of the Sabbath is a great preservative to the truths of Christianity, so it is also to the duties thereof. God hath set this one duty as a hedge or fence for keeping all the rest; for, by keeping the Sabbath conscientiously, the soul is notably disposed and put in frame for serving God in every religious duty. The frequent recurring of this day, and the gospel-ordinances therein dispensed, serve to continue the remembrance of Christ and heaven among men, keep sin and vice under constant rebukes, and put atheism and infidelity to the blush. Take away the observation of the Lord's day, then the worship of God would be cast off, and atheism, profaneness, and all disorders, like a flood, would break in upon us.

We may look upon the duty of Sabbath-sanctification to be of no less consequence to the practice of Christianity, than Luther reckoned the article of justification to be to the doctrine of it, when he called it *articulus stantis seu cadentis ecclesiæ*: For, if once we make a gape in this hedge of piety, serious godliness will run out at it, and a flood of impiety and looseness rush in upon us. It was surely the sense of this, that determined the wisest of emperors, kings, parliaments, and church councils and synods, to frame and publish so many excellent laws and acts for the strict observation of the Lord's day, agreeable to the divine laws thereanent. It would be happy for churches and nations, if these were put in execution, and all sorts of men brought to have a due regard to them.

But, notwithstanding of all the laws, divine and human, for the holy observation of the Lord's day, there are many in the age wherein we live, who adventure to pour contempt upon this holy day. Some there are who dispute against the morality of the Sabbath, and disown the standing and perpetual obligation of the fourth command. Others, though they own the obligation of the command so far as to forbear servile work, and attend public worship on the Sabbath, yet plead for carnal diversions and recreations after public worship is over. Many would incline to the Papist's way of celebrating the Sabbath, who after mass and even-song (as they call it) go presently to piping and dancing, and then to the ale-house; the same way that the Israelites celebrated the feast of the golden calf, Exod. xxxii. 6. "The people ate and drank, and rose up to play." If this profane course were allowed, as of old, in times of antichristian darkness, many would then call the Sabbath a delight, and be, in some measure, reconciled to it; but, when they hear that the whole Sabbath is to be spent in religious duties and exercises, they murmur, and say, as those in Mal. i. 13. "What a weariness is it?"

It would be no grievance to many to see that old abomination of the *book of sports* revived and authorised among us; I mean, that infamous declaration for liberty of sports and recreation on the Lord's day, published by authority in the year 1633, and appointed to be read from the pulpits; the prelates consenting to it, and persecuting those ministers who refused to read it. O what heinous God-provoking wickedness was it, for civil and ecclesiastic rulers, to unite in promoting the profanation of the Sabbath by such methods! As the heavy judgment of God followed them for such avowed profanation, so those in our age have reason to fear his judgments, who continue to be of the same profane disposition. Oh, is it not evident that sports and pastimes do unfit the mind for spiritual service, and take off mens thoughts from what is serious and solemn? Do they not put the heart out of frame for attending on God, and for holding communion with him in holy duties and ordinances? This is shewed more fully in the following treatise.

Again, there are others who observe this day no better than the beasts do: They only rest from their ordinary labour, and spend the day in idleness and sloth; which is to keep the Sabbath of an ox or ass, not of a reasonable creature. To sanctify the Sabbath, it is not to keep it merely as a rest from our common employments, or keep it as an idle day: but to keep it as a holy day, a day set apart for God's glory, and for promoting our salvation. But, alas! such is the spiritual sloth and idleness of many poor careless souls on this day, they labour as little for their souls on it, as they do for their bodies; they sleep, loiter, ly at home, and seldom go to any worship at all; if they go out of doors, it is for their diversion, to take a walk, to pay a visit, or the like, but not to attend God's worship. Many, alas! will go a dozen of miles to a market for a little gain, that will not go one mile, nor a few steps to the church, to attend the gospel-market for enriching their souls. If the bell that calls them to the worship of God, did advertise them of a stage play, or of some idle pastime, perhaps they would be found there among the first; but, for spiritual work, they have an aversion to it.

Moreover, there are many who go to church and attend ordinances this day, rather to please a natural conscience, or support their reputation in the world, than to serve God or save their souls. Or perhaps they go because it is the fashion, or the way in which they have been brought up; but alas! leaving their hearts behind them, they present their bodies to God, and no more: And hence it is, that in the time of the most solemn worship, they have their eyes either wandering after vanity, or else shut with drowsiness, and sleep; they find no delight in the Sabbath, taste no sweetness in ordinances, know nothing of communion with God in them: They understand not the Psalmist's language, "A day in God's courts is better than a thou-

sand any where else." No, this day is to them the longest and most wearisome day of all the week; the religious exercises of it are irksome and burdensome to them. It may be said of them, as of Doeg the Edomite, 1 Sam. xxi 7. "He was that day detained before the Lord." They long to be released from the service of that day, and glad when it is over. Alas! the minds of many are so set upon the world, that they complain in their hearts of the length of this day, as the Israelites of old, Amos viii. 5. "When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn; and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat?" They count all these days lost days, that bring them in no worldly gain. Hence it was, that the Heathens (as Seneca tells us) counted the Jews a foolish people, because they lost a full seventh part of their lives, to wit, by observing the Sabbath But, ah! it is to be lamented, that not Heathens only, but also many profest Christians, count the Sabbath a lost day: O what base ingratitude is this to God, for the invaluable privilege and blessing of the Sabbath to the souls of men!

Lastly, There are, besides these mentioned, some prodigies of wickedness in the world, persons who prosecute their lewd and profane courses with more vigour on this holy day than upon any other; and so make this day of holy rest the devil's working day, and consume it wholly upon their lusts! O how daring an affront must this be to a great, a holy God, to make that a day to serve the devil, a day to improve in vice and debauchery, which the Lord hath instituted to be a day for his own worship, and for our improvement in piety and devotion!

It is for remedying these woeful abuses of the Sabbath that I have written the ensuing treatise; and, to make it more generally useful to the poor, I have shortened this fourth edition of it, by leaving out the *Help of Prayer* which was subjoined to the former, and possibly may be afterwards published by itself. I have heard of the usefulness of this treatise to some who have read it: O that God would bless it to many more, and make it the means to preserve and promote the love and esteem of the Lord's day in the hearts of many! A serious godliness never did, so it never will thrive nor flourish in the world, when or where the Lord's day is disregarded: Long experience confirms it, that the sin of Sabbath-breaking is a woeful inlet to impiety and profaneness: They who once begin to make little difference betwixt the Lord's day and other days, will easily be brought to make little difference betwixt the Lord's name and other names, the Lord's table and other tables, the Lord's book and other books: Whereas a conscientious regard to his holy day is a strong fence to religion, being a mighty aw-band upon the soul against the commission of sin, and the neglect of duty. The Lord's day is an unspeakable blessing to a lost world, and the sweetest day that ever dawned upon it; it ought to be the delight of our souls, and rejoicing of our hearts. Every wise man, that knows the value of this day, will have a peculiar esteem for it above all the days of the week, and will reckon every minute of it precious, and desire that none of it be mispent. What Christ said to his disciples concerning the loaves and fishes, he says to us concerning his holy day, *Gather up the fragments*, "Gather up the spare hours and minutes of it, count them as precious as the goldsmith doth the small filings of his gold, let nothing of Sabbath-time be lost, improve it wholly for God and your souls.

This treatise I recommend chiefly to families, because the duty of sanctifying the Sabbath doth nearly concern all families as such: For all governors of families are charged, by the fourth command, to see that it be done in all their dwellings; and by the command, they are made responsible for *their children, servants*, and for all that lodge *within their gates*, that none of them be allowed to break the Sabbath. If any masters of families be excited by this treatise to mind their proper duty, I have my reward; but let the glorious author of the Sabbath alone have the praise.

May all of us get grace to keep the Sabbath of our God, and chuse the things that please him, and take hold of his covenant, that so we may be numbered among those whom he will bring to his holy mountain, and make joyful in his house of prayer! *Amen.*

SOME INSTANCES

OF THE GREAT REGARD WHICH OUR

ANCESTORS AND LEGISLATORS

MANIFESTED TO THE

LORD'S DAY,

And of the Laws *and* Acts *made in ancient Times for the strict Observation of it, with those of this Nation and Church which still stand in Force; being so many Testimonies to the Morality of the Sabbath, and the divine Institution of the Lord's Day.*

I SHALL not stand here to notice the high regard which kings, prophets, and righteous men among the Jews had for the Sabbath, recorded in the Old Testament; the passages being obvious to those who are versant in the holy scriptures, sundry of which are brought in, in the following treatise. Neither shall I stand citing the testimonies of learned and pious divines at home or abroad, for confirming the doctrine of this treatise; seeing these are so many as would fill a volume by themselves. I shall only mention some of these of more public authority, and which may be of greater weight with the generality of readers.

The ancient Christians, who lived nearest the apostles times, still spoke of the Lord's day with the highest veneration and respect; such as Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and others; who also give an account of the particular religious services performed by Christians on that day. It is observable, that the Christians then commonly called that day among themselves, *the first day of the week*, and *the Lord's day*, as it is denominated in the New Testament; likewise, they sometimes called it the *eighth day*, because it succeeded the Jewish seventh day, and came to be celebrated in the room of it, and seems to be pointed at by the eighth day mentioned by Ezek. xliii 27. I grant that some of the fathers, such as Justin and Tertullian, in their apologies to the heathen emperors, called this day *Sunday*; the reason whereof is plain, they were speaking to heathens, who always called this day by that name, and so would not have known certainly what day they meant, if they had not called it Sunday; which name indeed was

given it by the heathens, because of their dedicating this day to the sun, which was the chief of the planetary gods worshipped by them. But now, when that reason is ceased, and Christians speak of this day among themselves, it is not proper to give it the name of Sunday any more.

With what esteem and veneration doth Ignatius, that ancient martyr, speak of this day, in his epistle to the Magnesians? saith he, 'Let us not Jewishly sabbatize, but 'let us rest spiritually; and, instead of the old Sabbath, 'let every lover of Christ celebrate the LORD'S DAY, the 'best and most eminent of days, in which our Life arose.'

So strictly was this day set apart by the ancients for public devotion, that very early the synod of Illeberis ordained, 'That if any man dwelling in a city (where churches are 'near at hand) should for three Lord's days keep from 'church, he should be suspended from communion with the 'church.'

In the fourth century, the Historian Eusebius tells us, that Constantine the Great, the first Christian emperor, issued an edict, requiring the whole Roman empire to observe the LORD's DAY, in memory of those things which were done by the common Saviour of all men; and bearing that he counted that day the best and chief of days, truly the LORD's, and a day of salvation; and that he ordered his army to offer up prayers to God, and required all men every where to apply themselves to religious worship; and that no work nor any thing should be allowed to hinder their prayers and devotions that day.

We read also of many ancient laws made by kings in England, prohibiting all kinds of servile work, merchandise or traffic, on the Lord's day, upon very severe penalties; as that made by King Ina about the year 688, that made by King Alfred in the year 876, that made by Edward his son about the year 912, that made by King Edgar about the year 966, which required that the celebration of the Lord's day should begin from nine o'clock on Saturday night: Also that law made by King Canute about the year 1026, to the same effect with that of Edgar's, and more particularly and strictly forbidding all trade, and all meetings of people for secular affairs or converses; requiring them to abstain from hunting and every worldly employment on this day.

To the same purpose might be adduced many canons of ecclesiastical synods and councils in England, France, Germany, and other nations; a great number whereof we find collected by Dr Francis White, bishop of Ely, in 1635. Likewise we find great zeal manifested by a convocation of the Scots clergy for the Lord's day, at their meeting at Perth in the year 1180, as narrated by Archbishop Spotiswood: They ordained, that every Saturday, from twelve o'clock, should be set apart for preparation for the Lord's day; and that all the people on Saturday evening, at the sound of the bell, should address themselves to hear prayers, and should abstain from worldly labours till Monday morning.

But I shall pass from those more ancient laws and canons, to give a brief account of some acts of Parliament both in England and Scotland, which are now in force, for observing the Lord's day; and which all magistrates of burghs, justices of peace, and other judges, should and might execute presently, if they were disposed to do it.

In England *Primo Car.* I. cap. 1. 'Forasmuch as there 'is nothing more acceptable to God than the true and sincere worship of him according to his holy will, and that 'the holy keeping of the Lord's day is a principal part of 'the true service of God, which in very many places of 'this realm hath been, and now is, profaned and neglected 'by disorderly sorts of people: It is therefore enacted, 'That there shall be no more meetings, assemblies, or concourse of people on the Lord's day, for any sport and pastimes whatsoever,' &c.

Tertio Car. I. cap. 1. it is enacted, 'That no carrier, 'carman, wainman, nor drover of cattle, shall travel on the 'Lord's day, upon pain of forfeiting twenty shillings: Nor 'any butcher shall be allowed to kill or sell meat,' &c.

Vigesimo nono Car II. cap. 7 it is enacted, 'That all 'the laws enacted and in force concerning the observation 'of the Lord's day, and repairing to the church thereon, 'be carefully put in execution: And that all and every 'person and persons whatsoever shall on every Lord's day 'apply themselves to the observation of the same, by exercising themselves thereon in the duties of piety and true 'religion publicly and privately; and that no tradesman, 'artificer, workman, labourer, or other person whatsoever, 'shall do or exercise any worldly labour, business, or work 'of their ordinary callings upon the Lord's days, or any 'part thereof (works of necessity and charity only excepted;) and that every person, being of the age of fourteen years and upwards, offending in the premises, shall, 'for every such offence, forfeit the sum of five shillings; 'and that no person or persons whatever shall publicly cry, 'shew forth, or expose to sale, any wares, merchandises, 'fruit, herbs, goods, or chattels whatsoever upon the Lord's 'day, or any part thereof, upon pain that every person so 'offending shall forfeit the same goods, so cried, or shewed 'forth, or exposed to sale.'

It is further enacted, 'That no drover, horse-courser, 'waggoner, butcher, higler, they or any of their servants, 'shall travel or come into his or their inn or lodging upon 'the Lord's day, or any part thereof, upon pain that each 'and every such offender shall forfeit twenty shillings for 'every such offence. And if any other person travels on 'the Lord's day, and should then be robbed, the hundred 'is not to be answerable for it; and whatever the person 'loses, he is barred from bringing any action for such robberies. No waterman is to be employed to travel, except 'as licensed for any extraordinary occasion. No person is 'allowed to serve, execute, or cause to be served or executed, any writ, process, warrant, order, judgment, or device, except in cases of treason, felony, or breach of the 'peace. The impeachment of offenders is to be within ten 'days, and a third part of the forfeitures is appointed to the 'prosecutor,' &c.

SOME

SOME ACTS
OF THE
PARLIAMENT OF SCOTLAND
FOR THE
RELIGIOUS OBSERVATION OF THE LORD'S DAY,
WHICH STILL STAND IN FORCE.

JAMES VI. Parl. 6. chap. 71. It is enacted, 'That 'there be no markets on the Sabbath-day: And that 'no gaming, playing, passing to taverns and ale-houses, or 'selling of meat or drink, or wilful remaining from the 'parish-kirk in time of sermon or prayers, upon the Sab-'bath-day, be used, under the pains of twenty shillings 'Scots: And who refuse, or are unable to pay the said 'pains, shall be put and holden in the stocks, or such 'other engine for public punishment, for the space of 'twenty-four hours,' &c.

Charles II. Parl. 1. Act. 18. intitled, *Act for the due observation of the Lord's day;* which act doth discharge, 'All going of salt-pans, mills, or kilns, under the pains of 'twenty pounds Scots, to be paid by the heritors and pos-'sessors thereof: and also all salmon fishing, hiring of 'shearers, carrying of loads, keeping of markets, or using 'of merchandise upon the said day, and all other profana-'tion thereof, under the pain of ten pound Scots, the one 'half thereof to be paid by the said fisher or shearer hired, 'and the other half by the persons hiring. And if the of-'fender be not able to pay the said penalties, that he be ex-'emplarily punished in his body, according to the merits of 'his fault. This act is again ratified, *Charl.* II. Parl. 2. 'Sess. 3. chap. 22. Likewise it is ratified by K. *William,* 'Parl. 1. June 15. 1693. And also, that parliament made 'several new laws to the said purpose, June 28, 1695, 'October 9, 1696, January 31, 1701. And in these acts, 'they ratify, renew, and revive, all former laws against 'Sabbath-breaking, and strictly require and enjoin all in-'ferior magistrates to put the same to exact and punctual 'execution against all persons without exception; with 'certification, that any magistrate that shall refuse, neglect 'or delay, to execute the said laws, upon application of 'any minister or kirk-session, or any person in their name, 'informing and offering sufficient probation, shall be liable '*toties quoties* to a fine of an hundred pounds Scots by the 'Lords of Session,' &c.

Likewise our *Sovereigns,* upon their coming to the throne, do still emit proclamations for executing the laws against Sabbath-breaking, and other vices; and wherein they charge all magistrates and judges to suppress and punish the profanation of the Lord's day by gaming, selling of liquors and otherwise; and they require and command all persons whatsoever, decently and reverently to attend the worship of God on every Lord's day, on pain of their highest displeasure, and with being proceeded against with the utmost rigour that may be by law.

To these acts of parliament and proclamations, I might subjoin some acts of the general assembly of the church of Scotland against Sabbath-breaking, and for the better observation of the Lord's day. Many such acts have they made since our reformation from popery: I shall only mention a few of them.

Ass. 1639, at Edinburgh, August 29. They made an act, intitled, *Act anent keeping of the Lord's day,* in which we have these words: 'The General Assembly recommend to 'the several presbyteries the execution of the old acts of 'assemblies against the breach of the Sabbath-day, by go-'ing of mills, salt-pans, salmon-fishing, or any such like la-'bour,' &c.

Ass. 1646, at Edinburgh, June 18. They made an act, intitled, *Act against loosing of ships and barks on the Lord's day,* which runs thus: 'The General Assembly, under-'standing how much the Lord's day is profaned by skip-'pers and other sea-faring men, do therefore discharge and 'inhibit all skippers and sailors to begin any voyage on the 'Lord's day, or to loose any ships, barks, or boats out of 'the harbour or road upon that day: And who shall do 'on the contrary thereof, shall be censured as profaners of 'the Sabbath.'

Ass. 1699, at Edinburgh, January 30, in their act against profaneness, they have these words: 'The General As-'sembly recommends to kirk-sessions and presbyteries, the 'vigorous, impartial, and yet prudent exercise of disci-'pline against all immorality; especially drunkenness and 'filthiness, cursing, swearing, and profaning the Lord's 'day, which too much abound: And that they apply to 'the magistrate for the execution of the good laws made a-'gainst immorality and profaneness. And seeing it is ob-'served, that in burghs, especially those of the greatest 'resort, as Edinburgh, many sit too late in taverns, 'especially on the Saturday's night, and men of business 'pretend they do it for the relaxation of their mind; 'through which, some neglect the public worship of the 'Lord's day in the forenoon, and others attend the worship 'drowsily: Therefore the General Assembly recommends 'it to all ministers, where such sinful customs are, to re-'present to the people, both publicly and privately, the 'sin and evil thereof; and to call them to redeem that time 'which they have free from business, and to employ it in 'converse with God, about their souls state, and in prepa-'ration for the Sabbath; which will yield more delight 'than all sensual pleasures can do. And the General As-'sembly beseech and exhort all magistrates of burghs to be 'assistant to ministers in inquiring into and reforming such 'abuses.

Ass. 1705, at Edinburgh, April 10. "The General As-'sembly, taking to their serious consideration the great 'profanation of the Lord's day, by multitudes of people 'vaguing idly upon the streets of the city of Edinburgh, 'pier and shore of Leith, in St. Ann's yard, and the Queen's 'park, and in diverse places about Edinburgh; and con-'sidering the profanation of the Lord's day in other places, 'by unnecessary travelling and otherways; and the Gene-'ral Assembly being deeply sensible of the great dishonour 'done to the holy God, and of the open contempt of God 'and man, manifested by such heaven-daring profaneness, 'to the exposing of the nation to the heaviest judgments; 'therefore they do, in the fear of God, earnestly exhort 'all their reverend brethren of the ministry, and other offi-'cers of the church, to contribute their utmost endeavours 'in their stations for suppressing such gross profanation of 'the Lord's day, by a vigorous and impartial, yet prudent 'exercise of the discipline of the church, and by holding 'hand to the execution of the laudable laws of the nation 'against the guilty, in such a way and manner as is allow-

'ed by law. And, because the concurrence and assistance 'of the civil government will be absolutely necessary for 'the better curbing and restraining of this crying sin, the 'General Assembly do hereby appoint their commission to 'be nominate by them, to address the Right Honourable 'the Lords of her Majesty's privy council, that their Lord- 'ships may be pleased to give such orders, and take such 'courses, for restraining such abuses, as they in their wis- 'dom shall judge most effectual.'

Ass. 1708, at Edinburgh, April 27. 'Forasmuch mi- 'nisters from diverse parts of this national church do repre- 'sent, that there is a general profanation of the Lord's day 'by travelling thereupon, carrying goods, driving cattle, 'and other abuses, to the great scandal of religion, and 'manifest breach of many good laws; therefore the Gene- 'ral Assembly did, and hereby do appoint each presby- 'tery within this church, to nominate two or three of their 'number, to attend the Lords Commissioners of Justiciary 'at their first circuit that falls to be in their bounds, and to 'represent to their Lordships the profanation of the Lord's 'day, by the foresaid wicked and sinful practices: And 'the General Assembly do seriously recommend to the said 'Lords of Justiciary, to take such effectual courses as they 'in their wisdom shall think fit, to restrain and punish the 'aforesaid abuses; which the Assembly will acknowledge 'as a singular service done to God and his church. And 'they do, in the meantime, enjoin all the ministers of this 'church, from their pulpits, to advertise their people among 'whom such practices are, of the great hazard their immor- 'tal souls are in by such courses,' &c. By all which we may clearly see what a high esteem our zealous and godly ancestors had of the Lord's day, and of what great importance they judged the due observation of this holy day is to the interest of true religion and godliness! And O what a pity is it, that we, who succeed them, should come so far short of them in zeal for sanctifying the Lord's day! O that all magistrates and ministers were animated to shew a due concern for the honour of this holy day, as in former times. A pleasant token would this be of the revival of decayed religion among us.

A

TREATISE

CONCERNING

THE SANCTIFICATION

OF THE

LORD'S DAY.

INTRODUCTION.

GOD, in his infinite goodness to fallen mankind, has been pleased to give us the Holy Bible, or canonical scriptures, as a perfect rule of faith and manners; containing at large the great truths, duties, and concerns of the Christian religion. And these we have briefly comprised in three succinct compends, which are owned and received by all Christians; viz. *the Apostles Creed,* as it is commonly called, *the Lord's prayer,* and the *decalogue;* the first being the sum of our *credenda,* the second of our *petenda,* and the third of our *facienda.*

The Decalogue, or Ten Commandments, which were solemnly delivered to the people of Israel from mount Sinai, do contain the moral law; being a fixed and perpetual rule of righteousness, which God hath given to be observed by all mankind, in all ages and periods, to the end of the world. This is that law which the royal psalmist so much admires and commends, and makes his chief subject in several psalms, particularly XIX. and CXIX. which deserves our special notice, and high esteem in that respect.

The moral law differs vastly in its nature from that of a positive law, which commands or prohibits things that before were indifferent, and only become good or evil by the virtue of the command, and not otherwise: Such was that command to our first parents, concerning their eating of the tree of knowledge; such were the ceremonial, and many of the judicial laws, given to the Jews: These were binding only upon particular persons, and lasted but for a time. But the moral law, contained in the Decalogue, is of universal and perpetual obligation to every rational creature, and can never be abrogated, nor dispensed with; seeing it is evidently founded upon, and agreeable to the dictates of the light of nature, and the principles of sound reason, naturally engraven on man's heart.

This moral law God hath divided into *two* tables, Deut. v. 22. In the *first* table, we have the first *four* commandments, which immediately belong unto the honour of God, and instruct us in the duties we owe to him. In the *second* table, we have the last *six* commandments, which respect the welfare of our neighbours, and teach us our duty towards them.

As all God's works are very beautiful in their order, so are the Ten Commandments, which have their place and rank assigned them, according to the dignity of the duties commanded, and the heinousness of the sins forbidden. As for the first table, the order of its commands is admirable; for the first command determines the right object of our worship; viz. the eternal and only true God. The second directs to the means of worship: viz. that they be only those of God's instituting, and not images, or means of our devising. The third appoints the manner of our worship, that it be with awful fear and reverence; without blaspheming or prophaning of his name. The fourth commandment specifies the right time or season to be employed in his solemn worship, viz. one day in seven, which is the subject of the ensuing treatise, the design whereof is to promote the religious observation of the Christian Sabbath, as the best mean to revive religion when it falls under decay, and to maintain it in its life and power where it is.

Time is a jewel of inestimable worth, and upon the management of it depends the salvation of our immortal souls for ever; and therefore it can never be enough valued, nor too carefully improven. Time is a golden stream, continually running down by us out of one eternity into another; and yet its worth is seldom taken notice of until it is quite passed away from us. How sadly do we verify that word of Solomon, Eccl. ix. 12. "Man knoweth not his time."

But of all time, Sabbath-time is the most precious, and

should be redeemed with the greatest care, as that upon which our salvation depends in a peculiar manner. It is the time in which the holy Spirit is especially at work for convincing, converting, and edifying the souls of men; it is the time set apart by infinite Wisdom for the happiness of the creature, and the glory of the Creator: And therefore it is the business of every one to enquire, how this time is to be improven aright. Now, for their encouragement and assistance in this matter, I propose to insist chiefly upon two heads: 1. To evince the morality of the Sabbath, and the divine appointment of the Lord's day. 2. Give directions how to sanctify it aright.

CHAP. I.

Concerning the Morality of the Sabbath, and the Divine appointment of the Lord's Day.

IN order to the handling of this subject the more clearly and methodically, I shall, through the divine assistance, propose and resolve several questions relative to it.

Quest. I. *What is the proper signification and import of the name Sabbath, so commonly in use among us?*

Answer. The name Sabbath is a Hebrew word, signifying *rest*, the Sabbath being a day of holy rest: and it is so called, because God hath enjoined us to rest this day from our earthly work and labour, that we may solemnly call to mind his resting from his works, both of creation and redemption; publicly adore him therefore, solace our souls in his goodness, repose and rest in the arms of his mercy, and meditate upon that "eternal rest which remains for the people of God" in the other world.

This being the true import and meaning of the word Sabbath, we still retain it, and commonly use it to signify the Lord's day, our Christian Sabbath.

There are some indeed who are offended at the retaining of the name Sabbath, under the New Testament times, pretending that it is properly Jewish; though, in the meantime, they are fond of the words priest and altar, which are much more so. But it is surely a mistake to say, that the name Sabbath is Jewish, or peculiar to the Jews, and so not to be used by Christians: For we see the Lord gives it that name in the moral law, which is of perpetual use, binding Christians as much as Jews: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" So it was not the Jews, but the great God, that gave the Sabbath its name. Nay, Christ our Saviour doth, in the New Testament, call his own day by the name of Sabbath, Matth. xxiv. 20. "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, nor on the Sabbath day." Now, it is evident, that our Lord doth there mean the Christian Sabbath, or his own day; for he is not only speaking to Christians, but concerning the flight of Christians, which he knew was to fall out forty years after the Jewish Sabbath was abolished, and the Lord's day come into its place. Surely he would not bid Christians pray that their flight might not fall on the Jewish Sabbath, when he both foresaw, and intended, that then they would reckon themselves under no obligation to observe the Jewish Sabbath, nor under any restraint of fleeing or travelling on that day; (which even the Jews themselves believed at that time, they might lawfully do in time of eminent hazard, as appears by the decree which they made relative thereto under the Hasmonians) and therefore he must mean the Christian Sabbath, upon which he bids Christians pray that their flight may not happen. Not that it was unlawful for them to flee or travel on that day in time of danger, but because it would be a great addition to their trouble, if their flight should happen at such a time, as to deprive them of the opportunity of God's worship and ordinances.

It is of no weight, what is objected by some, that the Christians, who lived in Judea among the Jews, could not be allowed by them to travel on their Sabbath, and therefore (say they) Christ bids them pray that their flight might not fall upon it. For, in the *first* place, The Jews not having the government then in their hands, they had no power of restraining or punishing of crimes. *2dly*, The time which Christ speaks of was a time of war and confusion, occasioned by the Roman armies invading the land, when no notice could be taken of such cases as travelling on the Sabbath. *3dly*, The most superstitious were at that time put to flee and travel as well as the Christians; which they then thought it lawful to do, as we told before. *4thly*, If Christ had spoke so concerning the Jewish Sabbath, it had laid some foundation for Christians to fall into mistakes concerning the obligation of the Jewish Sabbath, and other ceremonies: which, to be sure, our Lord would not have given them. And, if there had been any such occasion given, the Judaizing Christians would certainly have improven it against the apostles; which yet we do not find. *Lastly*, The learned Owen, Durham, Brown, and other writers on this subject, understand Christ as speaking in this place of the Christian Sabbath.

But granting that the name Sabbath were indeed Jewish and improper, (as some would have it) yet I am sure it is still preferable to that of Sunday, which is truly Heathenish, though commonly used by them in their liturgy to the offence of many Christians. For it is well known that the Heathen idolaters called this day Sunday, because of their dedicating it to the created Sun, which was the chief of their planetary gods that they ordinarily worshipped, as may be gathered also from 2 Kings xxiii. 5. Ezek. viii. 16. And hence, some of the ancient Heathens (of whom Tertullian speaks) fancied that the Sun was the God of the Christians, because they celebrated the first day of the week.

I know it is objected, that some of the primitive apologists for Christianity, as Justin Martyr and Tertullian, in their writings, call the Lord's day Sunday. But the reason of their so doing is plain; they were writing to Heathens, to whom the doctrines of Christianity and institution of the Lord's day were things new and strange, and who would not have known what day they meant, if they had spoken of the Lord's day; and therefore they call it by the name they gave it, Sunday: For when we treat with others, we must express things by the names that are common and current among them, unless we intend to be barbarians to them.

But the primitive Christians did not use to call it Sunday among themselves, but, commonly, the Lord's day, not the Sabbath; partly to distinguish it from the Jewish Sabbath that was so lately abolished, and partly to wean the Jewish converts the more effectually from Judaism. But the true reason why some in this age seem to be offended at the word Sabbath, as being applied to the Lord's day, is, because they cannot allow of any thing that would infer an

obligation upon them to keep such a strict holy rest upon the Christian Sabbath as the Jews did upon their Sabbath: but I will have occasion to speak of this afterwards.

I need not stand long here to shew the different significations of the word Sabbath among the Jews; only, in a word, beside the seventh day of each week, or weekly Sabbath, (which is the most ordinary acceptation of the word in scripture) it is put also sometimes to signify a whole week, because every week had a Sabbath included in it, Lev. xxiii. 15. "Seven Sabbaths shall be complete," *i. e.* weeks. The Pharisee saith, Luke xviii. 12. "I fast twice a-week;" orig. *neusteuo dis tou Sabbatou.* Likewise the word Sabbath is sometimes put to signify seven years, Lev. xxv 8. "Thou shalt number unto thee seven Sabbaths of years," *i. e.* (as it is there explained) seven times seven years. Seven years was called among the Jews a Sabbath of years, because their land rested from culture or husbandry every seventh year in answer to the church's resting every seventh day. Hence it is said, Lev. xxv. 4. "The seventh year shall be a Sabbath of rest unto the land." Besides this, they had their great sabbatical year, or Jubilee, which was every fiftieth year: For, according to Lev. xxv. 9. they were to reckon seven Sabbaths of years, or seven times seven years, which is forty-nine, and then to observe their Jubilee, or sabbatical year. *Lastly,* The other sacred feasts which the Jews kept monthly or annually, are also called Sabbaths, in regard of their resting from labour on these days as on the weekly Sabbath. Hence, Lev. xxiii. 24. the first day of the seventh month, which was their "feast of trumpets," is called a Sabbath: But the weekly Sabbath is commonly called in Scripture, by way of eminency, *the Sabbath*; to distinguish it from all other Sabbaths, and give it the preference to all the other feasts of the Jews.

Quest. II. For what ends hath God appointed a weekly Sabbath?

Ans. 1. God hath appointed it for manifesting of his own glory, and particularly for displaying his sovereign power and authority over all his creatures. It most certainly be a high acknowledgment of God's universal dominion and supremacy, to have all the world every week, in one day, lay aside their own business, that they may jointly worship him in a public and solemn manner.

2. He appointed the Sabbath for the benefit of his creatures, and particularly in compassion to fallen man; for he saw man's heart would be so glewed to the world, so drenched in sensuality, that, were he left to himself, he would not allow one day in a month, nay, in a year, for divine worship; but would have drudged himself, his servants, and beasts, even to death, in pursuit of worldly things, without minding any thing that is better. Wherefore a merciful God hath strictly commanded man to rest one day every week from all worldly concerns, that thereby he might, in a manner, be laid under a necessity to mind his soul, and the things of another world; and, in the mean time, the poor toiled beasts, as well as men's bodies, might have some rest and ease, for their preservation and support.

But more particularly, the Sabbath is designed for our souls eternal welfare; in regard,

1. The Sabbath tends highly to our instruction, and to the keeping up the lively impressions of the truths of Christianity in our memories. The Sabbath recurring every week doth still of new lay before us a compendious view of these essential doctrines:—*The creation of the world, man's fall, Christ's incarnation and satisfaction, his death, resurrection and victory for completing our redemption*: Besides that *glorious and eternal rest above,* provided for the people of God.

2. It tends to promote holiness, spirituality, and heavenly-mindedness, in us; and that two ways. 1. By calling us off from temporal to spiritual employment. Sensual objects through the week are ready to alienate our affections from God, and wear spiritual things out of our minds; for recalling whereof the Sabbath seasonably returns, and presents and entertains us with divine objects.

3. By affording us a lively emblem of heaven, and the conversation of the glorified saints, in celebrating that eternal Sabbath above: For, as in heaven there is no buying, selling, nor any worldly business, but a continual speaking of God, enjoying communion with him, adoring and praising him for ever, without any mixture of other affairs, so the Lord will have an emblem or representation hereof, as near as may be, given weekly to his people on earth, by the Sabbath, wherein they must lay aside all wordly things, and be wholly employed in the service of God, and work of heaven: And this is in order both to keep them in mind of, and make them meet for, that inheritance of the saints in light.

Quest. III. What is to be understood by the morality of the Sabbath, or fourth commandment, so frequently spoke of?

Ans. When we call the Sabbath, or fourth commandment, *moral,* we mean that it is one of God's moral precepts, or a part of the *moral law, i. e.* the perpetual and unalterable rule given us by God, for regulating our life and manners: Also, by calling it *moral,* we distinguish it from the *ceremonial law,* which was binding for a time only, and abrogated by Christ's coming. The fourth commandment, enjoining the observation of the Sabbath, is not ceremonial, but moral; that is, it is not temporary, but of standing and perpetual obligation, and which binds all men, in all ages, to the end of the world.

But, that we may have a more distinct apprehension of the morality of the Sabbath, we must distinguish betwixt things that are naturally moral, and things positively moral. Moral natural is, when the thing required is so founded upon, and authorised by, the law of nature and right reason, that it is fit and necessary to be done, though there had been no express command for it; such as worshipping God, obeying parents, abstaining from murder, &c. Moral positive is something enjoined us, which, though it be agreeable to the law of nature, yet carries not such a natural evidence in it, as to oblige us, without a divine revelation and express command; but, being once revealed and commanded, it is perpetually binding, as well as that which is moral natural. Now, the fourth command is commonly called moral positive, though indeed there are several things in it which are of natural equity, and authorised by the law of nature and sound reason; such as,

1. That there be a due part of our time stated and consecrated for the solemn worship and service of God, and particularly in public assemblies.

2. That this stated time or day should be universal, and the same through all, that one man's business interfere not with another's devotions.

3. That this day should recur in a due frequency, that it neither be so rare as to hinder our souls good, or indispose us for the duties of it; nor so frequent, as to deprive us of opportunity for our necessary secular employments.

4. That the holy duties of this day be not marred or interrupted by worldly employments or diversions; in regard they tend naturally to draw off the mind from God and divine objects. These four things, included in the fourth commandment, I reckon to be of natural equity or moral natural.

There are other things in it, which are of positive institution, *i. e.* binding only by a positive law, and express revelation. Of these again there is something.

1. That is positive moral, *i e.* of perpetual and unalterable obligation; viz. that the foresaid stated time for God's solemn worship should be the seventh part of our time, or one day in seven. This, by God's law, is become perpetually moral and unalterable; but, if God had not revealed it to us, the law or light of nature could not have determined us to it, nor rendered any solid reason why the seventh rather than the fifth, sixth, or eighth part of our time, should have been so consecrated to God: But the Author of nature, who best knows what proportion of time suits best both to mens bodies and spirits, and how oft it should recur, so as to answer best the exigencies both of our present and future life, hath wisely determined it to be a seventh part, or one day in seven: And can any man say but it is a most rational and fair determination? Had he dealt with us strictly, he might have taken the six days, and left us but one: But since he hath taken but one, and allowed us six, we ought to acknowledge that the Lord hath dealt graciously and liberally with us. Nay, had it been referred to ourselves, could we have given less time than this to God, from whom we have all our time, nay, our very being, and all the good things we enjoy?

But, *2dly*, There is in the fourth commandment something that is positive ceremonial, or mutable, viz. The observation of the last day of the seven for the Sabbath. This indeed was enjoined at first, though not directly and principally, as anywise essential to the command for the Sabbath; but only in a secondary way, as a circumstance of the command, which was to be altered when God pleased. It belonged not to the substance of this command, or the great design of the law, in what end of the week the Sabbath should be, whether the first or last of the seven days should be consecrate for it; since the scope of the fourth command is only, to bind us to consecrate the seventh part of our time, or one day in seven, to the Lord: This is the morality of the command, and what is of sacred and perpetual obligation in it. For, observe how the command runs, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy: —Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord." He saith not, "Remember the seventh day" to keep it holy, but, "Remember the Sabbath-day," or "holy rest," whatever day it shall be appointed on. Take the six days for your labour, and let God have a seventh every week for his solemn worship; this is the design of the law: For when it is said, "The seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord," it is not precisely meant of the seventh in the order, but the seventh in number; not the seventh day after the creation, but the day following the six days allowed men to labour; that day is the Lord's, whatever day in the week it fall on. And though it be told in the end, that "God rested the seventh day," which indeed seems to be the seventh from the creation; yet it is said, "He blessed the Sabbath-day," not the seventh day. So that it is plain, that both in the beginning and end of the command, the Lord puts a remarkable difference betwixt the Sabbath or day of holy rest, and the seventh day of the week, the day of his own rest; implying, that the scope of the command is to bind us to sanctify one day in seven, whatever seventh the Lord pleases to chuse, whether it be the *first* or *last* day of the week: and that the observation of the seventh day from the creation, is to be distinguished from the standing law of the Sabbath. For "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," is the fourth command, and would have bound us, though it had stopt there, and said no more. Though yet I grant, that the observation of the seventh or last day of the week for the Sabbath, is so enjoined by the fourth command, that none could have altered it from that day to another, but he that is Lord of the Sabbath.

Thus you see in what sense the fourth command is moral and of unalterable obligation; and how it perpetually binds all Christians, as well as Jews, to sanctify one day in seven for a weekly Sabbath unto the Lord. And now the day being changed by divine authority, from the *last* to the *first* day of the week, (of which afterwards) the substance scope, or morality of the fourth command, is nowise infringed; and it still retains its authority and obligatory force as much as ever, binding Christians to sanctify the first day of the week, as much as it did the Jews to sanctify the last: Even as a law, commanding the keeping of an anniversary day for the sovereign's birth, doth equally apply itself to the birth-day of each succeeding prince.

Quest. IV. How may the morality of the Sabbath, or the perpetual obligation of the fourth command, be demonstrated against those who deny it?

Ans. There are many reasons which prove that the fourth command is moral, binding us by a sacred and perpetual law, to keep holy one day in seven, to the end of the world; such as,

I. If the law for the Sabbath was given to man, and binding upon him in a state of innocency, before there was any ceremony or type of Christ instituted; (for then man did not need a Redeemer, nor any rite or type relative to him) then consequently this command was not ceremonial, nor abolished by Christ's coming, but is of moral and perpetual obligation: But the former is true; and therefore the latter. The consequence of the first proposition is certain, for the reasons mentioned, and also from this, that the Sabbath was appointed to Adam upon a moral ground, which obliges all his posterity; viz That he might have freedom and opportunity for the solemn worship of God, without any diversion from worldly things. For Adam, in his best estate, being but a finite creature, could not be intensely taken up with spiritual and temporal things both at once, his ordinary employment of dressing the garden, would in some measure have diverted his mind, that he could not wholly give himself to devotion, and the solemn worship of his Maker: Wherefore, God saw it fit he should have a day set apart, wherein he might have an uninterrupted freedom for it Now, if Adam needed a Sabbath, for the grounds above-mentioned; much more do we need one, who are not only finite creatures, but corrupt also; and have so little grace and strength for spiritual employment, and so many corruptions, temptations, and allurements, to draw our hearts from God through the week, which he had not.

Philip Limbroch, and other Anti-sabbatarians, have no way to answer this argument, but by denying such an early institution of the Sabbath, and asserting, that it was not appointed till Moses, his time, when the ceremonies were

instituted. But the contrary is evident from several texts.

1. From Gen. ii. 3. where we are told, before man's fall, or any word of it, that "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his work." Now, the scripture notion of sanctifying any thing, is to separate and set it apart from common to sacred uses and purposes. And so it is plain from this text, that God from the beginning of the world, did sanctify and set apart one day in seven to be observed by all mankind, as a day of sacred rest, a day solemnly consecrated to his worship and service: And to lay a tie on us to observe it, we have God's example, of resting this day from all his work, set before our eyes. And, seeing God from the beginning of the world had a church in it, who would certainly join together in performing public worship and service to him; they behoved to have set times for it, and consequently a Sabbath: And what day so fit for that purpose, as the day which God hath sanctified for sacred rest? That this was the ancient practice, may be inferred from Gen. iv. 3, 4. where we read of Cain and Abel, their bringing offerings to the Lord, which was an instance of public worship. And, verse 3. It is said, *In process of time*, they brought offerings, &c. Now, these words, *In process of time*, may be as well rendered from the Hebrew, *At the end of days*, and so it is in the margin of bibles. Now, by *the end of days*, must be meant the period of working days, which we call a week; and so it was on the seventh day, when solemn worship was (according to divine institution) to be performed, that men brought their offerings to the Lord. That God's rest on this day was exemplary to all mankind, appears from his taking six several days to perform his works of creation, and the distinct recording of each day's work, and his resting upon the seventh day. Certainly it had been as easy for an Almighty power to have made the world in one day as in six. He that said, "Let there be light, let there be a firmament," and it was so, might, if he had pleased, as soon have said, *Let there be a world*, and it had been so. And why did he not? Surely for our instruction and imitation, that we in like manner should sanctify every seventh day of our time after six days labour. And this is given as the reason of the fourth command, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy;—for in six days God made heaven and earth," &c.

The Anti sabbatarians are much gravelled with the forecited text, Gen. ii. 3. And, to evite the force of it, contrary to all reason, they would allege, that the blessing and sanctifying of the seventh day did not commence immediately from the creation, but only in the days of Moses, when the command was given for the Sabbath, Exod. xx. and that Moses only relates this in Gen. ii. by way of anticipation. But this opinion is contrary both to the text and context; for it is evident to every man that seriously reads them, that Moses relates the sanctification of the Sabbath, as a thing done by the Lord immediately on the back of the creation, and nowise as a thing done or to be done by him two thousand years thereafter: For, as soon as he had said, that God ended his work and rested on the seventh day, he adds immediately in words of the same tense, "That God blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it." And if we compare this place with Exod. xx. 11. "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." It is manifest, that there he brings in God's blessing and sanctifying of the Sabbath, not as an action then first done, but as that which God hath done long before, upon the creation of the world.

2. That this was done from the beginning, is further confirmed from Exod. xvi. 16, 22, 23. from whence commentators justly observe, That the Sanctification of the Sabbath, was a thing notour to the Israelites, before it was enjoined them by Moses; otherwise there would be a strange abruptness in the introducing of that matter. For, before ever there was any mention of the Sabbath, we find, ver. 22. that the Israelites, of their own accord, gathered two days provision of manna on the sixth day of the week, reckoning that the gathering of manna was a servile work, not proper on the Sabbath. But the rulers taking notice of this practice as done, not only without, but in appearance contrary to the orders given them, they bring the matter to Moses, that they might know his thoughts of it. Whence it appears, that the rulers doubted if the people had done right, seeing Moses had commanded that every man should "gather it according to his eating, and lay up none till the next day," verse 16, 19. and so they might apprehend, that by virtue of this order they might lawfully gather it on the Sabbath also. But not being able to reconcile the seeming clashing of these two commands, of gathering manna every day, and resting on the seventh day, they come to Moses in a solemn manner, for direction in this straitening case. Accordingly, verse 23. Moses gives them a resolution, and approves what the people had done, as agreeable to God's ancient law concerning the Sabbath, Gen. ii. which now was to be renewed and confirmed. "To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord." He saith not to-morrow shall be the rest, but, to-morrow is the rest; speaking of it as a thing well known to them. Now, if Moses had given them any previous direction about the keeping of the Sabbath, and gathering a double provision of manna, what was the need of all the rulers coming so solemnly to Moses about this case? For, it is said, verse 22. "That all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses." From all which it is clear, that the law for the Sabbath was extant, and the observation of it in use, before either the promulgation of the moral law at mount Sinai, or the giving of the ceremonial law, which was sometime afterwards.

3. The first words of the fourth command, "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day," plainly insinuate the renovation of an old command, and not the enacting of a new one. It is highly probable, that the observation of this ancient law had been greatly neglected for many years before, while the Israelites were in bondage in Egypt, and obliged to sore labour every day by their task-masters, and so not suffered to keep the Sabbath as before. Hereby, no doubt, the impressions of the duty of keeping it, might be much worn off the minds of many; though the memory of the Sabbath was not quite lost, as appears from the peoples gathering double manna on the sixth day of the week without direction. But, that they might guard against neglecting or forgetting the law for the Sabbath in time coming, the Lord renews the command with a solemn *memento*, "Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day."

4. Though Moses makes no express mention of the patriarchs observing of the Sabbath, it is no wonder, in regard he writes the history of some thousands of years after the creation, in very small bounds; wherein many things re-

lating to the church in that period must certainly be omitted: for the account which Moses gives of those early times, is only designed for an introduction to his history of the deliverance, erection, and polity of the nation of the Jews, God's peculiar people, and the only visible church he then had upon the earth. Nevertheless, we have no reason to call in question the patriarchs observation of the Sabbath from the beginning of the world; but good ground to believe they did it, if we consider the eminent piety of some of them, together with their long lives, by reason whereof it was very easy to hand down the institution of the Sabbath, with others of God's revelations, from Adam to Abraham's days. For Adam's life reached to Methusalem's time, Methusalem's life reached to Shem's time, and Shem's life reached to Abraham. And, being religious men, they would not fail to teach and recommend God's statutes to one another. And, for Abraham the father of the faithful, we read expressly of his commanding his children to keep these statutes, Gen. xviii. 19. and, without doubt, he enjoined the keeping of the Sabbath among the rest. And, though it be not mentioned in so many words, that is no argument against the thing; for we read not of the church's observing of the Sabbath all the time of the Judges, which was near five hundred years; yet there is no ground to question but they kept it all that time.

Several things might be added, which make it highly probable, that the institution of the Sabbath was handed down by tradition from Adam to his posterity, through all the world. What reason else can be given of Noah's observing the revolution of seven days while in the ark? Gen viii. 10, 12. where we see him once and again waiting the fall of the waters by sevens. He still did let the seventh day or Sabbath be over, before he sent out the next messenger: wisely reckoning, that upon his suitable observation of the Lord's Sabbath, he might look for the more agreeable news to be brought him. What reason else can be given for the Heathens dividing of their time into weeks, and their weeks into seven days, and their constant holding the septenary number as sacred? Yea, (as Clemens Alexandrinus tells us) the seventh day of the week was still held sacred by the Greeks. All this certainly was conveyed to them by tradition from Adam and Noah, their forefathers; and not learned, to be sure, from the Jews, against whose customs and religion they had such rooted prejudices.

II. A second argument for the morality of the fourth command, may be drawn from the situation of it. We find this command placed in the midst of the Decalogue, or those moral preceps which God hath delivered to the world, as a perpetual rule of their lives. And is it any way probable, that God would place a ceremonial law, or temporary precept, in the very midst of them? As it is certain that the moral precepts have the preference to the ceremonial in many things; so it is as sure that the fourth command, or the sacred observation of one day in seven, hath an equal share with the other nine, in all the dignity and privileges of the moral law. For,

In the 1st place, This fourth command, as well as the rest, was spoke immediately by the voice of God, in the hearing of all the people; whereas the other laws, ceremonial or judicial, were only given unto Moses, and by him declared unto the people.

2. This command, as well as the rest of the Decalogue, was written by the finger of God; nay, twice written by him in tables of stone: Whereby the Lord intended to teach us its fixed continuance and lasting obligation, and that by his Spirit he would have this law writ in the fleshly tables of his people's hearts, never to be obliterated. But this was not done with the ceremonial laws, which were only delivered verbally to Moses, and written by him from God's mouth.

3. This command was put and reserved with the rest of the moral law in the ark; whereas the law of ceremonial ordinances was placed in a book without on the side of the ark, and which might be separated from the ark. The moral precepts were laid up within the ark of the covenant, as a sign of their excellency and perpetuity, and of their being inseparable from Christ and his covenant, (of whom the ark was a famous type) therefore saith Christ, Psal xl. 8. "Thy law is within my heart:" But the ceremonial precepts being without the ark of the covenant, was a token they were separable from it, and to be abolished by Jesus Christ, when the appointed time should come And, if the law of the Sabbath had been of this nature, to be sure it had been placed on the side of the ark, with the other ceremonial laws, and not lodged within it, together with the moral precepts, which were perpetual and unalterable. Moreover, if situation in the Decalogue, among the moral precepts, which were laid up in the ark, be a good argument for the morality of the second command, against the Papists, as it is improven against them by Protestant divines, there can be no reason, why the same argument should not be fully as concluding for the fourth command against the Anti-sabbatarians.

III. A third argument for the morality of the fourth command, may be this: The reasons and grounds of this command are, in their nature, moral and perpetual, and as forcible upon Christians as Jews; consequently the command itself must be moral also.

The reasons included in the fourth command are various. 1 One reason, enforcing the sanctification of the Sabbath, is taken from the propriety of the day, "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God," it is the Lord's day, and the "holy of the Lord," Isa lviii 13 the day which the Lord hath reserved for himself and his use, and therefore must be entirely dedicated to him; no man may encroach upon this consecrated time, without the guilt of sacrilege. And doth not this reason bind us as much as the Jews? Have we any power to alienate from God, what is his property, more than they had?

2. Another reason is taken from the equity and rationality of this precept. God is good and liberal to us, in giving us six days for our works: Wherefore it is highly reasonable and just, that we should give him one day for his worship. It aggravated David's sin, that he took the poor man's darling ewe-lamb, when he had a whole flock of his own: As it did our first parents fault in pulling the fruit of one tree that God had reserved, when he gave them all the rest of the trees at their will; so it heightens our crime, if we rob God of his one day, when he gives us no less than six to ourselves. Moreover, it is highly reasonable and fit, when our dying bodies have six days for their necessities and occasions, that our immortal souls should have one for theirs. Now, doth not the equity and justice of this command affect and oblige us as much as it doth the Jews?

3. A third reason is taken from the charitableness of this law; viz. That our bodies and cattle should have a day al-

lowed them for rest; charity saith, that they should have some ease and relaxation from sore labour, and not be wearied out with continual toil. And is not this as needful now as it was of old among the Jews?

3 Another reason is drawn from God's example, which is a rule to us: "For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is; and rested the seventh day." Here we have a twofold example, both of God's resting and working; and they are both set before us for our imitation. As God employed six days in the works of creation, so we are to make use of six days in the works of our lawful calling: And as he ceased from his works and rested on the seventh day; so we are bound to imitate him in that respect, by quitting our weekly labours, and sanctifying of the Sabbath day. Now, can there any reason be given, why we are not as much bound to follow God's example, in resting one day after six days labour, as the Jews were?

A fifth is taken from the blest advantages of it; it is a blest day to them that keep it. And, is not God as able and willing to bless the Sabbath to us now as he was of old? And, do not we need his blessing as much as the Jews?

Now, if these arguments be moral, perpetual, and obligatory to us, as much as to the Jews; the command that is enforced by them must be so likewise.

IV. A fourth argument may be taken from the special marks of honour and respect that God puts on this command. It is not only engraven in tables of stone by the immediate finger of God, as all the rest; but it is privileged above them, in several respects

1. It is placed in the first table of the law, and thereby preferable to those of the second table.

2. It is situated in the midst of the Decalogue, in the close of the first table, and before the front of the second table; thereby teaching us, that the observation of both tables much depends on the right keeping of this one command. God hath placed it in the heart of the Ten Commands, because the keeping of it gives life to the keeping of all the rest. The sanctification of the Sabbath is an epitome of all religion, it virtually includes all the commands, and strongly engages men to keep them all. Hence it was, when the Israelites broke the fourth commandment by gathering of manna, that the Lord charges them with breaking all the commands, Exod xvi. 28. "How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?" Why so? Because he that makes no conscience of keeping the Sabbath, will not much stick to break any of the rest.

3. It hath a solemn *memento* prefixed to it, which the rest have not, God ushers it in with a *remember*, which is very emphatic, and is, as if he had said, "Keep this command always in your minds: forget what you will, forget not this." God speaks, as a master that hath some special affair, among many others, to recommend to his servant. Among all other injunctions, he bids him particularly remember such an affair; thereby shewing a special concern for it, more than the rest.

4 It is delivered both positively and negatively: All the rest of the commands are delivered only one of the ways, but this is both ways. It is not only said positively, "Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy;" but also negatively, "In it thou shalt do no manner of work," &c.

5. The Lord presseth obedience to this command with more motives and arguments than any of the rest, which were enumerated before. And this he doth, because he knew the conscientious observing of this command would engage us to make conscience of all the rest, and because he foresaw wicked men would attack it, and reason against it more than any of the rest. Now, is it probable that God would shew such a concern for a ceremonial law, that he would place it in the middle of the moral precepts, and press it with more reasons and arguments than any of them?

6. He makes the keeping of this command, and sanctifying of the Sabbath, one special end of man's creation; because therein God is highly glorified. The Jewish Talmund propounds the question, "Why God made man on the evening before the Sabbath?" and gives this one reason, that man might forthwith enter upon the observation of the command to keep the Sabbath, and begin his life with the worship of God, which was the chief end why it was given him, as if the keeping the Sabbath were the great end of his creation. And indeed there is solid reason for this assertion, if we consider that, as the end of the Sabbath day is to commemorate God's glorious works, and celebrate his praises for the same, so the chief end and design of man, whom God made on the sixth day, as his last and most consummate work of all, was, that he might be the tongue of the whole creation, to trumpet forth his praises for all the rest of his works. And accordingly, just on the back of his creation, he entered upon the keeping of a Sabbath for that very end. So it may well be said, that God made man chiefly for this end, to keep the Sabbath day.

7. The Lord entails many special blessings upon the keeping of this command, and denounces many sad threatenings against the breaking of it. Read the 56th chapter of Isaiah throughout, where the Lord not only pronounceth him blessed that keeps the Sabbath, but promises to "give him a place and a name better than of sons and daughters," to fill his heart with "spiritual joy," to give him a "spirit of prayer," and to "hear his prayer." God will both give him ability to serve him, and then accept and reward his service when it is done. Also read Isaiah lviii. 14. Jer. xvii. 24. where blessings, both spiritual and temporal, peace, wealth, plenty, and prosperity, are promised to such as keep the Sabbath. On the other hand, how terrible are the plagues he threatens against a land or people for breaking this command. Read Jer. xvii. 27. Ezekiel xx. 21. to 26.

8 He hath severely punished sinners for the breach of this command, as if it were the sum of his whole service. He caused a man to be put to a cruel death for "gathering sticks on the Sabbath," Numb. xv. The offence might be thought small, but God looks on the contempt of the Sabbath as an affront to the Creator who instituted it, and to whose honour it was dedicated, and an incursion upon the whole law, about which God appointed the Sabbath for a hedge. It was the slighting of the Lord's Sabbaths that caused Jerusalem to be burnt with fire, Jer. xvii. ult. Many instances of judgments against Sabbath-breakers might also be brought from human histories.

V. A fifth argument may be taken from the prophecies of the Old Testament. We find Isaiah, that evangelical prophet, pronouncing a blessing on those that should keep the Sabbath, even in evangelical times, Isaiah lvi. 1, 2. "Thus saith the Lord, keep ye judgment, and do justice; for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. Blessed is the man that doeth this—that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it." That is a plain prophecy of Christ; yet in his times he declares them

blessed who should keep the Sabbath; yea, verse 6. he puts "the keeping of the Sabbath" in a manner for the whole duties of the covenant. That this evangelical prophet is speaking there of the New Testament times, there is no ground left to doubt: for he is speaking of the time when the stranger and eunuch should be joined to the Lord, and when there should be no distinction of persons, Jews or Gentiles, but both should be alike welcome to God and his ordinances. And yet, in these times, there are many blessings promised to them that should keep the Sabbath; which demonstrates it to be a moral and perpetually binding duty.

VI. Christ himself plainly tells us, "That he came not to destroy (or abrogate any part of) the moral law, but to fulfil it," severely threatening those who would seek to invalidate the obligation of the least of these commands, Mat. v. 17, 18, 19. and, in confirmation hereof, he bids Christians "pray that their flight might not be on the Sabbath day," Mat. xxiv. 10. Now, the flight he there speaks of was to happen in Vespasian's time, about forty years after that all ceremonies were abolished, together with the Jewish Sabbath, as I shewed before; and yet we see Christ plainly enough homologates the morality and perpetual obligation of the law for the Sabbath, under the New Testament: for he still supposes that a Sabbath would be in being and in force, after all the ceremonies were abolished; and therefore he warns his disciples, and in them all Christians to the end of the world, to make it a petition in their prayers, upon any approaching calamity, to be delivered from the necessity of fleeing upon the day when the duties of the Sabbath should be observed; seeing it is no small aggravation of our distress to be forced to flee and travel on God's holy day, when we should be employed in attending the solemn ordinances of his worship, and enjoying communion with God therein.

VII. A seventh argument may be taken from the absurdities that would follow upon the denying the morality of this command. For then, 1. There would be but nine commands in the moral law, which is directly contrary to scripture; for we are told that there are ten in it, Deut. x. 4. "And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the Lord spake out of the midst of the fire," &c.

2. It would open a door for atheism and immorality, and tend to cast loose the whole moral law. For, if we yield that the fourth command is not moral, but ceremonial, why may not some, in the next place, rise up and say, the second and fifth are not moral neither? and so on, concerning the rest. But the Lord, having written the whole moral law in tables of stone, and the fourth commandment in midst thereof, doth teach us thereby, that the whole of it should be indelibly written in our hearts, and that the obligation of it, and of this command among the rest, can never be extinguished.

Lastly, The universal church have still held the commandment of the Sabbath to be moral, and of perpetual obligation, and that the seventh day of our time should be consecrated unto the Lord. The constant practice of all true Christians, since the apostles' times, in observing a weekly Sabbath, is a great confirmation of this truth; especially if we consider that the judgment and practice of the Catholic church have been so uniform, constant, and uninterrupted in this matter, that we do not find so much as one heretic, or person of any sort in ancient times, that ever presumed to oppose or contradict this doctrine.

And as the foresaid universal consent evidenceth this truth or law to be of divine institution, so it proves it to be a dictate of the law of nature and sound reason, that one day of the week should be dedicate to the worship and service of God. Yea, so strong is the light hereof, that those who have apostatized from the true religion, and have taken up with the vilest of superstitions, have still found it necessary to fix upon a certain day of the week, for the performing of solemn worship; and so the Mahometans have chosen Friday for this end, and the Parthians observed Tuesday. For it is evident to every rational man, that the religious observation of a weekly Sabbath is the greatest preservative of a solemn profession of religion in the world. Take away from amongst men all conscience of observing a stated day of sacred rest to God for the celebration of his worship in assemblies, and all religion will quickly decay, if not come to nothing in the world. And it is to be observed, that, wherever religion flourisheth in the power of it, there we find most conscience made in the observation of the Sabbath.

Quest. V. If the fourth commandment be moral and perpetual, how then could the Sabbath be changed from the last to the first day of the week, as we see it done?

Ans. The precise day of the week for the Sabbath not being of the essence of the fourth commandment, but only an alterable circumstance in it, the actual alteration thereof under the New Testament makes no more against the morality of the fourth command, than the change of the outward ordinances and means of worship under the gospel, makes against the morality of the second command. That the keeping of the precise seventh day of the week is distinct from the scope and substance of the fourth command, which is only to institute one day in seven for the Sabbath, is pretty evident from the command itself, both in the first and last words of it. The first words, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," do contain the whole substance of the command. The last words, "Wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it," do contain the formal reason of the command, and in neither of these is the seventh day of the week spoke of; which notifies to us, that the observation of that precise day is not essential to the moral and standing law of the Sabbath, but separable from it. If it be said, that the command enforceth the observation of this day from God's example in resting upon it, I answer, that a seventh day's rest after six days labour is all the conformity which the fourth command requires of us to the example of God, *i. e.* any seventh day he pleaseth to appoint.

Moreover, our natural reason argueth for what is above asserted: For though the Jews, who lived in the land of Palestine, might possibly have observed the precise seventh day from the creation; yet the joint observation of that precise time was impossible to all others whom the fourth commandment doth concern, because of the difference of the climate where they live, which makes it night to many of them when it is day to the Jews. Again, the computation of our time by weeks, consisting of seven days, each of twenty-four hours length, was so interrupted in the times of Joshua and Hezekiah, by the prodigious lengthening out of some days, that I cannot see how the precise seventh day could possibly be moral, or perpetually binding. From all

which I infer, that the change of the day, by instituting the Lord's day, or first day Sabbath, in the room of the seventh day Sabbath, doth noways repeal or infringe the morality and substance of the fourth commandment.

Several proper questions may be moved upon this head.

Quest. 1. By what authority came the day for the Sabbath to be changed?

Ans. By the same authority that first appointed the Sabbath, I mean that of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is true God, "the Lord of the Sabbath," and sovereign Head of his church.

There are, indeed, some differences among divines about this matter, *some* holding this change to have been made immediately by Christ himself; *others*, that it was made by the apostles: But both opinions come to one thing, and equally establish the divine authority of the Lord's day; seeing the apostles were divinely inspired, and infallibly guided by Christ's Spirit, in their ecclesiastical determinations, delivering nothing to be constantly observed in God's worship, but what they had the Lord's authority for, according to 1 Cor. xi. 23.

Athanasius plainly affirms, that the change was made by the Lord himself; and indeed it is more than probable, that during Christ's forty days stay on earth after his resurrection, wherein he continued instructing his disciples of the things relating to the gospel-church, "and giving his commandments to his apostles," Acts i. 2, 3. he, among other things, appointed this change, leaving it upon his apostles to make promulgation of it to the world after his ascension; and especially at Pentecost, at the extraordinary effusion of the Spirit on that day, whereby he publicly confirmed this charge.

When the sacred penman of the book of the Acts tells us, that Christ continued for so many days space after his resurrection, to speak to his apostles "of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," *i. e.* the gospel-church, he surely hath a special respect to the instructions he gave them concerning the ordinances and institutions of the Christian church. And as he instructed them how they should change the carnal sacrifices of beasts into the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, the sacrament of circumcision into that of baptism, and the sacrament of the passover into that of the Lord's supper; so likewise he instructed them how to change the seventh-day Sabbath into that of the Lord's day. All the primitive fathers are very positive concerning the divine authority of this change.—Ignatius, who lived in the first century, saith (in his Epist.) concerning the Lord's day, 'Omnis Christi amator dominicum celebrat diem, reginam et principem dierum omnium.' August. Serm. 151 *de tempore*, saith, 'Dominicum diem apostoli religiosa solemnitate habendum, sanxerunt, quia, in eodem Redemptor noster a mortuis resurrexerit, quique ideo Dominicus appellatur.'

Quest. 2. If it be asked, What was the necessity of this change? I answer, it was necessary,

1. To manifest Christ's glory and equality with the Father; for Christ saith, "That men shall honour the Son as they honour the Father," John v. 23. Wherefore, as they honoured the Father with a Sabbath, upon account of his rest from creation, so it was fit they should honour the Son with a Sabbath, upon account of his rest from redemption, which was a far more glorious work. And therefore, in honour of the Son, the Christian Sabbath is, by the Spirit of God, called the Lord's day.

2. The change of the day was necessary to manifest Christ's headship over his church, and that he is the sovereign Lord over his own house, worship, and ordinances; and particularly that he is "Lord of the Sabbath," which title he had assumed before, in Mark ii. 28. And accordingly he would have this convincingly displayed to the world, by shewing that he is able to change the day of his solemn worship.

3. Since he hath thought fit to appoint a new manner of his worship, it was meet to appoint a new time of it also. The Levitical service and ceremonial worship of the Sabbath day being changed, it was proper the day of the Sabbath should be changed also, to shew the more clearly the expiration of that worship, and to induce the Jews the more easily to lay it aside, and keep Christians the more from judaizing.

4. There were some things in the observation of the seventh-day Sabbath peculiar to the Israelites, that belonged properly to that nation, and not to others: As, 1. God designed it to be a signal or mark for distinguishing that people from the rest of the world; therefore he calls the keeping of this day "a sign betwixt him and the children of Israel, throughout their generations," Exod. xxxi. 13, 17. *i. e.* a sign they were God's covenanted people, a nation that stood in a peculiar relation to God, above all others in the world. But this relation coming at length to be altered, it was fit the sign should be also changed. 2. When God revived the institution of the Sabbath to the Jewish nation, he enjoined them to keep it, in memory of their deliverance from Egypt, as well as the creation of the world; for it is very observable in Deut. v. when Moses called the Israelites together in a solemn manner, to put them in mind of the covenant God had made with them in Horeb, he repeats the Ten Commandments to them: But, in repeating of the fourth, he leaves out the argument for keeping the Sabbath, taken from God's creating of the world in six days, and resting the seventh; and, in the room of it, puts in their miraculous deliverance from Egypt: For, in the close of the fourth command, he says, Deut. v. 15. "Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a stretched-out arm; therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day." And hence some think, that it was not precisely the seventh day from the creation that was appointed for the Jewish Sabbath, but the seventh day from their deliverance from Egypt.—*Lastly*, This day was also appointed them for to call to mind their wonderful deliverance at the Red sea, which several learned writers are of opinion was wrought for them on the morning of the Jewish Sabbath, and seems very probable from Exod. xii. 15, 16, 17. and hence they are enjoined to rest, and cease from their labour on this day, in remembrance of their being miraculously rescued on it from Egypt, and of their resting from the cruel bondage thereof. From all which it appears, that there was something in this commandment peculiar to the Jewish nation, and which belonged not to others. And whence I may well infer, that if the deliverance by Moses, from Egypt and the Red sea, was a good reason for the Sabbath of the Jews, surely the eternal redemption by Christ, from sin and hell, is a much stronger and better reason for the Sabbath of the Christians.

5. In the command for the seventh-day Sabbath, there were some things typical and mystical, peculiar to the Old Testament times, and which were to be fulfilled in the

Messiah, and gospel-times; and therefore to be abolished. 1. The seventh-day Sabbath represented Christ, who is the only rest, centre, and satisfaction of our souls; therefore the apostle tells us, Col. ii. 17. That the Sabbath "was a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ," *i. e.* He is the substance which this shadow or type represented.

2. It signified the great Sabbath of the New Testament, or the happy times of the gospel, wherein the faithful were to rest from the servile rites and burdensome ceremonies of the law.

3. The seventh-day Sabbath being a "shadow of things to come," typified the believer's rest and deliverance by Jesus Christ from the bondage of sin, and being brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

4. The Jewish Sabbath, with its ceremonial and typical worship under the law, shadowed forth the Christian Sabbath, with its pure and spiritual worship under the gospel, and so is expired.

5. The rest of the seventh-day Sabbath was a type and shadow of Christ's resting upon that day in the grave, and therefore could not be continued after his resurrection, more than any of the other types fulfilled in Christ. Our Saviour, by choosing to lie buried throughout this day in the grave, did thereby bury the Jewish seventh-day Sabbath, with the rest of their types and shadows. Hence it is that the apostle Paul, Col. ii. 16, 17. doth expressly number the Sabbath among the Old Testament shadows, that ceased upon their being accomplished in Christ, the substance and Antitype, who came in place of all the legal shadows. Now, it being evident from the foresaid text, that the Jewish Sabbath was abrogated by Christ's death and resurrection, it is necessary to believe that either Christ, by himself or his apostles, did appoint another day in lieu thereof, for the solemn worship of God; otherwise the state of the Christian church, under the New Testament, would be far worse than that of the Jews under the Old, which is absurd.

6. The two ages before and after Christ, are reckoned as two diverse worlds, Heb. ii. 5. wherefore as, when the first world was made by creation, there was a day set apart in memory thereof; so, when the world was renewed by redemption, it was fit there should be a day kept in honour and memory of that great work: For, if the perfecting the work of the first creation deserved to have a day set apart for celebrating the power and glory of the Author, much more doth the finishing the new creation, or restoration of the world, deserve a day to be consecrated for the commemorating of that, in regard the glorious attributes of God do shine far more brightly in this, than in the other.

Quest. III. If it be asked, Why was the Sabbath changed to the first day of the week?

I answer, For many reasons.

I. The great reason for observing the last day of the week doth plead more strongly now for the observation of the first day of the week. The reason for observing the seventh day was, because the Lord rested that day from the great work he had made, viz. of creation, which ought to be remembered with thankfulness and praise. Now, when God gave the ten commandments, there was no greater work in the world than the creation; and therefore it was fit that the day of God's rest from his greatest work should be the Sabbath, or day of rest to the world. But, should God thereafter work a greater work than creating heaven and earth, then, by parity of reason, and even by virtue of the fourth commandment, the day of God's rest from that should be the Sabbath of the world. Now, the work of redemption which the Lord perfected, and rested from on the first day of the week, is far greater than the work of creation; it doth even eclipse and swallow it up, as the temple did the tabernacle: It is far more valued and esteemed by God the Author, and ought to be far more regarded and remembered by us on many accounts.

1. In regard, that in the world's redemption there is a far more glorious display of the divine attributes, God's power, wisdom, justice, goodness, &c. than in the world's creation.

2. It is much more for our benefit and comfort than the work of creation; we could have had no comfort in this without the other; for the whole creation groaned under the burden of sin, and, by reason thereof, all the creatures were at enmity with us. Without redemption, what pleasure can we take in our creation, since by it we are made capable only of everlasting misery and destruction? Alas! there are no comforts in being creatures, if we be not made new creatures; and there is no doing of that, but by this new and glorious method.

3. In regard the second creation was a work of far greater difficulty and expence than the first. The first was finished by the word of his mouth, but the second could not be perfected but by the blood and death of his dear Son. The first was finished in six days; but it cost the Son of God above thirty-three years painful travail and suffering in the world to effectuate the second. In the first there was no opposition; for, since the world was made out of nothing, there was nothing to make resistance to the Creator; but in the second creation, or redemption of the world, there was a formidable opposition made by justice, men, and devils. It was wonderful for the glorious fabric of heaven and earth to be made out of nothing; but much more for the Maker of all things to be made of a woman, Jesus Christ to be born of his own creature. In the first creation God made us like himself; but here the Lord makes himself like us. The glorious Creator is made a creature, yea, made sin, made a curse, to save man, his sinful creature, from the curse. We may indeed say, "We are fearfully and wonderfully made;" but much more are we fearfully and wonderfully redeemed. Creation was the work of God's fingers, Psalm viii. 3. but redemption the work of his arm, Luke i. 51. We use the strength of the arm to effectuate what the fingers cannot do. So that we see it is a far greater work and miracle to bring us back from hell, than to bring us from nothing; to make us saints, than to make us men and women. Well then, if God's resting from his work of creation on the seventh day determined mankind to keep this day for a Sabbath in a thankful remembrance thereof, much more should God incarnate's raising a new world at a far greater charge, and resting from his labour of love on the first day of the week, determine us to observe that day for a Sabbath, in an adoring remembrance of his infinite glory and goodness, displayed in this stupendous work.

4. The Lord himself delights and rejoices much more in the new creation, than in the old, his glory being more conspicuous by the one than by the other; and that which is esteemed and preferred by him ought to be so by us. The Lord indeed took pleasure in the review of his works in the first creation, when he at first rested from the same; but these being afterwards all corrupted and deformed by sin, his complacency therein was exceedingly diminished.

Hence, Gen vi it is said, "It repented him he had made man" Wherefore it was proper and necessary to tranfer the Sabbath to the day of the world's new creation or redemption, effected and completed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ the world's Redeemer, in which day the Lord rested from these his more glorious works, delighting himself in the review thereof with an everlasting complacency.

Lastly, To confirm what is said, let it be observed, that God so far preferred the work of redemption to that of creation, that he changed the beginning of the year (as Dr Lightfoot remarks on Exod. xiii) from the time of the world's creation, to the time of the passover, and the Israelites deliverance from Egypt by Moses, as being an eminent type of our redemption from sin and hell by Jesus Christ We have reason to believe, that, from the creation of the werld, the year began in September, at the time of the autumnal Equinox; for we find the fruits were on the trees at the creation, Gen i 12. But when God instituted the first passover, which immediately ushered in the Israelites deliverance from Egypt, which was in March, at the vernal Equinox; he changed the beginning of the year, and ordered it to commence from that time, Exod. xii. 2. "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months, it shall be the first month of the year to you" Now, if the beginning of the year was changed upon the account of the type, a day might well be changed upon the account of the antitype. If the month of the figurative redemption was so remarkable, that the month of the world's creation must give place to it; then surely the substance itself, when it appeared, might well be the cause of the change of a day, and the seventh day of the creation give place to the first day of the finishing of our redemption.

II Since there was a necessity of changing the Sabbath from the seventh day of the week, as is already proven, it could be into no other day so fitly as the first day of the week, on several accounts

1. Because of its answering the intent of the command better than another day: For if the Sabbath had been changed into the second, third, fourth, or any other day of the week than the first, the morality of the fourth command had been infringed: For so God would not have had one day, and man six working days together of one and the same week; as the command requires. But now it holds in a constant course. God hath his one day, and we our six together in one and the same week; as it was from the beginning. And, by this wise alteration, there was never a week without a Sabbath, and never a week had two Sabbaths. For as the week ended with the Jews Sabbath, so the next week began with the Christian Sabbath; which could not have been, if any other seventh day had been chosen

2 Since there behoved to be a change, it was very agreeable to reason to begin the week with God, and that our Creator and Benefactor should be first served, and have his portion of the week assigned to him in the first place, that his worship might have the preference to our labour; and also, that our consecrating the first fruits of the week to God, might in a manner sanctify the whole, obtain his blessing on the week's labour, and make all our works therein the more acceptable to him.

3. The first day of the week is the fittest for keeping up the memory both of the first and second creation of the world. For it being a day of rest always succeeding our six days labour, puts us in mind of God's finishing the works of creation in six days space, and resting the seventh. And especially, it being the first day of the week, serves to mind us of the beginning of the world, and of its first creation, seeing it was on this day that God began his glorious work, saying, "Let there be light" But in a special manner, this day serves to perpetuate the memorial of this greater blessing of the world's new creation or redemption by Jesus Christ; since on it he finished this work by his resurrection. It was on this day that not only that temporal and perishing light did first shine at the first creation;—— but also that eternal and heavenly light brake out in a meridian splendour, the Sun of righteousness arose from a dark grave, and shined on a dark world, and brought light, life, peace, healing, and all mercies under his wings.

4. It is the fittest day for celebrating the honour and memory of all the persons of the glorious Trinity; For though Jesus Christ the second person of the Trinity, be honoured by this day in a peculiar manner, upon account of his glorious rest this day from the work of redemption; yet the Father and Holy Ghost are this day remarkably honoured also The Father did not only begin this day to create, but he was the glorious contriver of our happiness, and sent his Son to carry on that blessed work of redemption, which was this day happily completed Also, the Holy Ghost is honoured by observing this day, since he gloriously descended at Pentecost on this day for fitting and furnishing the apostles for the work of the gospel. and he is the blessed Applier of the redemption finished this day by Jesus Christ, and is in a more especial manner at work this day, in making saving application of it unto elect souls, by the preaching of the gospel.

III. The Sabbath is changed to the first day of the week, because it is the most honourable and glorious day to Christ and his church, that ever dawned upon the world: The most honourable day to our Redeemer, and the most joyful to the redeemed, and therefore ought to be kept in perpetual remembrance.

Hence, by the spirit of God, and ever since Christ's resurrection upon this day, it is called the Lord's day, it being the most glorious day ever he had. It was in an eminent manner his birth day, for in it he was born from the dead: in it God solemnly owned him to be his only begotten Son; hence that word in Psal. ii. "Thou art my Son, this day I have begotten thee," is applied to the day of his resurrection, Acts xiii. 13. "He was this day declared to be the Son of God with power," Rom. i. 4. For, at his rising, he made the earth to shake, the graves to open, the stones to roll away, the dead to rise and appear, the soldiers to tremble and flee, and both saints and angels to come and attend him. And was not this a triumphant day to him? Yea, on this day he conquered the grave, death and hell, and shewed himself to be the Captain of our salvation, triumphing over his and our enemies. His birth and death did shew him to be truly man, but his resurrection did manifest him to be truly God, and the great Redeemer of the world. Hereby he gave full proof, that he had completely finished the work of our redemption, paid the elect's debt, satisfied divine justice, cancelled our bond, and obtained an ample discharge, since he, as our great Cautioner, was now let out of prison. Was not this then a joyful day, a day to be had in everlasting remembrance? The day our Jonas came safe out of the whale's belly; the day our Samson carried away the gates of Gaza. Now it was that death lost its sting; now the grave and hell lost their purchase; now the

serpent's head was bruised; now were they all swallowed up in victory; now it was that our glorious Redeemer rested from all the works of suffering and redemption, and rejoiced in the review thereof, with infinite complacency. And ought not we, who are so much concerned, chearfully to rest this day with Christ, in a thankful remembrance of all he hath done?

IV. This day was prophesied of long before, Psal. cxviii. 24. "This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it." The current of expositors understand this day of our Christian Sabbath, and of Christ's resurrection thereon; for here plainly there is a prophecy of Christ, and of a remarkable day whereat the world should wonder, and the church rejoice. "This is the day which the Lord hath made," *i. e.* of which God is author. He made it, not by creation only, as he made all days; but by consecration, designing and appointing it for a peculiar end, even for that strange and wonderful work of Christ's resurrection from the grave, when he obtained his glorious victory, and our gracious deliverance from hell and destruction. Again, he made it, *i. e.* (as the word from the original may be rendered) exalted it. This is the day which the Lord hath honoured and exalted above its fellows, above the seventh, or any other day of the week, because of the incomparable work of this day. That the day prophesied of in that place is some remarkable day of the Messiah, is very clear if we consider the context, and the two preceding verses of this Psalm; by which it plainly appears, that the day there spoke of is the day wherein "the stone rejected by the builders," (*i. e.* Christ, who was rejected by the elders, scribes and pharisees, the pretended builders) became "the head of the corner:" Now what day was this, but his "resurrection-day?" in which God, by raising him from the dead, gloriously exalted him above all his enemies, rolled away his reproach, made him "Head of the corner," and Head of the church, by openly declaring him, to be his "Son with power," and that to the terror and confusion of all his enemies, and the joy and gladness of all his friends. And to put it beyond doubt, that this is the meaning of the place, see it particularly applied by Peter, before the Jewish Sanhedrim, Acts iv. 11, 12. "Be it known to you, that this Jesus Christ whom ye crucified, God hath raised from the dead:" And therefore he subjoins, verse 12. "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner." Now, this being such a memorable day, the psalmist's direction is, that all Christians should rejoice and be glad in it; which indeed is a most proper duty on our Christian Sabbath.

Again we have another prophecy concerning this day, in Isaiah xi. 10. "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious." Now, what was that special day, wherein Christ was raised and exalted for an ensign, to invite and engage the nations to flee to him as their Redeemer? Was it not his resurrection day on which he was declared to the world to be "the Son of God with power," Rom. i. 4. This is the day then on which his rest was glorious. For as God the Father's "rest from the work of creation was glorious" and had great glory and honour put on it, by the world's keeping a Sabbath for about four thousand years thereupon; so God the Son's "rest from the work of redemption" was to have great glory and honour put upon it, by the Christian world's observing a weekly Sabbath on it, to the end of time.

And was it not a glorious rest which the Son of God had on the first day of the week, from his great and stupendous work, when he had laid the foundations of the new heavens and new earth, and had given the finishing stroke to a new creation; when all "the stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" It was on this day the Son of God rested from his works, "and was refreshed," as it is said of God, Exod. xxxi. 17. with respect to his resting from the works of the first creation. Now, as God's rest from his works on the seventh day, and his being refreshed therein, was a sufficient indication of the precise day of rest which he would have observed by the world under the old dispensation of the covenant; so the rest of our Lord Jesus Christ from his works on the first day of the week, and his being refreshed therein, is a sufficient indication of the precise day of rest which he would have observed under the dispensation of the new covenant. And accordingly, upon this indication, we immediately find the disciples assembling themselves together upon this day of their Redeemer's rest; and no sooner are they met, but Christ comes and graciously meets with them, solemnly blesses them, and gives them the Holy Ghost, John xx. 19. from which time forward the first day of the week was never without its solemn assemblies.

Moreover, we have the apostle to the Hebrews expressly confirming the foresaid prophecies concerning Christ's rest upon the first day of the week, by telling us, that under the gospel "there remained a rest for the people of God," Heb. iv. 9. Now if this place be duly considered, and rightly understood, it will mightily confirm the change of the Sabbath from the last to the first day of the week. For the word, which is there rendered *rest*, in the original is *Sabbatismos*, and should be rendered a *Sabbatism*, or *Sabbath-keeping*, and so the meaning is, (according to Dr. Owen and other learned commentators) "There remaineth a Sabbath-keeping for the people of God, under the New Testament, as well as under the Old." And this (as the apostle should in the context) behoved necessarily to be a new Sabbatism, in regard it hath a new foundation, in correspondence to the foundation of the old Sabbatism mentioned verse 4. of that chapter. "For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works." Well (saith the apostle) the new Sabbatism hath the like foundation, verse 10. "For he (viz. Jesus Christ) that is entered into his rest, hath also ceased from his own works, as God did from his." Now it was on the morning of the first day of the week that Christ entered into his mediatory rest from his works of redemption, as God on the seventh day entered into his rest from the work of creation. And as God, by his resting on the seventh day, did determine that day for a sacred sabbatical rest under the Old Testament; so Christ (who is the Lord of the Sabbath) by his entering into his rest on the first day, did determine that day of the week for a sacred Sabbatism under the New Testament, The ceasing from his works, as God did from his, mentioned ver 10. can never properly be applied (as some do) to the believer, but to Christ's ceasing from his works of redemption; seeing it is absurd to make our ceasing from the vile works of sin, a parallel to God's ceasing from his glorious works of creation. And it cannot be meant of ceasing from the works of duty and service to God; for, to all eternity, believers never cease from these, Rev. xxii 3

V. Our Lord Jesus Christ hath put honour upon the first day of the week, and authorised the observation of it by his own example and practice, which hath the force of a law to us. It was on this day he met with the two disciples going to Emmaus, opened the scriptures to them, and was made known to them in the breaking of bread, Luke xxiv. 13. Likewise upon the same day he appeared to the eleven, when gathered together, and others with them, shewed them his pierced hands and feet, comforted them, and opened their understandings that they might understand the scriptures, Luke xxiv. 33, 36, 40, 45. It was on this day that Christ came to his disciples, (being all convened together except Thomas) gave them his peace and blessed them, and also gave them their commission and the holy Ghost, John John xx. 16, 20, &c. Again, upon that day eight days, being the next first day of the week, when the disciples were assembled together, and Thomas with them, John xx 26. Christ chose to appear unto them, and graciously convinced Thomas by the discovery of his wounds. Though Christ, after his resurrection, met with severals of his disciples upon other days of the week, yet on the first day only (which is therefore expressly recorded) did he appear to them when assembled together; and therefore we see how he left Thomas a whole week under his unbelief and doubtings, till the next Lord's day or first day of the week should come, that he might have occasion graciously to resolve him in the assembly of his disciples, for their common edification and comfort. The first day of the week is the only day of the week, or month, or year, that is ever mentioned by number in all the New Testament; and wherever it is spoke of, we hear of the religious observation of it, by the the disciples assembling together. And why are we told by the evangelists so expressly, and so often, of Christ's making his visits to his disciples upon the first day of the week? but to shew us, that Christ put a particular honour and respect upon this day, and thereby gave us a plain intimation of his will, that it should be observed in his church, as the Christian Sabbath, or the weekly day of holy rest and holy convocations. That one day in seven should be religiously observed in this manner, was a law from the beginning, and that as old as the state of innocence (as I shewed before.) But that, in the kingdom of the Messiah, the first day of the week should be that solemn day; this was indication enough, that Christ on that day once and again met his disciples in a religious assembly. And it is highly probable, that at his first meeting with them, he appointed them that day eight days to be together again, promising to meet them; for we find them more chapterly convened that day than the former, John xx. 26. " And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them," as it would seem waiting for Christ's coming. And many are of opinion, that he thus continued to meet with them every first day of the week, till his ascension, " speaking to them the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," Acts i. 2.

Christ's meeting with them that day was not merely occasional, but designed; as appears by the express mentioning of the first day of the week so oft as he met them For, when Christ met with his disciples on any other day of the week, we are not told what day it was, whether the second, third or fourth day of the week; but when he meets with them on the first day, the Holy Ghost names and records that, thereby subscribing something peculiar to it above all the rest.

VI. The observation of the first day of the week is also authorised by the divinely inspired apostles of Christ, and founders of the Christian church, and that both by their example and direction.——We have them both directing and performing the duties of the Sabbath on this day, and also asserting Christ's propriety in it as his; all which is evident from scripture.

In the forecited scriptures, where we read of Christ's appearances to his disciples, we also read of their assembling together on the first day of the week several times; which certainly was for the public worship of God, and in honour of this day. For, when they met on other days of the week, it is not told what these were; but, when they met on the first day of the week, the Holy Ghost records that; which shews it to be a remarkable day in itself, and observed as such by the disciples of Christ, and that in a religious way

But, besides these, I shall adduce four other scriptures, that clearly demonstrate what is above asserted.

The first is, Acts ii. 1, 2. where it is recorded, that " the apostles and other brethren were met altogether on the day of Pentecost in one place." This meeting was for public worship on the first day of the week, according to their wonted practice. It is not in the temple with the Jews, but in a house in Jerusalem by themselves.

Quest. How prove you that it was on the first day of the week? *Ans.* Because it is evident from scripture, that the passover that year fell on the Jewish Sabbath; and Pentecost being still the fiftieth day after the passover, it consequently fell that year on the first day of the week, or the Lord's day. Pentecost is a Greek word, signifying the *fiftieth*, called so because of its being still the fiftieth day after the passover, a Jewish feast, which fell sometimes upon one day of the week, and sometimes on another; but this year it fell on the last or seventh day of the week. Pentecost was another feast of the Jews, but kept in remembrance of God's giving the law that day on mount Sinai, being the fiftieth day after their eating the passover and coming out of Egypt. And consequently, Pentecost falling this year upon the first day of the week, our Lord's resurrection day, the apostles and brethren assembled for celebrating this day by public worship. Now, let us observe how remarkably God confirmed their keeping of the first day of the week, and blessed their meeting together upon it for worship: He even sent down that extraordinary effusion of the Holy Ghost upon them, for fitting and furnishing them for the extraordinary work of planting the Christian church, and converting the world. This was a solemn approbation of the Christian Sabbath, and a seal to its institution from heaven, which did confirm all Christians in the celebrating of this day for the future: And many times have they experienced the gracious effusions of the Spirit on their public assemblies this day since that time. It is observed by Grotius, upon Exod. xix. 1. That it was on the first day of the week that the law was given in its fearful promulgation from mount Sinai. But though God made that in some respect a terrible day to them, yet he makes it weekly a joyful day to us, by the comfortable promulgation of the gospel thereupon from mount Zion.

A second scripture is, Acts xx 7. " And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached to them," &c. Whence it is plain that the first day of the week was then the stated time for Christians their meeting together, for the preaching of the word, and celebrating of the Lord's supper; for this is re-

corded as their customary known practice. Paul had been at Troas seven days, and consequently was there upon the Jewish Sabbath; but there is no word of any meeting among them on that day, or any other day of the week: But when the first day of the week comes, the church is solemnly convened, and perform the work of the Sabbath on this day. Paul was ready to depart from that place, only he must stay till the first day of the week, that he might meet with the whole church, and preach to them before he leave them; and so, according to their custom, they all assemble together, and he sanctifies the Sabbath with them, by preaching and dispensing the sacrament, and that even till midnight; for they did not soon weary, at that time, of the work and duties of the Lord's day. A third scripture is, 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store," &c. Whence it is plain, that the apostle enjoins the church of Corinth, in conformity with other churches, to make their collection for the poor on the first day of the week. Now, why on the first day of the week, and not on the seventh, or any other? but for these reasons: 1. They had their public meeting on this day, and so had more conveniency for gathering their charity on this day, than upon another. 2. The first day of the week was now come in place of the old Sabbath, on which day collections were made in the Jewish synagogues; for the giving of alms was always reckoned a proper duty for the Sabbath day: But now the apostle will have all the duties of the Sabbath transferred to the first day of the week, and particularly this duty of public charity, there being a peculiar fitness in this day for it, in regard we are called this day to commemorate Christ's infinite charity to our souls, and also to receive new blessings and expressions of bounty from him; and therefore should be the more liberal to his poor saints. I hope, there is none that will say that the apostle had not Christ's warrant for what he appointed in this matter; for in this epistle he protests, that "he delivered nothing to them, but what he had received from the Lord, and had his command for;" see 1 Cor. xi. 23. and xiv. 43. It is as clear as light, from the foresaid testimony, and many others, that the primitive Christians had their assemblies on the first day of the week, which they would not have had without the apostles direction; nor would the apostles have determined so, without knowing the mind of Christ.

A fourth scripture is, Rev. i. 10. where John saith of himself, that "he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day;" which, to be sure, is no other than the Christian Sabbath, getting the denomination from our Lord Jesus Christ, and his rising from the dead thereupon, and frequent meetings with his disciples this day; and to this day it still retains this title of the Lord's day, being a day specially instituted for the honour of our Lord, and consecrated for his service and worship. The apostle wrote this book near the end of the first century, and calls this day by that name which it commonly got then, and speaks of it as a day universally notour and remarkable for the Christians observation of it. The apostle, at this time, was banished into the isle of Patmos by Domitian the emperor, where probably he wanted the opportunity of the public assemblies on this day; yet he is employed in sanctifying the Lord's day in a private way; he is in the Spirit, i. e. in a spiritual frame, and taken up in spiritual exercises, meditation and prayer, (which are proper duties for the Sabbath) and the Lord rewards this is conscientious regard to this day, with the revelation of these great things which were afterwards to fall out to the church to the end of the world.

Moreover, it is observable, that the Lord puts his name on this day; for the Holy Ghost calls it here the Lord's day, and that for these reasons: 1. Because of its deriving its institution from him: So the prayer dictate by him is called the Lord's prayer; the sacrament of his supper, instituted by him, is called the Lord's supper.

2. It is called the Lord's, because of his special propriety in it. He hath separated, and set apart from common use, and consecrated it wholly to his use and service: So the sacrament is called the Lord's table, because of its being consecrated for holy uses, and so set apart and distinguished from all other tables.

3. Because of its being dedicate to his honour and memory, being the day in which he conquered death, got a total victory, and triumphed over all his enemies.

4. It is called the Lord's day, because the Lord Jesus Christ, his person and mediation, is the principal subject of this day.

VII. Another argument for the observation of the Christian Sabbath may be drawn from the constant and uninterrupted practice of all Christ's churches through the world since the apostles days; they have all continued to observe the Lord's day for holy worship. All the ancient fathers and Christians had the Lord's day in great esteem, and made it a badge of their religion to observe it carefully, as appears from the writings of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen, &c. Ignatius, that ancient father, who lived so near Christ's times, in his epistles highly recommends the Lord's day: "Let every one that loveth Christ (saith he) observe the first day of the week, the Lord's day, as the queen of all days." It is a remarkable saying of Augustine, "as the Virgin Mary was blessed above all women, so is the first day of the week blessed above all days."

VIII. The consciences of men plead for the divine authority of the Lord's day. Surely it is God, who is the supreme Lord and Sovereign of mens consciences, that directs this his deputy in men to excite and press them so closely to the observation of this day, and also to challenge and smite them so sharply for the neglect and profanation of it. And indeed there is no sin that conscience more commonly accuses wicked men of, than the breach of the Lord's day: And hence it is that many malefactors, at their last hour, when most serious, do most bitterly bewail it; acknowledging that their Sabbath breaking was their leading sin, and the occasion of all the rest of their wicked courses; having provoked God to leave them, and give them up to the lusts of their own hearts, and temptations of the devil. Clark, in his 2d volume of Examples, tells us of one Thomas Savage (a young man who was executed at Ratcliff, October 28, 1668, for murdering his fellow servant,) that whilst he was in prison, cried out to some that came to visit him after this manner—"Oh wretch that I was! I studied how I might spend the Lord's day in the devil's work; at that time when I should have been serving God, I was busiest in serving Satan. I was glad when the Sabbath came, for then I had leisure to pursue my lusts and pleasures. I sometimes went in to the church, but I never staid the time of a whole sermon. I laughed at those who spent their Sabbaths in hearing and praying and looked [illegible]

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verrest fools in the world. O tell young men from me, that Sabbath-breaking is a dangerous and costly sin," &c.

Turner on Providence, gives an account of one Edmund Kirk, vintner, executed at Tyburn, July 11, 1684, for murdering his wife, who in his confession lamented his frequent profanation of the Lord's day—"Upon which holy day (saith he) I committed the heinous sin of murdering my poor wife." Thus one sin was punished with another, Sabbath-breaking with murder, and that with the gallows. Likewise he tells of another, executed May 25, 1687, for theft, who in his confession said, "That it was his earnest desire that all young men especially, should take care not to spend the Lord's day." And the author's remark is, that he does not know that ever he observed any repentance in a malefactor, who did not bitterly lament his neglect of his duty to God on that day.

IX. In the *last* place.—The dispensations of divine providence may be brought in, as giving suffrage to the sanctification of the Lord's day. God hath highly honoured this day, by doing many mighty works upon it: On this day he created the light, and began to make the world; on this day he gave the law from Mount Sinai, as Grotius observes. Nay, it is affirmed, by an ancient Council held at Constantinople, Counc. 6. Can. 8. "That Christ was born on the Lord's day, and the star shined to the wise men on it. Christ fed the five thousand with the five loaves and two fishes on this day; that he was baptised, rose from the dead, and sent down the Holy Ghost on this day." And some of the ancients have further affirmed, that whatsoever notable thing was done in the world, the Lord ordered it so, was done to the honour of this day. Thus God hath consecrated the first day of the week, or Christian Sabbath, by doing so many of his wonderful works upon it; to intimate to us, that it is his will we should sanctify this day, and observe it weekly, for publishing and proclaiming his worthy acts, and keeping up the memory of Christ's nativity, passion, resurrection, &c. to the end of the world, without instituting days of our own for these ends.

Moreover there are various dispensations from God, both of mercy and judgment, that conclude for the observation of this holy day. The gracious providences that attend the conscientious observers of the Lord's day, are most remarkable. On these the Lord pours down the gracious influences of his Spirit, in his ordinances dispensed this day; he eminently blesseth them with increase of grace tenderness of conscience, and holiness of life; and with all his best blessings, both spiritual and temporal. God hath now for these 1700 years past, granted all his churches through the world many signal marks of his favour and presence in observing the Lord's day, which they could not have expected, had they been in an error in keeping it. How often hath he poured out his Spirit upon them when attending ordinances on this day, and blessed them with conviction, conversion, and manifestations of his love? Nay, the universal experience of Christians do testify, that all the blessings and mercies promised to the observers of the Sabbath under the Old Testament, are now transferred and accomplished to the keepers of the Christian Sabbath: For, the change of the day being by divine authority, the first day Sabbath doth lawfully succeed to all the privileges, promises, and threatenings, formerly pertaining to the seventh-day Sabbath. We see what blessings are promised to the keeping of the Sabbath of old, both spiritual and temporal; that is a remarkable word, Jer. xvii. 24, 26. "If ye hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work therein, then they shall come from the cities of Judah, and all other places, bringing burnt-offerings, and sacrifices, and meat-offerings, and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise unto the house of the Lord;" *i. e.* When the Sabbath is duly observed, then the church shall flourish, religion shall be promoted, and the name of God highly exalted. And do we not see this promise visibly accomplished to such churches and persons as strictly sanctify the Lord's day? Among such Christianity doth flourish, knowledge is increased, reformation is advanced, grace is multiplied, and a conscientious regard is had to all the other duties of religion.

Again, we find temporal mercies annexed to the keeping of the Sabbath, Isaiah lviii. 13, 14. "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath," *i. e.* If thou ceasest from profaning it, "I will cause thee to ride on the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father;" *i. e.* Thou shalt be blessed with outward prosperity, and many earthly enjoyments. This is again confirmed in Jer. xvii. 24, 25. "If ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord, to hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work therein, then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes, sitting on the throne of David, riding in chariots, and this city shall remain for ever:" *i. e.* The nation and city shall be blessed with all secular and civil advantages. Accordingly the people of God have found the hallowing of the Lord's day sensibly prosperous to them with respect to their secular affairs. When they have discharged the duties of this day with a good conscience, it hath fared the better with them all the week after. In testimony whereof, I shall here narrate the experience of that excellent person Sir Matthew Hale, Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, in the reign of King Charles II. who was both an eminent lawyer and a great divine. In his book, called "Contemplations, Moral and Divine," he hath these words: "I have found (saith he) by a strict and diligent observation, that a due observing the duty of the Lord's day hath ever had joined to it a blessing upon the rest of my time; and the week that hath been so begun hath been blessed and prosperous to me: And, on the other side, when I have been negligent of the duties of this day, the rest of the week hath been unsuccessful and unhappy to my secular employments; so that I could easily make an estimate of my successes in my own secular employments the week following, by the manner of my passing this day. And this I do not write lightly or inconsiderately, but upon a long and sound observation and experience." Again, in another place, he saith "I thank God, I ever found that, in the strictest observation of the times of his worship, I ever met with the best advantage to my worldly occasions; and that, whenever my worldly occasions encroached upon those times, I ever met with disappointment, though in things of the most probable success; and ever let it be so with me. It hath been and ever shall be to me, a conviction, beyond all argument and demonstration whatsoever, that God expects the observation of his times; and that, while I find myself thus dealt with, God hath not given over his care of me. It would be a sad presage unto me of the severe anger of my Maker, if my inadvertance should cast me upon a temporal undertaking upon this day, and that it should prosper." Thus the learned and pious Judge Hale, who spake from his own experience, after long and critical observation of divine providence.

Again, the judgments which often follow upon the violation of this day, do give testimony to its divine authority. How sad are the spiritual strokes, though little noticed, which God inflicts upon the slighters of his holy day, by giving them up to hardness of heart, searedness of conscience, and vile affections; so that commonly they fall into scandalous out-breakings, and notorious crimes, proceeding from evil to worse, till they at length run themselves into some fatal mischief! And, when men neglect to punish the profanation of this day, the Lord usually takes the sword into his own hand, and, by visible temporal judgments, plagues the profaners of it. If the violation of the Jewish Sabbath was, by a divine order, punished with death, under the law, Exod. xxxi. 15. surely the breach of the Christian Sabbath shall not escape without some signal marks of the divine vengeance, according to the scripture-threatenings, which are levelled against the one as well as the other, as I shewed before. Let us not forget that terrible denunciation of judgment, which we have in Jeremiah xvii 27. " But if you will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem, on the Sabbath day, then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched." The Jews (as Augustine observes) fell generally into this grievous sin of profaning the Sabbath: for, though they pretended to hallow it, by forbearing servile labour upon it, yet upon that day above all days, they used to pamper the flesh with carnal delights, and run into the excesses of gluttony and drunkenness. Against these sins did our Saviour warn them; but, they persisting, the foresaid dreadful threatening was at length exactly fulfilled; for upon that very day, so abused by them, their regal city Jerusalem, the glory and master-piece of the whole earth, was burnt down to the ground by the Romans. And this Hegesippus and Dio observe to have been done on the Sabbath day, in September, about forty years after Christ's death.

And doth not that prophetical commination concern us as well as the Jews? And have we not cause to fear the accomplishment of it for the breach of the Christian Sabbath? Yes, we have found it to be true. Some impartial observers of God's judgments in the world have remarked, that this sin, viz. the breach of the fourth command, by the profane neglect of God's worship upon the Lord's day, and the spending of this time in open works of impiety, hath been frequently visited upon cities and private persons, by consuming fires that have happened upon this day; of which many instances might be given in this same island, as well as other parts of the world. That fiery prediction against Jerusalem hath been oftener than once fulfilled and executed upon the two capital cities thereof, many of whose inhabitants have been as guilty of profaning the day set apart for God's service as ever the Jews were. In London this vice reigned, and there it was dreadfully punished with a furious and astonishing fire in the year 1666, which laid the most part of that great city, with its fairest churches and buildings, in rubbish, in three days space: And it is remarkable, that that dreadful fire broke forth on the Lord's day, very early in the morning, being the second day of September.

Likewise in Edinburgh, where Sabbath breaking very much abounded, (as appears by the acts of assembly made against that sin) the fairest and stateliest of its buildings, in the Parliament close, and about it, (to which scarce any in Britain were comparable) were, on the 4th of February, 1700, (being the Lord's day) burnt down and laid in ashes and ruins, in the space of a few hours, to the astonishment and terror of the sorrowful inhabitants; whereof I myself was an eye-witness: and the effects of that fire are visible to this day. Yea, so great was the terror and confusion of that Lord's day, that the people of the city were in no case to attend any sermon or public worship upon it, though there was a great number of worthy ministers convened in the place, (beside the reverend ministers of the city) ready to have prayed with, or preached to, the people on that sad occasion; for the General Assembly was sitting there at the time: but the dismal case of the city made this impracticable. However the Lord himself, by that silent Sabbath, did loudly preach to all the inhabitants of the city, setting forth to them, in a most awakening manner, the great sin and danger of irreligious neglecting of God's worship upon the Lord's day, and profaning it, " by doing their own works, and finding their own pleasures."

I have read of the town of Stratford upon Avon, that it was twice, upon the Lord's days, almost consumed with fire, chiefly for profaning the Lord's day, and contemning his word in the mouth of his faithful minister. The like also might be told of several towns in Scotland.

Dr. Beard, in his theatre of God's judgments, tells us of the town of Feverton, in Devonshire, that was often admonished by her godly pastor, that God would bring some heavy judgment upon the inhabitants of that place, for their profanation of the Lord's day, occasioned chiefly by preparing for their weekly market, which they then held on the Monday. Accordingly, very soon after the said minister's death, on the 3d of April, 1598, God sent a terrible fire, which in less than half an hour consumed the whole town, except the church, the court house, alms-houses, and a few poor people's dwellings; where a man might have seen four hundred dwelling-houses all at once on fire, and above fifty persons consumed in the flames. But the remaining inhabitants not taking warning by the former judgment, but continuing in the same sin, the town was again fired on the 5th of August, 1612, (fourteen years after the former fire), and all consumed, except a few poor houses. The historian adds, that they are blind who see not in this the finger of God. and he prays for grace to the people of that city, when it is next built, to change their market day, and to remove all occasions of profaning the Lord's day.

Dr Twiss on the Sabbath, relates a passage that happened in Bedford-shire, not long before his writing that book. A match at foot-ball being appointed on the Sabbath afternoon, whilst two of the most forward were in the belfrey, tolling of a bell to call the company together, there was suddenly heard a clap of thunder, and a flash of lightning was seen by some that sat in the church porch, coming through a dark lane, which flashed in their faces, and much terrified them: And, passing through the porch into the belfrey, it tripped up his heels that was tolling the bell, and struck him stark dead; and the other that was with him was so sorely blasted therewith, that shortly after he died also.

Mr Clark, in his father's life, p. 128, hath a very strange passage, to this purpose. Mr Hugh Clark preaching at Oundle in Northampton-shire, where the people were generally very ignorant, and much addicted to the profanation of the Lord's day, by Whitson-ales, Morice dances, and such pastimes, which he much set himself against, endea

vouring to convince them of the evil, and denouncing God's judgments against them in case of perseverance: But they being trained up in those courses, and hardened by custom, persisted still in their wickedness. At last, on a Lord's day, the leader of the dance, being a lusty young man, in the midst of their profane pastimes, fell down suddenly, and died; but they, soon shaking off their fear, returned to their vomit again. The Lord's day following, Mr Clark took occasion, from this sad dispensation, to quote the fore-cited text, Jer. xvii. 27. "If thou wilt not hearken unto me, to hallow the Sabbath-day, then will I kindle a fire," &c. But the people kicked against these admonitions, and that same evening went to their sports again; among whom was a smith that was a chief ringleader: But it pleased God, the very next day, two husbandmen coming to his shop to sharpen their plough shares, a spark from the red-hot iron, as he was beating it upon the anvil, flew into the thatch, which both the smith and his neighbours saw, but had no power to move towards it; which presently burnt down the smith's shop, house, and all his goods. This Mr Clark pressed upon their consciences: but nothing would prevail, till at last, upon a Sabbath day at night, when they were retired to their several homes, there was heard a great noise, and rattling of chains up and down the town, which was accompanied with such a smell and stink of fire and brimstone, that many of their guilty consciences suggested to them, that the devil was come to fetch them away: And now, and not till now, they began to thin in good earnestness of a reformation.

Mr Clark, in his examples, tells us of one Mr Abberly, a godly minister in Burton upon Trent, who took occasion often to reprove and threaten Sabbath-breakers, especially such as sold and bought meat upon Sabbath day mornings, a practice too common in that place. Nevertheless, there was a taylor, that dwelt in the upper end of the town, who would go through the long street (as it were in a bravado) to the other end of the town, and fetch home meat on the Lord's day morning; but as he returned with both his hands full, in the midst of the street he fell down stark dead. I was (saith Dr Teate) an eye-witness, both of his fall and burial: And it pleased God thereby to work some reformation, both among the butchers and others.

Also he relates, from one Mr Falconer, minister of Burford near Salisbury, a fearful example of God's justice, about the year 1635. A prophane company of young men, on the Lord's day, early in the morning, went to Claringdon park, to cut down a May-pole; and having loaden the cart with it, at Milner's Bars, entering into the city of Salisbury, one of the cartwheels fell into a rut, which made the young tree in the cart (which they had stole for a May-pole) to give a great surge on one side, so that it struck one of the company such a blow on the head, that it beat out his brains, and he instantly died on the place, and lay there a fearful spectacle of God's wrath, both against that heathenish sport and wilful prophaning of the Sabbath; whilst he maketh the very thing they had chosen for their sport and pastime, to be the instrument of executing his fury. The author saith, that he diligently enquired after the truth of this matter, at his first going to Sarum; and many godly and credible persons, who had seen that sad spectacle, in his hearing attested it to be so as above narrated.

Also, in the county of Devon, one Edward Ameridith, a gentleman, having been pained in his feet, and being somewhat recovered, one said unto him, He was glad to see him so nimble, Ameridith replied, That he doubted not but to dance about the May-pole next Lord's day; but, before he moved out of that place, he was smitten with such feebleness of heart, and dizziness in his head, that, desiring help to carry him to an house, he died before the Lord's day came.

Dr Twiss on the Sabbath, tells, That at a place called Tidworth, on the Sabbath day, many being met together to play at foot-ball in the church yard, one had his leg broke, which presently gangrening, he forthwith died thereof. Likewise at Alcester in Warwickshire, a lusty young woman (upon the coming forth of the declaration for sports) went on the Sabbath day to a green not very far off, where she said, she would dance as long as she could stand: But, while she was dancing, God struck her with a violent disease, whereof, within two or three days after, she died.

Beard in his theatre, writes of a certain nobleman, that used to go a hunting on the Lord's day in time of sermon, who had a child by his wife with a head like a dog, and it howled like a hound.

I shall conclude with one example more from Mr Clark. He gives account of a godly minister, that one day was preaching, and earnestly pressing the sanctification of the Sabbath; and, in his sermon, he had occasion to make mention of that man, that, by the special commandment of God, was stoned to death for gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. Whereupon one in the congregation was so wicked, as to rise up and laugh; yea, made all the haste he could out of the church, and went to gathering of sticks, though he had no need of them: But, when the people came out from the sermon, they found him in their way, lying stark dead, with the bundle of sticks in his arms. These instances of divine vengeance, inflicted upon the profaners of the Lord's day, may contribute very much to confirm us in the belief of the divine institution of this holy day; and likewise may serve to warn all ranks and degrees of persons, to guard against the contempt and violation of the Lord's day. The Lord indeed exerciseth great long-suffering and patience towards many notorious Sabbath breakers, to shew us that there is a judgment to come: But nevertheless he makes monuments of some, to let us know, that "verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth."

Many more examples might be brought, if it were needful, from all corners of the land; but I truly believe, there are few serious observers of providence, but might relate many sad instances of the discovery of God's displeasure against the profanation of the Lord's day, from their own experience and observation.

After all, I hope, there is none that fears God, loves Christ, and believes the holy scriptures, but will see these arguments which I have adduced, to be convincing demonstrations of the necessity of sanctifying the Lord's day, and honouring it as God's Sabbath, to the end of the world.

Now, to sum up the whole, let us lay all these together: The solid ground for the morality of the fourth command, the weighty reasons of the change of the day, and the special marks of honour that Christ hath put upon this holy day; it being the day in which he first made the light to shine, the day wherein also the Sun of righteousness arose, dispelling the clouds of guilt and fear; the day he subdued his enemies, manifested himself to his disciples, and taught them his will; the day he sent the Holy Ghost to his apos-

apostles; the day he hath called by his own name, and reserved for his own use, and upon which he holds special communion with his people, and vouchsafes them the marks of his royal favour; the day which God highly honours by his providential dispensations. And will it not then be judged an high affront to Almighty God, to pour contempt on that day which he delights to honour? Surely it ought to be matter of grief to all true lovers of God, when they see it done. We are told, that, when one of Darius's eunuchs saw Alexander setting his feet on a rich table of his masters he fell a weeping; and being asked the reason of it, he said, "It was to see the table his master so highly esteemed, now made a footstool." And may we not weep to see the day that God hath honoured and blessed, and for which he is so highly concerned, made a footstool, and trampled on by so many profane persons in our days? To be sure, God will not sit with such open affronts as he gets from some in this matter.

Thus, I think I have demonstrated the morality of the fourth command, and the divine institution of the Lord's day for our Christian Sabbath; which, by necessary consequence, proves the abolition of the Jewish seventh-day Sabbath. For though there were no other scripture warrant for abolishing the old Sabbath, (which nevertheless there is, as I shewed before) yet seeing it is evident that our Lord Jesus Christ, "the Lord of the Sabbath," hath by his resurrection, example and authority, for ever consecrated the first day of the week, for the solemn remembrance and celebration of the Lord's rest from the great work of redemption, and of that unparalled deliverance wrought by him for a lost world, and thereby hath set apart the first day for our Sabbath; then, of course, the old seventh day must cede, and resign its sanctity to it, and be for ever abrogated. The Christian Sabbath must necessarily extinguish the Jewish, seeing the two Sabbath days cannot stand in force together: For, by virtue of the fourth command, there is but one day of seven to be observed for the Sabbath, one day only after six working days, and not two after five. And since it is the ancient and unrepealed institution of God, that men should labour six days of the week, and observe but one day for the Sabbath; then surely, if we should labour but five days of the week and keep two for the Sabbath, we would expressly violate the law So that no Christians need to have the least scruple about the abrogation of the Jewish Sabbath.

But though the seventh day be now divested of its sanctity, and hath no more claim to the Sabbath, having resigned all its dignity and privileges to the first day of the week, the New Testament Sabbath; yet still it hath the honour of ushering it in, and of serving as a preparation day for it. As the Jewish typical worship ushered in the evangelical spiritual worship; and the Jewish deliverances from Egypt and Babylon were preparatory to that more glorious and general one from hell and destruction by Jesus Christ, which is this day commemorated. So the Jewish seventh-day Sabbath serves to usher in and prepare us for the glorious festival of the Christian Sabbath, which is to continue while Christ hath a church upon earth, being the only day appointed to be kept in remembrance of him, and as serving to usher in and prepare us for that far more glorious and celestial Sabbath above, which shall have never have an end.

O then endeavour by all means to get and keep up a high esteem of the Lord's day, that day which God hath exalted above all the days of the week, and above all the Jewish Sabbaths and festivals whatsomever. Of them in comparison of the Lord's day, we may say in allusion to that word, Heb. i. 11, 12. "They perish, but thou remainest; and they all wax old like a garment, and as a vesture thou hast folded them up, and they are changed; but thou shalt (maugre all the malice of men and devils) continue the same, and thy years shall not fail." These were but as morning stars, to usher in the sun. Other festivals, in all their royalty, are not arrayed like thee. All the graces triumph in thee; all the ordinances conspire to adorn thee; the sacred Trinity do delight in thee: the Father ruleth thee, the Son rose upon thee, and the Spirit hath overshadowed thee. Thus is it done to the day which the King of heaven delighteth to honour; and what shall be done to the man that delighteth to dishonour and put contempt upon thee?

Surely, as "God will not hold him guiltless" that breaks the third command, "by taking his name in vain;" so he will not hold him guiltless that breaks the fourth commandment, by spending his day in vain. And though the breakers of this commandment may escape punishment from men, or may even escape outward judgments from God in this world; yet there is a day coming, when he will call them to account for it. Oh sinners! the day of the Lord is like to be a dreadful day to you that despise the Lord's day.

Quest. VI. What is that proportion of time which is to be sequestrated and allowed for the Sabbath day? and when doth it begin and end?

Ans. The fourth command requires one day in every seven; by which we are not to understand only the artificial day from sun-rising to sun-setting, or from the break of day until the darkness of the night come on, and think then the Sabbath is over, and that we are no longer bound to abstain from our own works; and far less are we to think that the Sabbath is no longer than the time of public worship doth last, and that we are at freedom from the work and duties of the Sabbath when that is over: This some say in words, and many more in their practice.

But, consider what absurdities would follow hereupon: For, if no more time be allowed for the Sabbath, but the time of public worship; then it would follow, that God requires no private or secret duties from us on that day, since these will need some more time: But that cannot be; for, if private and secret duties be required of us on week days, then much more on the Sabbath day.

Again, it would follow, that some must keep longer Sabbaths; and others shorter; nay, the Sabbath of many shall not be above an hour or two of the day; for there are ministers and people who are scarce so long at public worship: But the whole day is the Lord's, and not a part only. You will have your servants to work the whole six week days for you, from morning to night, and not be contented with their working an hour or two only of these days: So neither should you yield less to God than you require for yourselves. Nay, if attendance on the public worship were all that is requisite this day, by virtue of the command, it would follow, that a man would be loosed from the obligation of the command, if he were in a place of the world where God is not publicly worshipped.

But all these things being absurd, I do upon solid ground, assert, that the whole natural day, consisting of twenty-four hours, is to be set apart for the Sabbath day; and that we ought to measure this day, and begin and end it, as we do other days, that is, from midnight to midnight; during which time we are to abstain from our own works, and

sanctify the Lord's Sabbath: For the fourth command binds us to consecrate the seventh part of every week to the Lord, who challengeth a special property in one of seven, and asserts his just title thereto, saying, "The seventh day is the Lord's:" And also, Isa. lvii. 13. he expressly calls it, "My holy day." It is all holy; and therefore no part must be profaned or applied to common uses. It is all the Lord's: and so it is unlawful for us to rob him of any part of it, and alienate it to our private use.

Object. But who is able to spend the whole twenty-four hours in religious duties?

Ans. I do not say that this is to be done without any intermission; for we do not this in following our employments on other days: A due proportion of every day is to be reserved for the natural support of our bodies, and particularly for moderate eating and sleeping, which are works of necessity, and must be allowed on the Sabbath, as well as other days; with this difference only, that, whereas they are done on other days to enable us for labour, they are to be done on the Sabbath to strengthen us for holy duties; and so cannot properly be called our own works: Neither can the doing thereof be called a taking of God's time to our own use, since this contributes to our better spending of God's time, and is truly necessary for God's service on the Sabbath. But, besides the time requisite for the works of necessity and mercy, the whole natural day, as above described, is holy unto the Lord, and ought to be employed in religious duties; and not a part of the day only: Both Sabbath morning and Sabbath night should be spent in prayer and praises, as is plain from the 92d Psalm, which is intituled "A psalm or song for the Sabbath day," verse 1. and verse 2. we are told, that "It is good to give thanks unto the Lord, and shew forth his loving kindness in the morning, and his faithfulness every night." But more of this afterwards, when I come directly to treat of the sanctification of the Sabbath. And, before I do this, I judge it necessary to answer some objections brought against the morality of the Sabbath, and the change of the day.

Quakers, Familists, and others, holding that there is no difference of days, and so denying the divine authority of the Sabbath, I shall consider what they say.

Some Objections against the former Doctrine answered.

Object. 1. "Every day ought to be a Sabbath to a Christian, and so there is no need of a set day."

Ans Though Christians should serve God, and walk with him every day, yet they cannot make every day a Sabbath for the public worship of God, since God calls them to other necessary work and business thereupon, which are inconsistent with the solemn spiritual employment of the Sabbath.

Object. 2. "Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, and elsewhere, condemns the observation of days under the New Testament."

Ans. The apostle speaks only of the Jewish Sabbath and festivals, which were shadows of things to come, and abolished by Christ's coming; but not of the Lord's day, which the apostle himself observed, and did particularly recommend to the Galatians for their observation, 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2.

Object. 3. "The Sabbath was given as a type or sign only to the Jews; therefore it must be abolished with the rest of their types and ceremonies."

Ans. 1. The Sabbath is indeed said to be given as a sign betwixt God and his people, Ezek. xx. 12. But that is not confined to the people of the Jews, (except as to the seventh-day Sabbath only, of which I spoke before), but to be extended to all God's people to the end of the world.

2. There is a great difference betwixt a sign and a ceremony, which is an alterable thing. The rainbow is called a sign, Gen. ix. God's moral precepts are called signs, Deut. vi. 8. Yet none will say that these are ceremonies, or alterable things.

3. Some signs are ceremonial and alterable; others are moral and perpetual. The Sabbath is not a sign of the first, but of the latter sort. Indeed, all the signs and types of the sacrifice of the Messiah, and justification by Christ to come, were nailed all to the cross with him, and abrogated; but all signs were not of this kind. The rainbow is given as a sign of the world's preservation from a deluge, and is perpetual: The Ten Commandments are given as probative signs of our obedience, and are perpetual, and so is the Sabbath. Indeed, the Sabbath is a more peculiar sign than any of the rest of the commands, and therefore is emphatically called a sign several times in scripture.

1. It is a sign of God's special love and favour to his people. The Sabbath is a great blessing and privilege to them; for which Nehemiah gives God thanks in a special manner, Neh. ix. 14. of which more afterward.

2. It is a sign of that eternal rest above, provided for the people of God.

3. The religious observation of the Sabbath is a declarative sign of our sanctification; therefore it is said, Exod. xxxi. and Ezek. xx. that the Lord gave his people Sabbaths and signs, that "they might know that he was the Lord that sanctified them." So that it is plain from these, that the Sabbath is a sign to us as well as to the Jews.

Object. 4. "But (say Quakers and other sectaries) there is no holiness in days, one time is not better than another; and therefore the Sabbath doth not differ from other days in the week."

Ans. I grant, one day is not holier than another in itself, (as one place is not more holy in its own nature than another), yet it may be holier in respect of its use. Thus the Sabbath day hath a relative holiness in it, as it is designed and appropriated to God's use and service, and therefore must not be alienated to uses of our own; for this would be sacrilege, which is a heinous crime. Hence it is, that the Lord doth expressly call the Sabbath a *holy day*, Isaiah lviii. 13.

Object. 5. "But (say they) doth God require us to be more religious and godly at one time than another?"

Ans. There are sometimes that God requires us to give ourselves more to religion, and to express it more by outward acts of worship, than at other times. I grant that we ought always to be religious, and to serve and worship God every day of the week; but God, in his wisdom, hath thought fit to set apart a certain season, wherein he requires more of the solemn, external, and visible exercises of religion, and performance of holy duties, than at other times. The reason of his so doing I mentioned before.

Some Objections against the Change of the Day answered.

Object. 1. "The seventh-day Sabbath was instituted in the state of innocency; therefore it is to be held as *moral,* and unalterable."

Ans. The institution of the Sabbath, or consecration of "one day in seven to the Lord," may be hence concluded *moral* and perpetual, since the reason and ground of it is such, as was shewed before; but it will not follow, that the determination of the precise day of the week is moral and unalterable also, since the Lawgiver, who appointed it, not only could, but actually hath altered it, as was shewed already. Every thing that God did bid or forbid our first parents, in a state of innocency, was not moral or unalterably good or evil in itself, as appears from the instance of prohibiting to "eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil;" this was a law merely positive, and alterable in itself. *Lastly,* Though the Sabbath of the seventh day was appointed in the state of innocency, and probably would have continued unalterably, if the fall had not intervened, and no greater work than that of the creation had been wrought; yet, after the fall, God made the seventh-day Sabbath peculiar to the old œconomy, or dispensation of the covenant, and alterable, together with it, upon his accomplishing the far more glorious work of our redemption.

Object. 2. "The Israelites are enjoined to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, "for a perpetual covenant," Exod. xxxi. 16.

Ans. 1. This may be understood of the Sabbath indefinitely, and not of the seventh-day Sabbath.

2. Granting the seventh-day Sabbath were meant here, yet the perpetuity attributed to it is not absolute, but periodical; denoting only a great length of time; for so we find it ascribed to circumcision, the shewbread, and other things which were to be abolished.

Object. 3. "There is no express precept for keeping the Christian Sabbath in the New Testament."

Ans. 1. The Lord doth not give express command for every particular duty in his word, but hath thought it sufficient to afford us plain scripture consequences, whence we may gather it.

2. There was no need of any new express precept to be left on record, since all the Christians understand themselves to be expressly obliged by the fourth command to observe one day of seven as a Sabbath unto the Lord. And, for the particular day, the example of Christ, and of his apostles, (who delivered nothing but what they received from their Master, 1 Cor. xi 23.) was sufficient to enter the church upon the uniform observation thereof: And, being once begun, they could not easily mistake in the continuance of it. The scripture, indeed, mentions the change of the day, and the keeping of the Christian Sabbath, but briefly, and by short hints, because it was a thing universally notour to the whole church.

These things, concerning the morality and perpetual obligation of the law for the Sabbath, being premised, I come, in the next place, to the chief thing which I designed to handle, viz.—The sanctification of the Sabbath: and there to shew particularly how this holy day should be sanctified in a due and suitable manner.

CHAP. II.

CONCERNING THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE SABBATH.

THERE is a twofold sanctification of the Sabbath, mentioned in the fourth command, the one by God, the other by man.

As to the *first,* God hath already sanctified it, as is recorded in the close of the command; "The Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." His blessing and hallowing the day are both of the same import, and signify these two things:—

1. The Lord's distinguishing this day from others, and his setting it apart from common unto sacred uses and employments. He hath honoured it with his royal stamp, and consecrated it for the work of heaven.

2. His pitching upon the Sabbath as the day whereon he doth remarkably bless and sanctify men, by filling his ordinances with the special blessings and graces of his holy Spirit, and making them effectual to our sanctification.

This is a blessed day, and a day of blessing: For as it is our duty on this day to meet together, and bless God, so it is God's promise this day to meet with us, and bless us. He will rain blessings upon the observers of his Sabbath, grant them his presence, and make them joyful in his house of prayer.

As to the second, the sanctification of the Sabbath which is required of us, this is either negative or positive. The first consists in a holy rest; the second in holy exercises upon the Sabbath.

Before I proceed to handle these, I shall lay down some cautions for the right understanding of the fourth command, and for preventing mistakes. Wherefore, when God doth here appoint us six days of the week for our labour, and one day for his worship, we must not think that it is God's meaning, 1. That no part of our six days is to be spent in religious exercises; for, under the law, there were set portions of every day consecrated to divine worship, in the tabernacle and temple. Nor,

2. Doth he mean that no whole day beside the Sabbath may be set apart for imploring God's mercy in time of distress, or returning thanks to God for some special favour or deliverance, when the providence of God calls us to it: For we find God himself enjoining the observation of other days beside the seventh, Exod. xxxiv. Lev. xxiii. Numb. xxviii. and commanding cessation from labour on these days. It is not the design of the fourth command to lay us under a peremptory or indispensible obligation of labouring in all the six days throughout; but only to enjoin us not to labour on any other day but these six days, and to do all our works upon them, so as we be not hindered from serving God in a solemn manner on the seventh.

SECTION

SECTION I.

CONCERNING THE HOLY REST REQUISITE ON THE SABBATH.

THIS holy rest upon the Sabbath consists in a total abstinence from all worldly employments and recreations, and from whatever work, business, or action, that may any wise prove a hindrance to the worship and service of God upon that day. This is plain, not only from the fourth command itself, but from many other scriptures, particularly Jer xvii. 24. Isaiah lviii. 13.

I shall here propose some questions upon this subject to be answered.

Quest. I. Are no sort of works lawful on the Sabbath day?

Ans. There are three sorts of works ordinarly excepted, as not prohibited by the fourth command, viz. the works of piety, of mercy, and of necessity.

1. The works of piety, that is, such bodily actions or labour as are necessary and subservient to the performance of divine worship, or contribute to order or decency therein; these are lawful and necessary on the Sabbath day: Such were "the killing of beasts, washing and preparing of sacrifices, the convocating the people to worship by blowing of trumpets, making short journies to attend worship, &c." under the law. So now, under the gospel, ministers toiling their bodies in preaching and praying, people travelling to church, the ringing of bells, and the like, are lawful on the Sabbath day.

2. Works of mercy and charity are lawful this day, yea, and necessary also; for, seeing the Sabbath is instituted as a memorial of God's great love and mercy to us, we are bound upon it to shew charity both to the souls and bodies of men, and mercy to the very beasts also: So that "the feeding of our bodies, our beasts, and using means for the help of man or beast in distress, and preserving of their lives, the visiting the sick, making collections for the poor," and the like, are lawful on the Sabbath day: For the Jews had allowance for these under the law, so have we now under the gospel.

3. Works of necessity and great conveniency, which could not be foreseen, nor provided against the day before, nor cannot be delayed to another day, such as "fleeing from enemies, or defending ourselves against them; quenching of fire, dressing of meat, putting on our clothes." and the like; these are also lawful on the Sabbath. The Maccabees of old did not decline to fight on the Sabbath day, nor did the Jews long before their days: For the Jewish writers tell us, that the overthrow of Jericho was on the Sabbath; which also seems to be founded upon Joshua vi. 3, 4. where it is said, "They shall compass the city six days; and on the seventh day the walls of the city shall fall down, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him." Only take these cautions concerning such works: See that the necessity be real, and not pretended, and that ye have no secret complacency in its falling out. Take heed that it be not a necessity of your own bringing, and which you might have foreseen and prevented the week before. And, when ye are doing these works of necessity and mercy, endeavour to keep your hearts in a spiritual frame as much as you can, and study to do them without giving scandal or offence to others, and then dispatch them as soon as possibly you can, that ye may attend the main work of the day.

Quest. II. What are these works and actions, then, from which we must rest and abstain upon the Sabbath?

Ans. We must not only take special care this day to abstain from all such sinful works and actions as are unlawful upon any day; but we must also rest from all worldly business and actions, whether employments or recreations, although they be such as are lawful on other days. But, more particularly,

1. We must rest from all sorts of servile work or worldly employments that tend to our profit or advantage; such as making of journies, merchandizing, or travelling to markets, carrying of burdens, fishing, going of mills, ploughing, sowing, reaping, &c. and, in a word, all parts of mens ordinary callings. See Nehem. xiii. 15, 16, 17. and downwards: "In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine-grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath-day: And I testified against them in the day where they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the Sabbath unto the children of Judah and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath-day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath," &c. The Jews were strictly prohibited to do any work this day, even the least work of any sort; manna must not be gathered, nor a few sticks to a fire; nay, the materials for the tabernacle must not be prepared this day, Exod. xxxi. nor any thing that might be delayed or done upon another day. This cessation was shadowed forth by that river in Judea, called the Sabbatical river, because it dried up and ceased from running every Sabbath day: which not only Josephus speaks of, but also Pliny, Augustus Cæsar in his letter to Tiberius, and others. Let none think that such a total cessation from secular business would tend to their worldly disadvantage; for none were ever losers in this respect, by laying aside their own labours to attend God's worship and service upon his own day. As God took care of Israel's safety, while they came up to Jerusalem three times a-year to attend the solemn feasts which he had instituted; so that at these times none of their enemies should make any attack upon them, or so much as desire their cities, according to his promise in Exod. xxxiv. 24. So will that same God, by his kind and watchful providence, take care that his people sustain no damage in their worldly affairs through their dutiful observation of this holy day. Nay, on the contrary, they have found this practice to be even profitable to them, with respect to their outward temporal estate: And there is good ground to think it will always be so; for, the more conscientious any man is in sanctifying the Sabbath-day, the greater blessing he may expect from God upon his labour on the six days: And it is not your own labour or toil, but the "blessing of God that maketh rich," Prov. x. 22. Judge Hale, and other godly persons, have attested the truth of this point from their own experience, as I have shewed before.

The Lord, in his word, is very peremptory and particular in injoining this cessation from labour on the Sabbath;

and because he knows the eagerness of mens hearts upon the world, and their readiness to encroach upon his holy day with their worldly labour, he condescends upon these seasons wherein they have most tentation thereto, and requires them in "earing time and in harvest" to rest on the Sabbath, Exod. xxxiv. 21. Though those be the times when we are most throng with worldly business, yet he will have us in midst thereof punctually to observe the Sabbath, and prefer the pleasure of communion with God in his ordinances to the joy of harvest, and to expect that harvest work will prosper the better for our religious observation of the Sabbath in harvest time. Also the Lord specifies these seasons, because then we are under greater obligations to strict keeping of the Sabbath, than at other times; because,

1. The bodies of servants and cattle are more toiled then, than at other times; and so have the more need of rest.

2. People then have less time to worship God in their families and closets on week days, because of the greatness of their labour; and therefore have need to improve the Sabbath the more diligently.

3. In harvest we partake more of the fruits of God's bounty, than at other times; and therefore should be the more thankful to God for his mercies, and especially for Christ, the mercy of mercies, who alone doth both purchase and sweeten all our mercies to us.

Now, is it not matter of deep regret that (notwithstanding God's special command, and our manifold obligations to the contrary) our churches in many places should be thinner, and fields thronger with idle people wandering therein in time of harvest, than at other times of the year?

Object. "When the weather is unseasonable and tempestuous through the week, doth it not become a work of necessity to sow or reap on the Sabbath, for preserving of food to man and beast?"

Ans. If some particular mens corns were in hazard of being carried away, or lost by the inundation of a river, or the like, it were a work of necessity to endeavour the preservation of them upon the Sabbath; because the dispensation is extraordinary, the case not common nor general, and the damage irrecoverable in any ordinary way. But, as for sowing, reaping, or gathering in upon the Sabbath, (whatever be pretended from the season or weather for it) I judge it unlawful, because the case is common and general; the hazard proceeds from the ordinary providence of God; and there is ground to expect God's sending better weather, according to the gracious promise, which we ought not to distrust, Gen. ix. 22. "While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest shall not cease." But if any distrust God's word, and incroach upon his holy day with their labour, let them consider that God can easily blast the works of their hands, and cast their business farther behind than their neighbours, who believe and wait upon the Lord. I have a certain account of a rich farmer in this nation, not many years ago, who in harvest time (the weather having been very bad for some time before, and proving fair and dry on Saturday and the Lord's day) would needs cause his servants yoke his horses, and fall to the leading of his corns upon the Sabbath evening: But it pleased the Lord that he soon got other work to do; for that very night his house and goods took fire, and so their labour was quickly stopt, all hands being called to be employed in quenching of the fire. Many other instances might be given; But I proceed.

II. We must rest not only from all worldly employments on the Sabbath, but also from all worldly recreations, according to the word of God, and our confession of faith and catechisms. But this point being much impugned and disputed by many, I shall handle it as distinctly and satisfyingly as I can.

Recreations are twofold, some are natural and necessary, such as the refreshing our bodies with meat, drink and sleep. These are recreations we cannot live or do business without upon any day, and therefore are both lawful and necessary upon the Sabbath; especially since we are thereby better disposed for performing the duties of the day. But,

2. There are recreations which are voluntary and not necessary, freely chosen by people for their bodily pleasure and diversion; such as sports, pastimes, or games, whether more public or more private, such as playing at cards, dice, chess, tables, &c. or any sort of carnal music, such as whistling, singing, or playing on an instrument, or putting off the time with worldly converse, jesting, laughing, telling idle stories, walking and talking idly in the streets, or seeking our pleasure in the fields, though it be after public worship is over. Now, all such recreations being our own works, and for our own pleasure, and not subservient to the duties of God's worship, but hindrances thereto, are unlawful on the Sabbath day, as being expressly contrary to that rest required in the fourth command, and to that plain word in Isa. lviii. 13, 14. "If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasures, nor speaking thine own words:—Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob," &c. Now, can there be any thing more directly levelled against carnal recreations, idle talking, walking, &c. on the Sabbath day than this is? "We must turn away our foot from doing our own pleasure on it," *i. e.* by travelling or walking for pleasure or recreation; nay we must neither do our own ways, speak our own words, nor find our own pleasures on this day. But if people will, notwithstanding hereof, allow themselves in idle diversions and loose recreations upon the Sabbath, I see not how they will free themselves of open rebellion against God: For God commands us to remember the Sabbath day, not to delight ourselves by carnal recreations, but to keep it holy by divine exercises; and to spend it otherwise, is plainly to trample upon God's authority, and declare war against him.

Object. "But those who are for Sabbath days recreations, will tell me, that they condemn all such recreations in time of public worship, as well as we do: For the fourth command obliges us duly to attend public worship on the Sabbath, and forbear all worldly employments or recreations in time thereof; but, when that is once over, we may lawfully divert and recreate ourselves with such recreations as are modest and decent, and not unlawful for Christians on other days."

Ans This supposes that the Sabbath lasts no longer than the public worship of the day, the contrary whereof I made evident before, and shall evince more fully afterwards. I shewed that we are obliged to keep holy the whole Sabbath day, not only the time of public worship, or from sun rising to sun setting, but the whole natural day, consisting of twenty-four hours: This being the seventh part of our time, and of the week, it is the Lord's, and consecrated for

his use and service; and consequently no part of it is to be alienated from him, or applied for our pleasures or recreations.

I shall further confirm this truth by some more arguments.

I. If it was unlawful for God's people under the Old Testament, to spend any part of the Sabbath in carnal pleasures and recreations, it is unlawful for us also under the New; but the former is true: And therefore the latter. That such recreations were prohibited to the Jews, I believe none will deny, that is either acquaint with their ancient rules and constitutions, or that reads and believes the scriptures, particularly the fourth command, and Isa. lviii. 13. forecited. All that remains for me to prove is, that we are bound to abstain from those recreations upon the Sabbath, as well as the Jews: which I do thus: Whatever the Jews were obliged to upon moral reasons and grounds, that we are bound to as much as they; but the Jews were bound to abstain from carnal recreations on the Sabbath, upon moral grounds, which concern us as well as them. I shewed before, that the reasons of the fourth command are moral, and reach Christians as well as Jews: I mentioned five of them, and truly every one of them levels as much against worldly recreations on the Sabbath day, as against worldly employments: I shall not resume them all here, but only insist a little on two of them.

1. God's liberality in allowing us six days for our own use: This reason binds us as much as the Jews, to consecrate one day to the Lord for his service. God hath given as gracious discoveries of his bounty to us, as to them; and shall we be so ungenerous or ungrateful, as to incroach upon God's time, or rob him of any part of it, more than they? The very light of nature, and principles of sound reason, besides the command of God, plead strongly for this: That, since the Lord hath liberally given us six days for our use, we should, without grudge, give him one day for his service; and, since he gives us six whole days, it continues morally just and rational, that we should give him his one day whole too, and that we should spend as much of his day in holy duties as is ordinarily allowed on other days for servile labour, and that is the whole day, except what is allowed for necessary bodily refreshments, viz. eating and sleeping.

The *second* Ground I shall insist on is, the Lord's propriety in the Sabbath, or in one day of seven. This reason binds us as much as it did the Jews; the Lord's right to a day in seven, is the same that ever it was, otherwise the morality of the fourth command is not the same; but I have already demonstrated the contrary. The Christian Sabbath is called the Lord's day, as well as the Jewish Sabbath was called "the holy of the Lord," Isa. lviii. 13. to shew that his propriety and title is the same. And it is observable, that the Lord in that one verse, calls it twice his holy day; and it is from this that the Lord takes the principal argument, which he there uses against carnal recreations on the Sabbath; "Ye shall not speak your own words, nor find your own pleasures on this day." Why? It is my holy day, the holy of the Lord: The seventh part of the week is mine unalterably, set apart for holy uses, consecrate for my holy service. This argument is moral, and perpetually obliges all men, Christians as much as Jews. For if a day in seven be dedicated to God, certainly every part of it, yea, the whole of it, belongs to him; and to alienate any part of it to our own use or pleasures, is sacrilege, and a direct infringement of the morality of the fourth command. The Lord tells us, Levit. xxvii. 28. "That every devoted thing is most holy unto the Lord." Here is a day both by God and man, solemnly and perpetually devoted to the Lord; and accordingly the Lord, Isa. lviii. 13. asserts his just right and title to it, and twice in one breath calls it his holy day, and, upon this account, prohibits carnal recreations upon it: And must it not be great presumption for any creature, to venture deliberately to rob his Creator of his just property, and put that which is holy, and solemnly consecrate to God, to common use? Remember what Solomon says, Prov. xx. 25. "It is a snare to the man who devoureth that which is holy, and after vows to make inquiry:" It is a snare, *i. e.* it is a most dangerous thing, it brings heavy guilt, even God's curse and vengeance, upon the man that doth so. Thus you see how the morality and unalterable reasons of the fourth command restrain Christians from carnal recreations on the Sabbath, as much as the Jews. The standing and perpetual rule, which God hath there laid down, can never be altered to the world's end: Still God hath one day, and man hath six; but if we take any part of God's day to our own use, more than the works of necessity and mercy require, then we have more than our six, and God hath less than his one, which is contrary to the command. Moreover, if it be in the power of man to alienate any part of this day from God, why not the whole of it? and so the Sabbath might come to be wholly abolished, which is absurd.

Object. 1. "The memory of Christ's resurrection on the Lord's day, calls us to more joy and gladness upon our Sabbath than the Jews were called to upon theirs."

Ans. This says nothing for carnal sports or recreations: It is not a worldly joy but a spiritual joy, that we are called to this day; such a joy as is expressed in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs Again, if our mercies be this day greater than those the Jews had to commemorate, then we are in gratitude obliged to a more strict and holy sanctification of the day, to the honour and glory of the God and fountain of our mercies; which, I believe, no serious Christian will think carnal recreations very consistent with.

Object. 2. "But these recreations are no where forbidden in the New Testament.

Ans. It is sufficient if they be forbidden in the Old Testament; for the Old Testament is our rule, as much as the New, in actions which are moral, or not ceremonial; and I see not what shadow of ground there is for calling abstinence from carnal pleasures on the Sabbath, a thing ceremonial, or less binding upon us than the Jews: But moreover, if we compare the 58th chapter of Isaiah with the 56th, it will manifestly appear, that the Lord, in injoining his people strictly to observe the Sabbath, and abstain from carnal pleasures thereon, hath a respect to gospel-times after the Messiah's coming. Isaiah was a most evangelical prophet, and still had the gospel-times in his eye; wherefore some call him the evangelist Isaiah: So that, in recommending Sabbath-sanctification, and calling the Sabbath God's holy day, he doth not confine himself to the Jewish Sabbath, which was soon to be abolished; but hath an eye to the evangelical Sabbath, which was to continue to the end of the world.

Again, this is confirmed by the practice of the primitive Christians: they thought it unlawful to spend any part of the Lord's day in unnecessary diversions from holy things; yea, they accounted the strict sanctification of this day the

prime character of a true saint. Augustine saith, "It is not enough that we keep three or four hours of this day, but that we observe the whole day." The ancient Christians did not think the work of the day was over, when the public worship was ended. The younger Pliny tells us, "That they used this day to meet before day-light, and sing their hymns to Christ." And Tertullian, in his apology, makes mention of their night prayers. They thought themselves bound to begin the work of the day so early, because Christ rose this morning before break of day. They neither thought nor pleaded that they had more freedom for worldly pleasures, or were less obliged to holy exercises this day, than the Jews upon their Sabbath.

Nay, if we consider things narrowly, it will be found, that Christians are under greater obligations to a strict and holy sanctification of the Sabbath under the gospel, than the Jews were under the law, for several reasons

1. We have not only the creation, as the Jews had, but we have also the redemption of mankind, which is a greater work, this day to commemorate. Now, if the Jews were obliged to celebrate the day which was instituted for the memory of the creation, by a total abstinence from worldly employments and recreations; much more are we bound to a strict sanctification of the day which is instituted for commemorating of both creation and redemption. We have far greater mercies to commemorate this day than the Jews had, viz. "the redeeming love of a crucified Jesus, and his glorious victory over death and hell;" and consequently have greater work and employment, and ought to be the more active and busy in doing of it; and also more delightful work, and therefore should be the less inclined to weary or sit up in it.

2. We have a far more pleasant and excellent manner of worship to perform upon the Sabbath, than the Jews had. Their worship was attended with manifold rites, washings, and sacrifices, which were both chargeable and toilsome to their bodies; but ours is spiritual, pleasant and easy

3. The Jews had many other festival days to observe, by a strict and holy rest, beside the Sabbath; but, under the gospel, God hath freed us from the yoke of all other festivals, and hath institute none but the Lord's day, which, in gratitude, we ought to observe more strictly and religiously than the Jews.

4. By baptism, we come under more strict and solemn engagements to keep God's commandments, than the Jews; and also we have more special promises of his Spirit to help us in keeping of them, than the Jews had: For, in the New Testament times, the Spirit is poured out in a larger measure, than in the Old.

So that from the whole I infer, that if the Jews under the Old Testament were bound to keep the whole Sabbath-day, and wholly to abstain from their own pleasures upon it, yea, count the service of the Sabbath a delight, according to Isa. lviii. 13. though in itself it was burdensome: Much more ought we, under the gospel, to keep the whole Sabbath strictly, and call it a delight, when the work and service of it is so pleasant and easy.

II. Another argument, which I shall bring against the foresaid Sabbath day's recreations, shall be taken from the nature and greatness of the Sabbath day's work; and I shall form it thus:

If the work of the Sabbath be so necessary, weighty, and various, that requires the whole day to be spent therein, and challenges all our souls faculties to be employed thereabout; then carnal recreations are unlawful thereupon:

But the former is true; therefore, &c.

The connexion of the major proposition is evident: for that which is weighty and necessary ought always to take place of that which is not so.

As for the minor proposition, that the work of the Sabbath is so great and necessary, is plain, if we consider, that the Sabbath is the great market-day of heaven; upon which we ought to take in, and lay up provision for our souls for the rest of the week, yea, for eternity itself. It is the usual day of sinners conversion and acquaintance with God: It is the day wherein we have our sins to bewail, our needs to get supplied, our hard hearts to get melted, our dead affections to get raised, our guilty consciences to get disburdened, our dark minds to get enlightened, our weak graces to get strengthened: We have this day God's word to teach our families, our children to instruct, Christ's love to commemorate, death and judgment to provide for, and our Redeemer to treat with about the saving of our souls. In a word, this is a day wherein we are to make visits to God, and receive visits for him. Now, I do appeal to every serious soul, that knows any thing of real godliness, if these things be not so weighty and necessary, as to challenge the whole of the day, and the attendance of all our powers and faculties: And if so, then we are bound carefully to avoid every thing that may prove an avocation or diversion from doing them.

III. Another argument may run thus:

If the wordly circumstances of the generality be such as they can have but little time through the week for worshipping God, minding their souls, and preparing for eternity, then it is their duty closely and diligently to employ the Lord's day for these ends, in which God grants them freedom for the same:

But the former is true; therefore, &c.

The connexion of the major proposition is certain; for, if our whole lives be little enough for accomplishing the great work of our salvation, the seventh day, or seventh part of our time, is never to be thought too much

And for the truth of the minor proposition, that the circumstances of the generality are such as above represented, I do appeal to the experience of the whole country where we live. How many poor men are there every where, tradesmen, tenants, servants, workmen, &c. whose worldly poverty and necessities are so great and many, that they can scarce get so much spare time for their work and labour through the week, as is sufficient for eating and sleeeping? They are commonly so toiled through the day, that, at night, they are hardly fit for any thing but sleep. Now, what time have these through the week for holy duties and religious exercises? What time for reading and praying, and learning the principles of Christianity? But since God is graciously pleased to give them the Sabbath, in which they may retire from the world, and employ themselves wholly in the foresaid religious concerns; have they not the greatest need, closely and diligently to spend and improve the whole Sabbath therein, without any kind of unnecessary diversion from the same?

Are there not many poor servants, whose masters are so severe, that they will not allow them half an hour in a day to serve God, or mind their souls? and should they not

greedily lay hold on the opportunity of the Sabbath fo these ends, and let no part of this blessed day pass away idly? Now, for ministers or others to tell such, that the whole Sabbath day is too long for the foresaid spiritual exercises, and teach them to spend away part of it in carnal recreations or idleness, in my opinion, is a most compendious way to promote atheism, ignorance and profanity amongst them. And, doth not daily experience confirm this sad truth? Do we not see, that profaning the Sabbath opens a door to all profanity? and that in those places where people neglect the Sabbath, or spend the half of the day in recreations and idleness, there ignorance and immorality of all sorts abound, and family-worship and piety are neglected; whereas, on the contrary, in those places where the whole Sabbath is closely observed, and recreations discouraged, there we see Christian knowledge, morality, the fear of God, and family-godliness, do flourish and prosper? Ocular experience shews us, that the fourth command is a hedge about all the rest; and the religious observation of the whole Sabbath day, is the most effectual method for promoting Christian knowledge and universal piety. People may hear a sermon or two on a Sabbath, and yet ly still in their ignorance, if they spend the rest of the day in idleness and recreations, and neglect the private means of reading, praying, catechising, conference, repetition of sermons, &c. I never expect to see knowledge or piety flourish in congregations or families, till these means be used, and pains taken, after the public worship is over, to instruct children and servants. Oh! doth not the lamentable ignorance of many poor souls plead aloud for the strict and diligent observation of the whole Lord's day? Had ministers and others a due sense of the misery and perishing state of ignorant souls, I am sure they would press it more, and never set up to teach them carnal recreations on this day.

O poor men, servants and labourers, in the name of God I exhort you to spend more of God's day in heaven's work: You have little time through the week for it; therefore God, in pity to your souls, looses you this day from your weekly work, and cries to you from on high, "come up hither;" lay aside the thoughts of things below, and "set your affections on things above." As your bodies rest this day from labour, let your souls think on eternal rest in heaven, and use all the appointed means for attending to it.

IV. A fourth argument I make use of is this;

If God prohibits worldly employments on the Sabbath, then certainly he discharges carnal recreations:

But the former is true; therefore, &c.

The minor proposition is undeniable; so that all I have to prove is the connexion of the major proposition, which may be easily done thus: The great reason of prohibiting worldly employments on the Sabbath is, because they hinder the holy employment of the soul, and would interrupt the duties of the Sabbath. But if carnal recreations do hinder the duties of the Sabbath, and spiritual employment of the soul, as much as servile labour; then by parity of reason they are forbidden also: But so it is, that they do hinder as much, yea, more than servile labour would do. Nay, I may be bold to say, that a man may be more serious, and have his mind more exercised with heavenly meditations, when plowing, sowing or threshing, than when he is about carnal entertainments, recreations, or pastimes; or when he is in vain promiscuous company, jesting, sporting, and telling stories, or walking and talking idly in the streets or fields. These do far more distract the heart from God's service, than servile labour doth: A man will find himself more indisposed for prayer and holy duties after them, than after the works of his calling. It was the sense of this that made Augustine say, "That it were better for maids to spin, or for men to plow, than for them to dance and sport on the Sabbath day. *Quanto melius est arrare quam saltare in Sabbato.*" Aug. *in titulum* Psal. xcii. He very well knew, that carnal pleasures are inconsistent with devotion, and wholly unfit the soul for communion with God, which is the work of the Sabbath. Hence we see, lovers of pleasure, and lovers of God, are set in opposition, 2 Tim. iii. 4.

I might go on to multiply arguments to this purpose; but this truth is so clear from sound reason and the word of God, and particularly from Isa. lviii 13. to such as believe the scriptures, that I think it almost needless to say any more.

But, in regard this truth hath many adversaries, (and no wonder though satan muster up all his forces against it, since it levels so directly against his kingdom) I shall endeavour to answer the chief objections brought against it.

Particularly, there is one *J. S.* who calls himself a Presbyter of the Episcopal church of Scotland, that in his pamphlets upon the Sabbath, lately published, pleads for Sabbath days recreations, both as lawful and dutiful, after the public worship is over; providing (as he qualifies them) there be nothing immodest or indecent therein, nor too much time spent thereby: Though he neither tells how much time he allows for them, nor what are the immodest or indecent things which he disallows in them; but leaves every man to his own construction and choice therein.

I shall consider the strength of the arguments adduced by him and others, for these recreations; and I shall begin with the chief one.

Object. I. "To hinder these recreations after sermon, were to tye us, who are the disciples of Christ, to as strict a rest, and as burdensome an observation of the Sabbath, as the Jews were obliged to under the law, which were to judaize, and build that again which Christ hath destroyed."

Ans. 1. The fourth command being moral and perpetual, as hath been proven, doth oblige us to as strict a rest and cessation from worldly actions, as it did the Jews. I grant indeed, the Pharisees invented a great many superstitious additions to the rest of the Sabbath, which were not of divine appointment, and would have all to conform thereto, as if they had been divine laws. They assigned such a precise space for a Sabbath day's journey; they frequently would not allow the relieving of mens bodies and beasts in distress this day: Some came this length, that though they allowed beasts to be fed or watered, yet, if any of them fell into a ditch, they must not draw him out on this day, but feed him where he was till the Sabbath was over. Nay, I have read of Jews so ridiculously superstitious, that they would not allow themselves to be drawn out of pits or dangerous places into which they had fallen on the Sabbath, and therefore have smarted with death for their folly. Some held, that it was unlawful to kill a flea, take the skin off an apple, or do any thing of that kind on the Sabbath day; Nay, further, they taught, that it was unlawful to defend themselves against their enemies this day; by which means they sometimes became a prey to their enemies: Till Mattathias the priest better instructed them, as we are told by Josephus, and the author of the first book of the Maccabees.

I say, those were nothing but human additions; for the same things were lawful to the Jews on the Sabbath, that are allowed to us, viz the works of piety, necessity and mercy; as manifestly appears by the commentary which Christ gives upon this command, both by his words and actions. Christ defends his practice in healing, and his disciples in plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath; and shews, that the works of necessity and mercy, the relieving of men and beasts in distress, were lawful on the Sabbath. Our blessed Saviour, by his reasoning against the Pharisees on this subject, intends only to reprove their superstitious additions, and to shew what things were lawful to the Jews on the Sabbath from the beginning, but not what things are now lawful to us under the gospel; for he gives no more liberty for worldly things this day than what was before, since he " came not to destroy the law."

2. I grant indeed, that our Saviour hath freed Christians under the gospel, from the Jewish method of celebrating the Sabbath, by a typical service and ceremonial worship, consisting of sacrifices, washings, and manifold rites, which were a burdensome yoke. Now, to reintroduce abrogated ceremonies on the Sabbath, is (I confess) to judaize, and rebuild what Christ hath destroyed; and whoever are chargeable with this in any degree, let them see to it. But what man will call abstaining from carnal recreations on the Sabbath, an abrogated Jewish ceremony? or compare the strict sanctification of the Lord's day, by the pleasant evangelical sacrifices of prayer and praise, to the burdensome method of observing the Jewish Sabbath? Christ hath told us, that his " yoke is easy, and his burden is light;" and all his experienced disciples will set their seal to the truth of it.

For my part, I do not see how a man can own the morality and unalterable obligation of the fourth command, and not grant that we are as strictly tied to moral duties on the Sabbath as the Jews, and consequently to the same holy rest, and diligence in the service of God upon it; since the change made by Christ's coming is only in circumstantial or ceremonial things, viz. the day of the week, and the nature of the service or sacrifice requisite upon it.

Object. " But, besides the nature of the service and worship, there were several peculiar things required of the Jews upon the Sabbath, not binding upon us: Particularly, concerning the not dressing of meat, going out of the place, kindling of fire, bearing of burdens, the nature of the punishment of Sabbath-breaking, double sacrifices," &c.

Ans 1. If any of the foresaid things were typical or ceremonial, then indeed it is abrogated by Christ's coming, and not binding upon us: But this will nowise alter the case with respect to abstaining from carnal recreations on the Sabbath, which can never be reckoned typical or ceremonial; it being what is perpetually moral, and necessary to the suitable sanctification of this holy day, in all ages of the world.

2. Let the foresaid instances be narrowly considered, and it will be found that there is no such peculiar thing therein as is commonly imagined.

I. As to dressing of meat on the Sabbath, the only place whence the prohibition of it is inferred is Exod. xvi. 23. concerning the preparing of manna. There are several interpreters, who think, that the dressing of it on the Sabbath is not here forbid; but that they are there ordered to lay up a part of it undressed for the Sabbath. But granting, as the most part of interpreters do, that the dressing of the manna is there discharged, this will not infer a discharge of dressing any kind of meat on the Sabbath: since there were some things peculiar to the manna, beyond other meat: For,

1. There was a particular promise made concerning it, that was not made concerning other kinds of food, viz. That it should not spoil nor corrupt: For, in that hot country, dressed meat could not easily be preserved good and wholesome over night.

2. There was much more servile work requisite in preparing manna than other kinds of food; it behoved to be " grinded in mills, beat in mortars, and baken in pans," Num. xi. 8. Now, so much servile labour about preparing of food was not fit upon the Sabbath, since it did not tend to the rest or refreshing of the body, but rather to the toiling of it; and likewise it took up many hands, and would have hindered them from sanctifying of the day. So that there is no peculiarity in this prohibition; for, were we in their case, and had manna to feed on, it were not lawful for us to prepare it on the Sabbath, more than for the Jews: But it is certain that they did dress other meat on the Sabbath, that required not such servile labour. Only we are taught by this prohibition, as well as the Jews, to be careful to prepare that meat, which requires much toil and pains, before the Sabbath come; and so to order matters about our bodily provisions the day before, that servants may be as little hindered from sanctifying the Sabbath, and the work of the day as little interrupted as possible.

II. As to the second instance, the prohibition of " going out of their places on the Sabbath, Exod. xvi. 29. it is plain from the context, that it is to be meant of going out to seek manna, it being an unnecessary servile work, and therefore unlawful on the Sabbath day. For though the Jews were restrained from going through the streets or fields on the Sabbath, for worldly business, recreation or putting off the time; yet not from all walking or travelling, when either the works of piety or necessity did require; for a " Sabbath-day's journey" was allowed, Acts i. 12. The Pharisees indeed stinted it to two thousand cubits, (which some make one mile, others two, according to the different cubits in use among them) in regard this was to be the distance of the utmost part of the camp of Israel in the wilderness, from the tabernacle to which they were bound to repair for worship on the Sabbath day. But this was no good warrant for stinting the Sabbath day's journey to such a precise space; since it must be either more or less, according to the distance of peoples dwellings from the public ordinances, to attend which a person may go many miles, and not profane the Sabbath. The Shunammitish woman, as appears from 2 Kings iv. 23. used to travel on the Sabbath to the prophet Elisha, to attend public worship, and wait on his teaching.

III. As to the prohibition of " kindling fire," Exod. xxxv. 3. " If we consider the place and context, we will find that it is only kindling of fire for servile work, particularly for the work of rearing up the tabernacle, that they were then about, which is there forbidden: This is the mind of Vatablus, Junius and Termellius, and the best commentators on the place. For God is here giving directions for making the tabernacle; and, to prevent their thinking that the nature of the work, or haste required in doing it, would justify their working as it on the Sabbath, he first discharges all working on that day, verse 2. and then more particularly, v. 3. he forbids the work of kindling fire, as that of

smiths, founders, or any others, for preparing materials for the tabernacle. And so he will have that work, though for a sacred use, give place to that which was more immediately sacred and necessary, viz. the present sanctification of the Sabbath. This doth not prohibit kindling of fire for the works of necessity or mercy, which presently tend to the better sanctifying of the Sabbath; since this, for the servile work of the tabernacle, would have hindered the present sanctification of it; whereas kindling of fire for warming our bodies, preparing meat, or for shewing light, do not hinder, but tend to promote the sanctifying of the Sabbath. Yet we should take care that we do not extend our liberty this way too far, so as to make solemn feasts on the Sabbath, which require much servile work, and hinder the duties of the Sabbath: For though we be not forbidden on the Lord's day to kindle a fire for dressing meat, yet we must beware we make not such a flame as shall kindle the fire of God's wrath against us on that day.

IV. As to the bearing of burdens on the Sabbath, Christ hath given no more liberty to us this way, than to the Jews; for though he commanded the impotent man on the Sabbath, John v. 10. " to take up his bed and walk," yet this was no carrying of a burden for any secular design, but a mean required for glorifying of God, and publishing the miracle.

V. As to their punishing of Sabbath-breaking with death, Numbers xv. this belonged to the judicial law, which was peculiar to the Jewish common-wealth, and doth not bind other nations, except so much of it as is of universal moral equity; for the peculiar circumstances of nations require peculiar statutes and punishments for some particular crimes But, in the next place, there appears to have been some specialty in that Sabbath breaker's case; for we do not find that Sabbath-breaking was always so punished afterwards. If we read verses 30, and 31. we see God threatening death to all such as sin presumptuously, and with an high hand: And in the very next verse, the Sabbath breaker is brought in guilty; which makes it probable, that his crime was attended with the aggravation of presumptuous sinning.

VI. As to the double sacrifices required on this Sabbath, " two lambs in the morning, and two in the evening," Num. xxviii. 9, 10. I grant they were a heavy burden, in regard of the great expence and bodily toil the Jews were put to thereby, from which Christ hath happily freed us But, excepting what was typical and ceremonial in their worship and sacrifices, there is nothing here peculiar to them; for otherwise we are still as much bound to double sacrifices on the Sabbath as the Jews: We are bound to double our devotion, our prayers, our praises, &c. this day, beyond other days. Yea, as I shewed before, we are more called to it than the Jews; which also is confirmed from Ezek. xlvi. 4, 5. where, instead of the four lambs required on the Sabbath in Moses's time, we see that in Ezekiel's temple-service, which points at gospel-times, the Sabbath offerings were to be " six lambs and a ram;" intimating not only the continuance, but the advancement of the Sabbath-sanctification in the days of the Messiah, and that Christians should exceed the Jews in zeal and diligence in keeping of the Sabbath, and should multiply duties, and offer up a greater plenty of spiritual sacrifices, and be more active and intense about the works of the Sabbath, than they were: And good reason for it, since we have both the creation and redemption to commemorate this day, and a more excellent worship to perform upon it.

But I proceed to examine the rest of *J. S's.* arguments for Sabbath-days recreations.

Object. II. " Our Saviour saith, that the Sabbath is made for man, and not man for the Sabbath," Mark ii. 27.

Ans. This word makes not for his purpose; for Christ adduceth it in defence of his disciples " plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath," for satisfying their hunger, which was a work of necessity; and not in defence of carnal diversions and recreations.

But, that we may take up the true meaning of the place, we must consider, that, if by Sabbath be understood the true sanctification of the day by sincere worshipping and serving of God, then certainly man was made for it: But if Sabbath be taken, according to the Pharisees sense here, for the mere external rest of the day (as Christ certainly understands it in this place) then indeed the Sabbath was made for man; this external rest being but a mean for the true sanctification of the Sabbath, and designed for the special good of man, partly that his body might have some repose from labour, and chiefly that he might have a solemn opportunity to worship God, and hold communion with him. Now (says our Saviour) it were unreasonable to think that a law, intended for a privilege and benefit to man, should be improven to his hurt and ruin. The great design of the Sabbath, pleads for " works of necessity and mercy:" For how can God be served, or the soul profited on this day, if care be not taken for preserving the life, and supporting the body, in order thereto? But how this text makes for carnal diversions on the Sabbath, I see not; unless one should say, that Christ meant when he said, " The Sabbath is made for man," that it is made for his corporeal pleasures; which is most absurd, and directly contrary to Isa. lviii. 13.

Object. III. " The hindering of men from Sabbath-days recreations, is an encroachment upon our Christian liberty."

Ans. I would gladly know what he means by Christian liberty. I take the gospel sense of it to be this, that Christ hath purchased for believers under the gospel, not only liberty from the dominion, guilt, and punishment of sin, the bondage of satan, and sting of death; but also hath liberate them from the yoke of the ceremonial law, to which the Old Testament saints were subjected; and likewise from the curse of the moral law; yea, and from the power and obligation of it too, as a covenant of works; so as they are neither to be justified nor condemned thereby. But that he hath obtained any liberty to us from the obligation of the moral law, as the rule of life and manners, more than the Jews had, I know no orthodox Protestant that will assert it. Now, if the fourth command be a part of the moral law, (as *J. S.* owns) to pretend to any freedom from the strict observation of it, and what is truly moral in it under the gospel, is unchristian licentiousness, and not Christian liberty. Christ never purchased a liberty to us, to be less religious, or less diligent in prayer, praises, and other duties, than the Jews; for this were no true liberty. Our true liberty lies in a readiness to obey the holy will of God our only rightful Lord; and in being in a capacity to pursue our chief good and great end; and the more we are disabled from this, the more we are in bondage. And hence it is, that the Psalmist saith, Psal. cxix. 45. " I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy precepts." But for any, under pretence of Christian liberty, to walk loosely and licentious

ly, is to destroy the end of Christian liberty, which is, "That, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life," Luke i. 74, 75.

Object. IV. "The restraining these recreations is not a good politic for promoting godliness; for, instead of this, it drives people to the other extreme."

Ans. 1. Though it were a good politic, I am sure it is bad divinity: For, we must not do evil, that good may come of it.

2. It is no new thing for mens lusts and corruptions to grow more impetuous, and be the more irritated, by the restraints and prohibitions of God's holy and just laws, Rom. vii. 8. Yet no Christian ever pleaded that these laws should be either dispensed with or slackened upon this account; but still owned the fault to be in our own corrupt natures, and not in God's excellent laws. If all these precepts were to be dispensed with, that are grating to the lusts of carnal men, then few of them would be binding; for every spiritual duty is unpleasant to them.

3. If inquiry be made into the state of the flocks of those ministers who use this politic, I apprehend it will be found to have but very bad success in promoting godliness, or even morality, either on Sabbath or week-day. Nay, on the contrary, these Sabbath-day's recreations will be found a politic of hell, wherever the experiment is tried, for banishing piety, and promoting all sorts of profanity. Whereas, in those places where they are conscientiously suppressed, Sabbath-holiness, family-worship, and true piety, are known to be in a flourishing condition.

4. If magistrates and ministers would cordially join hands in the execution of civil and ecclesiastical laws against Sabbath-breaking and profaneness, the imperious eruptions of mens lusts on the Sabbath would soon, through the blessing of God, be effectually dammed up and restrained. A resolute resisting of the devil is the best way to overcome him; whereas, yielding to him in any degree, is the ready way to be vanquished by him.

Object. V. "The Christian Sabbath (saith J. S.) is a festival, and consequently solacing ourselves by a chearful and mutual conversation together in our houses on that day (if there be nothing immodest or indecent thereon, nor too much time spent thereby) is not only lawful, but dutiful also."

Ans. 1. I suppose he means the convening of friends and neighbours to carnal feasts and entertainments on the Sabbath and holding good fellowship together, after the manner of the world: for, if he meant any other conversation, I think he would not caution against the spending of too much time therein; for there is little need of any such caution with respect to spiritual conversation: Alas, there is little time spent therein! J. S. had employed his pen much better, if he had recommended this sort of conversation on the Sabbath: For that of a carnal sort, people are apt enough to learn it without a teacher.

2. I freely own the Lord's day to be a festival, but it is for the soul, not for the body. This is the day in which Christians are brought into the banqueting-house; but the fare is celestial, the dainties spiritual: On this day they are feasted and filled, but it is with the fatness of God's house, and the rivers of his pleasures: This day they are made joyful, but not with carnal joy and mirth; the pleasures are spiritual, the joy is divine. I do not say that this day ought to be kept as a fast-day for afflicting the body; no, it is necessary the body should be seasonably refreshed and supported, that it may be serviceable to the soul in the work of the day, and service of God, and may call the Sabbath a delight, rejoice in God's goodness, and be cheerful in the celebration of the love and praises of our Redeemer. But to say, that set feasts, carnal entertainments, and good fellowship, are proper duties on the Lord's day, is strange doctrine; for then I see not how carnal mirth and jollity can be excluded; and so God's holy day shall be turned into a carnival, destructive to the blessed design of it. Modest and honest provision for our tables on the Lord's day, is what I do not discommend: But I say, "Set feasts, sumptuous entertainments, and too liberal partaking of the creatures, are not proper on this day; in regard they are apt to indispose us for the duties of the day, by rendering the body dull and sluggish, and inclining us to drowsiness and sleep;" as also, the preparing of them doth detain servants from the ordinances, and divert them both from public and private duties necessary for the sanctifying of the Sabbath. It is observable of our blessed pattern Jesus Christ, that though he frankly went into the houses of Pharisees, and others, on week days, when invited; yet on the Sabbath day, it is only said, he went into one of their houses to eat bread, Luke xiv. 1. that is, to take such moderate refreshment as was suitable for that day, and the work of it; teaching us, that on this day, we should, like Moses and Jethro, with the elders of Israel, Exod. xviii. 12. "eat bread before God," *i. e.* with a deep sense of his all-seeing eye, and special caution against all manner of excess, or any thing that may indispose us for holy duties.

Moreover, observe what manner of conversation Christ had at this Sabbath-day's refreshment: He indeed solaced himself and the company with a mutual and cheerful conversation, but it was wholly spiritual and heavenly, concerning the feast provided for us in the gospel. This was suitable Sabbath-day's conversation, that needed not J. S.'s caution against spending too much time therein.

But J. S. is so zealous for those Sabbath days recreations and entertainments, that he is not content to prove the lawfulness of them, but he will have them binding on us, as necessary duties. But I would fain know how any man will prove the dutifulness of them? Pray, where is the command for them? where is the advantage of them? wherein do they promote the great ends of the Sabbath, God's glory and souls edification? I think I have clearly proven the contrary. I shall only add this word, I make a supposition, that a poor soul is brought under a law work, or deep convictions, like the jailor, by means of the sermons on the Lord's day: Will any man say, that it would be his duty, presently after, to go to these feasts, entertainments and recreations, and thereby hinder or quench the operations of God's Spirit on his soul? I would rather think it his duty to retire from the world and company, to prayer and self-examination, in order to entertain and cherish the Spirit's work on his heart.

Object. VI. "But these recreations and entertainments will not hinder the sanctification of the Sabbath, but rather help to quicken and prepare us for our succeeding devotions."

Ans. I am persuaded that those who exercise themselves to godliness, and are acquainted with the power of it, will not talk so; nay, they will tell, from their sad experience, that the meeting of promiscuous companies on the Lord's day, for carnal entertainments, vain walking, talking and

sporting, are so far from fitting us for after devotions or spiritual exercises, that they directly tend to deaden the heart, suppress convictions, quench any warmness of affections and liveliness of frame wrought in us by the public ordinances, and so render us the more indisposed for spiritual employments. Instead of quickening and disposing our minds for returning to God's worship, they do the more increase our averseness thereto. Experienced Christians can tell, that private meditation, reading, or Christian conference, are far better means to fit us for our evening devotions on the Lord's day, than carnal recreations.

Object. VII. " Some intermission for recreation is needful; for we cannot be employed in spiritual exercises a whole day: This would be a great toil to the spirits, especially of such who have been sore toiled with servile labour through the week: Nay, the best are ready to faint and weary in the continued exercise of piety."

Ans. 1. The extent of God's precepts is not to be measured by our ability or inability; neither can our impotency, to give obedience to God's commands, in the least invalidate or weaken the authority thereof.

2. By the same argument, the Jews might have pleaded, that they were not bound to rest the whole Sabbath, nor spend the whole day in religious exercises; for they were liable to the same infirmities that are incident to us.

3. I frankly allow what refreshment is necessary for supporting nature, and for the better performance of the duties of the Sabbath: But, for the foresaid carnal diversions, they are so far from being necessary for furthering the work of the Sabbath, that they are great hindrances thereto.

4. If labouring people need recreation for their bodies, then let them have some time on week days for it.—If for their minds, I know no such fit recreation as the joyful commemoration of the love of Christ, and our redemption from hell and wrath through his blood, and the cheerful singing the praises of our Maker and Redeemer, which is the very work of the Sabbath Is it not a recreation for Christ's sheep to feed in his green pastures, and to be led by him beside the still waters? to behold the waters of life, clear as crystal, flowing betwixt the banks of ordinances? to get a pleasant prospect from mount Nebo, of the promised land? Is it not a recreation for a condemned man, to come and hear his pardon pronounced? for a hungry man, to get pleasant food and heavenly dainties? for a sick man, to get all his diseases healed? Must it not be a carnal and stupid heart, that will call these a burden or weariness? There are many who weary not to spend whole days at markets, in buying and selling; nay, whole days and nights in gaming and drinking: And, will you call a day spent in such pleasant and refreshful work a toil, which is the highest privilege of a rational creature? Surely, no workman can be so glad of a day's ease from his sore labour, as a believer should be to have a day's release from his worldly business, that he may freely and entirely converse with his God and Saviour, and rejoice in his bounty and redeeming love.

5. Every Sabbath we meet with many unavoidable interruptions, which take us off from the duties of God's worship, though we go not to contrive unnecessary diversions and recreations for this end. There is much of every Sabbath spent in preparing food, dressing and feeding our bodies, going to the church, and returning from it, attending children, cattle, &c. O how many are our avocations and intermissions in serving our Creator and Redeemer on the Lord's day, which we cannot shun! And shall we think the rest of the day too much for this important work, that we must go seek carnal diversions to drive it away?

6. I grant, the best are ready to grow weary of duty, because of the aversion of our corrupt nature to that which is good; but carnal recreations will never cure this aversion, nor overcome that weariness, but will certainly indulge and increase the same. The best way to cure weariness (next to the grace of God) is practice and experience in religion, and sincere wrestling and striving against it. Resisting overcomes it; but giving way to it doth increase it.

7. The Lord knows the carnality and weariness that our hearts are naturally prone to in the work of the Sabbath; wherefore, for remedy thereof, he hath graciously appointed variety of exercises on the Sabbath-day, that, when we weary of one another, may be our recreation. Are you weary of hearing? then recreate yourselves with prayer: If of that, then recreate yourselves with singing of God's praises: If of that, then recreate yourselves in reading God's word, and other good books: If of that, then recreate yourselves with meditations: If you weary of that, then recreate yourselves with Christian conference, repeating the sermons, instructing your families, &c. If you weary of public duties, then go to private; if of these, go to secret duties. Is there not here a delightful variety of pleasant spiritual employments, sufficient to recreate ourselves with for one day, without needing the help of any sensual diversion, to put off the precious time of this blessed day? How think you to spend a whole eternity in spiritual exercises, when you weary so much of one day Whatever carnal men think, I am sure a godly soul will be far from counting this work a burden. Hearing and reading the scriptures is a far less burden to him, than recreations and pastimes would be; for God's " testimonies are his delight, and he rejoices in them more than in all riches," Psal cxix. Yea, nothing in the world is such a burden to him on the Sabbath as his ill heart, his little delight in the Sabbath, and shortcomings in the duties thereof; and nothing such a pleasure and recreation to him, as when he can win above these, and get his heart lifted up in the ways of the Lord.

I am sure, it is no unpleasant work that God calls us to on the Sabbath; who, but a wicked man, will count it a wearisome thing to think on Christ, and his dying love? to hear the sweet messages of free grace, and rejoice in the foresights and foretastes of his everlasting love. You know the black character of those, who of old called Sabbath-work a burden, and said, " when will the Sabbath be gone?" Amos viii. 5. This temper stands in opposition to gospel-holiness: Therefore I think, J. S. and every gospel minister should be so far from indulging it, by giving way to carnal recreations and diversions, that he should do what lies in his power to reprove, discourage, and remeid it. And if ministers would be at pains to preach and pray with life and awakening seriousness, and afford their people a pleasant variety of wholesome discourse concerning Christ and eternity, it would be a far better way to cure their weariness, than to prescribe carnal recreations on the Lord's day: For this is a cure that both strengthens the disease, and is as bad as the disease.

Object. VIII. ' But walking in the fields on the Lord's day seems to be a harmless practice; why will you not allow of that?"

Ans Whenever the works of piety, necessity, or mercy do require it, it is allowable, but to do it idly for putting off the time, or for worldly employments or recreations, is what the word of God condemns. It is not only lawful, but dutiful to walk abroad, if it be for attending public ordinances, visiting the sick, or other Sabbath duties, for then it is not for finding our own pleasure, which is disallowed by Isa lviii 13 Exod xvi 29 And, by the same rule, I cannot condemn tender persons walking abroad or taking the air, if their health truly require it, for the Lord loves mercy rather than sacrifice Nor do I condemn a person's going to the fields this day to have opportunity (like Isaac) in the evening for secret meditation and prayer when he wants conveniency for it within doors, for a walk thus improved may be a walk to heaven and is very consistent with walking with God Only take these two cautions,

1 If you walk abroad this day, chuse to do it alone as much as possible for people going in troops to the fields occasions idleness vain talking sporting and misspending precious Sabbath time The society of vain persons helpeth to embolden one another in sin and folly, and maketh them more incapable of Spiritual exercises than when single and apart Yea I am persuaded that the companies of people who so commonly go a walking together on the Lord's day do not so much as pretend to be spiritually employed Alas they who know them best, can tell that they are most unfit for it at such occasions Should any come and speak to them about death and eternity Christ and their souls or propose any serious question concerning the sermon they have been hearing I fear he might expect to be mocked and laughed at by them for his pains.

2 Let your walking abroad in any of the foresaid cases, be so ordered that it may not give scandal nor insnare others Study to do it so privately, that others may not be hardened or encouraged in their loose recreations, on this day by your example For even these things which are lawful and otherwise necessary in themselves, are not to be done when they may prove a scandal or temptation to others to sin, for in such cases, we ought to deny ourselves of our lawful liberty

Object "We find two of Christ's disciples travelling to Emmaus and back again, on the Lord's day, and Christ met with them and did not reprove them for it," Luke xxiv

Ans This was the first Lord's day of all, and was not then fully institute, or, at least, made known to the disciples, for they were not then assured of Christ's resurrection Again, walking abroad this day, for promoting the works of piety, for declaring God's glory, or preaching the gospel, is not unlawful And such was this walking of our Saviour, and his two disciples, on their return to Jerusalem this day

Now, having fully handled this point, of the *negative* sanctification of the Sabbath, or the holy rest requisite upon it, I proceed to treat of the *positive* sanctification of the day, and of the holy exercises required therein

SECTION

SECTION II.

CONCERNING THE POSITIVE SANCTIFICATION OF THE SABBATH, AND THE HOLY EXERCISES REQUISITE UPON IT.

THE rest of the Sabbath is not a lazy idle rest No, it is a holy active sort of rest th[illegible]s required upon it Though we cease from works of one kind, yet we must be diligent in works of another kind

What I have to say on this head may be summed up in the following directions

1 Concerning the disposition and frame of the soul, needful for sanctifying the Sabbath

2 Concerning the holy duties requisite upon the Sabbath

3 Concerning the special order method, and manner, wherein these duties are to be performed

4 Concerning those particular sins, whereby the sanctification of the Sabbath is hindered, or the Sabbath profaned

DIRECTION I.

CONCERNING THE FRAME OF SPIRIT FIT FOR SANCTIFYING THE LORD'S DAY

THE most suitable frame and disposition of soul, which I can recommend for sanctifying the Sabbath day, is that of John the divine, Rev i 10 "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" It is a most comprehensive expression, and a noble pattern for our imitation, wherefore I shall enquire into the meaning and import of it It is probable it may imply something extraordinary with respect to John, he might be in some singular spiritual extasy or transport, which ordinary Christians cannot attain to Nevertheless, the expression imports something attainable, and which ought to be endeavoured by all true Christians on the Lord's day

To be in the Spirit may be taken either as respecting the Spirit of God or our own spirits, or both For certainly both the Spirit of God, and our own spirits, are necessary, and to be much employed in the sanctification of the Lord's day Wherefore, taking the expression as including both, I conceive, to be "in the Spirit on the Lord's day" imports these things

1 A special dependence upon God's Spirit for conduct and assistance, in order to the right performance of the duties of the Sabbath, and exercise of the graces therein For, without the Spirit's aid, we can neither pray, praise, hear, read, or do any thing aright

2 The "serving of God with our spirits," as Rom i 9 or "worshipping him in spirit" John iv 24 and performing the duties of the Sabbath with inward sincerity of heart "The Lord desireth truth in the inward parts" He saith, "My son, give me thy heart," not Give me thy ear, thy tongue, thy lips, thy hands, or thy knees, for these may be given without the heart But the heart can never be bestowed without these as its attendants. This is so necessary

in all our duties, and approaches to God, that God saith of it, as Joseph did of Benjamin, 'Unless ye bring your hearts along with you, ye shall not see my face." You may observe Sabbaths, hear sermons, sing psalms, put up prayers, &c but all will be to no purpose, Isa. i 11 God would rather have the heart without the body, than the body without the heart. Soul prayer, when it is alone, is accepted; but woe to bodily prayer, if it be alone

3 A solemn retiring ourselves from the world, and abstracting our thoughts from earthly things, that we may be fitted for more immediate approaches to God, and intimate converse with him, on his own day, wherein he uses to deal more familiarly with his people than at other times

4. A laying ourselves open to the influences and operations of the Spirit of God, waiting for and thankfully entertaining his motions, convictions, reproofs and consolations, when they are allowed to us in the ordinances, and carefully guarding against every thing that may in the least grieve or offend the Holy Spirit

A more than ordinary intenseness of heart and affections in the duties of God's worship On Sabbath days, especially, we should be "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," we should call in all our straying thoughts and affections, praying with the psalmist, Psal lxxxvi 11 'Unite my heart to fear thy name," and Psal lxxx 18 Quicken us, and we shall call upon thy name' This day we should put forth our spiritual strength to the utmost, perform every duty, and exert every grace, with the greatest intenseness, we ought to love God with the most sublime affections, obey him with the purest intentions, pray to him with the most fervent importunity, and praise him with the most spiritual elevation of heart Nay, do it in some suitable proportion to the greatness of that God, "with whom we have to do' in so solemn a manner on the Lord's day, for, Psal cl 2 we must not only 'praise him for his mighty acts,' but "praise him according to his excellent greatness,' we must worship him like himself

6 A willing and cheerful performance of Sabbath duties We ought to call the Sabbath a delight holy and honourable," and go this day with "joy to draw water out of the wells of salvation," and be "joyful in the house of prayer' Holy David was not satisfied this day with a bare approach to the altar, but he must "go to God as his exceeding joy," Psal xliii 4 And ought not believers under the gospel more especially to do this on the Lord's day who have God in human nature to go to, and have the glorious atchievements of condescending and redeeming love to commemorate this day?

The Lord requires us to perform the duties of this day with a frame of mind suitable to the spirit freedom, and liberty of the gospel, guarding against the servile frame of spirit which the Jews had in the observance of the duties of the law For "we are not come unto the mount that burned with fire, and was terrible to behold, but unto mount Zion, the city of the living God" In the service of this day, we ought to keep up impressions of God as most accessible, familiar to us, and dwelling in our own nature, and as one that doth not so much regard our outward performances, as the inward frame and sincerity of our hearts The Pharisees pretended to great strictness about the outward observance of the Sabbath: (and hence they presumed frequently to censure Christ and his disciples' practices on this day) but they were strangers to inward sincerity, and love to God. It is the willing mind and honest heart, in Sabbath performances, that God chiefly regards, not a pharisaical strictness.

7 Being "in the Spirit on the Lord's day" implies the having of the graces of the Spirit in a more lively exercise this day than ordinary And therefore we ought this day solemnly to invite the "north and south winds of the Spirit to come and blow upon our gardens, that the spices thereof may flow out," and that, particularly in all our approaches to God, we may be possest with a holy awe and reverence of God's majesty and greatness and a deep sense of our own baseness and naughtiness, and have our faith acting vigorously upon God's goodness and mercy in and thro' Christ, our hearts melting with evangelical contrition and repentance, our love and spiritual desires flaming forth in all our acts of devotion, nay all our graces and affections should be this day elevated more than ordinary to God's special honour and glory.

8 A more than ordinary spiritual and heavenly frame of soul suited to the work of this day Since this day is wholly dedicated to God, and spiritual duties are the only work of it, our frame upon it should be more heavenly and divine, than upon any other day, or when going about the duties of God's worship at any other time we should this day be much viewing and admiring with thankfulness the dying 'love of Christ, and the glorious work of redemption" completed this day by his resurrection We should be living this day above the world, and within view of heaven, making this day a little emblem and prelude of the everlasting rest of the saints above

9 It imports that there is something of an universal sanctity and holiness peculiarly requisite upon this day — Now, this sanctity must be universal, with respect to ourselves, with respect to the day, and with respect to the duties of it

1 With respect to ourselves, all our thoughts, words and actions this day, should be God's in a special manner all that we are all that we have, all we can do, should be wholly devoted to God's worship and service on this day Isa lviii 13 God would not only have our hands free from working but also our tongues from talking, and our minds from thinking on worldly things this day

2 With respect to the day, we should spend the whole of it in holy duties, either public, private or secret. It is not for an hour or two only, that we must study to be specially holy, but through the whole day, we should count every moment of Sabbath time precious, and suffer none of it to be lost that we can save, still aiming to be doing something for God and our own souls

3. With respect to the duties of the day, we should esteem them all, and make conscience of them all, since they all have a divine stamp upon them, reading, hearing, prayer, praises, communicating, meditating, conferring, catechising, giving alms, &c. God is to be found in every one of these duties, and therefore none of them is to be neglected And, when we find him not in one of them, we must seek him in another, and, if we conscientiously go the round of duties, we shall surely "find him whom our souls love," Cant iii 4.

Lastly, This expression, of being "in the Spirit on the Lord's day," imports the performing the duties of it with pure and spiritual ends, viz "to glorify God, and enjoy him." God is the sole object of our worship, and he must be the principal end of it too. In our worship we must seek him, Heb. xi. 6. not ourselves. It is natural for man

to worship God for self ends, we often perform duties, not only to be seen and esteemed of men, but [illegible] to be seen and valued by God for them Isa. lviii 3 "Wherefore have we fasted, (say they) and thou seest not?" &c They did not perform duties to glorify God, but to obtain a reward for themselves, and have a righteousness of their own to found and plead upon Let us study to be denied to our own duties and guard against a selfish and legal spirit in our sabbath days performances. This will be a dead fly to spoil the ointment, and will keep our best duties from being savoury to God. Let us study then to perform them all "in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter," Rom vii 6 Let us use them [illegible] a means for bringing God and our souls together, as means for obtaining communion and fellowship with God [illegible] holding special intercourse with him which is the [illegible] way to fit us for glorifying God both here and hereafter

DIRECTION II.

Concerning the [illegible] Duties [illegible] upon the Lord's [illegible]

THE duties necessary upon this [illegible] are either public [illegible]

I shall [illegible] with the duties of public [illegible] the [illegible] sabbath, or what is specially incumbent upon [illegible] ministers upon this day in their public [illegible] [illegible] only upon the duties required of [illegible] Christians [illegible]

Quest What are those public duties required upon the Lord's day

Ans They are those which we are bound to perform in the public assemblies of God's people and indeed the Sabbath is instituted chiefly for the solemn performance of the duties of God's worship in the public meetings of his people [illegible] the Lord [illegible] special delight therein "he loves the gates of Zion more than the dwellings of Jacob, and wherever two or three are gathered in his name, he will be in the midst of them [illegible] It is in the assemblies of God's people for public worship, that God receiveth the highest praises from us, and hence the Psalmist saith "I will give thee thanks in the great congregation I will praise thee among much people — And in his temple doth every one speak of his glory" Psal xxxv 18 Psal xxix. 9 And as in public worship God receiveth the highest praises so there it is he bestoweth the richest mercies, Psal. lxv 4. "Blessed is the man whom thou chusest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts, we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house," &c O what good things are contained in that word, the "goodness of thy house" there is pardon, peace, love, grace, life, light, strength, comfort, &c Now the public duties of the Sabbath, recorded in scripture, which God's people ought to meet and assemble that day for, are various, and particularly, they are to meet together for reading and expounding the word of God, for preaching, hearing, praying, praising, partaking of the sacraments, collecting for the poor, &c. for all which we may see Lev. xxiii. 3. Psalm xcii. Isa. lxvi. 23. Luke iv. 16. Acts xiii. 14. 15, 27, 44 xv. 21. xvi 13. xx. 7. 1 Cor. xvi 12 But particularly,

I Hearing the word publicly read and preached with reverence and attention, is a principal duty on the Sabbath; nay, our life depends upon it, Deut xxxii 46, 47. It is the great mean God hath appointed for the conversion of souls, Rom x 14, 17 Whatever men think of it, it is the powerful instrument of our salvation, Rom i 16 The waters of the sanctuary run only through the channels of the word; the mines of grace are found only in these climates where the gospel-sun shines The Lord, if he pleased, could immediately, by his Spirit, break open sinners hearts, but he hath determined to honour his word in this work as is plain in Lydia's case, Acts xvi [illegible], 10 14 Reading the word and sermons at home is good, but hearing the word preached is the ordinary mean God hath appointed and promised to bless for conversion And if this be slighted, or prove ineffectual no other way can be contrived for it, as we are told, Luke xvi. [illegible] So that though a glorified saint or angel should come down from heaven, and preach upon the beauty of Christ and glory of heaven, in the most lively and demonstrative manner yet, if a preached gospel do not persuade [illegible] Or, though a damned soul should come up from hell and preach the evil of sin, and torment of hell, in the most pathetic manner, yet neither would that persuade if the word do it not Why, the one is God's instituted mean, the other not Let us then have an high esteem of God's ordinance and embrace all occasion for attending it "Be [illegible] to hear," Jam i 19. Let none dare to count that mean, weak, or despicable, which the wise God hath instituted to save souls, 1 Cor i. [illegible] It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe And how comes believing but by hearing Reading good sermons (as one says) is like milk cold out of the dish but preaching is like milk warm from the breast which is far more nourishing to the child. Let us always [illegible] new born babes desire this milk, that we may [illegible] thereby 1 Pet ii

II Another of the public duties of the Sabbath is public prayers with the [illegible]

Prayer is a principal part of God's worship and therefore is frequently put for the whole [illegible] Hence God's temple [illegible] called the house of prayer Public prayer [illegible] for averting judgments, obtaining blessings and preserving love and unity among Christians, [illegible] owning the God whom we serve in the face of the world [illegible] highly glorifies God The bountiful [illegible] pleased to see many beggars thronging at [illegible] beautiful gate of his temple, waiting for an alms from his hand And their joint prayers are most prevalent [illegible] far more than private prayers [illegible] a petition [illegible] is not so prevalent as that which is made by a whole city Peter is cast in prison to be executed Acts xii but the church meets and prays him out of his enemies hands The united prayers of the church are most powerful to procure God's blessing and presence, therefore [illegible] that you make conscience in joining therewith, [illegible] absent from them It is a most graceless practice in some, they [illegible] come not into the church till the public prayer be over or they go out after sermon before public prayers be made. I am sure, such can expect nothing by the sermon but a curse, since they join not with the prayers for a blessing upon it to themselves or others.

III Duty is the singing of psalms, and praising God with the congregation. Praising God by singing, is often enjoined in scripture; yea, no less than four times in one verse, Psal xlvii 6. It is comely for the people of God; they are called singing birds, Cant ii. 10 they are such as should sing all the months of the year; yea, even in the dead month of affliction: So did Paul and Silas in a prison at midnight, when their backs were sore with scourges, and their feet fast in the stocks Acts xvi 25 But in a special manner, singing praises to God is our duty in public assemblies, Psal. cxlix. 1 Luke xxiv 53 And in these, ' both princes and people, young men and maidens, old men and children," are bound to act a part in this heavenly concert, Psal cxlviii 11, 12, 13. And, above all days, the Sabbath is most proper for this duty, Psal xcii title, Psal cxviii 24 It is a day of thanksgiving and holy joy We have God's praises to celebrate for the wonders of creation and redemption we have the glorious victories of the Captain of our salvation to extol and magnify, and therefore the duty of singing praise this day is highly necessary By this duty we not only glorify God but we edify one another Col. iii 16 The melody and conjunction of many serious souls, tend to raise and elevate the heart Yea it was one mean of Augustine's conversion, he says " He wept when he heard the psalms sung by the church "

Singing is a reading with meditation and gives free vent to the thoughts and affections and helps to excite and actuate the graces, it is the breath or flame of love or joy, it is the eternal work of heaven, the music of saints and angels there, Rev v 9, 10, 11. xv 3 And what are church-assemblies here but the place of our apprenticeship and preparation for heaven? I know nothing in the world that more resembles heaven, than a company of God's people harmoniously singing his praises " with grace in their hearts making melody to the Lord," for them the soul rejoiceth in divine goodness meditates on divine promises, extols divine excellencies and mounts up to God in acts of faith and love Let us then make conscience of this heavenly duty in the public assemblies, and perform it with heart and tongue, for were it not a rare exercise, God would not honour it to be the only work of heaven, to the exclusion of prayer, repentance, reading, hearing, communicating, &c.

IV. Partaking of the sacraments is another public duty of the Sabbath.

1 The first day of the week, our Christian Sabbath, is the proper day for celebrating the memorial of redeeming love in the Lord's supper, Acts xx 7. This was the ordinary practice of the primitive Christians in ancient times and, because of their constant breaking of bread on this first day of the week, it wont to be called *dies panis*, August Epist 118 So fired were the hearts of Christians in those early times with love to, and zeal for their glorious Redeemer who had so lately poured out his blood for their redemption, that when they assembled together upon the first day of the week, the day he had instituted for his honour, they could not think of parting, until, by the breaking of bread according to his example, they had celebrated the memorial of his dying love, his aton[illegible], his victorious resurrection and triumphant ret[illegible] [illegible] they designed as a pledge of their mutual [illegible] communion with one another And though the [illegible] ans were animated with more life and love, and [illegible] ually in a better frame for partaking of this love-feast, than, alas, we now are, yet we must own, that we are under the same obligations of love and gratitude to our dying Redeemer, and have the same need of the frequent application of his blood, and of a confirmed interest in his death, that they had; and consequently ought to dedicate many more Lord's days to the celebration of this memorial feast of his supper, than now we do: Especially seeing the partaking of this ordinance is the proper work of the Lord's day, and one special design of the institution of this holy day.

2 Baptism is most proper on this day: The day is holy, and the sacrament is holy. Children should be brought to the congregation, and babtized in face thereof, for, since baptism is the door to Christ's house, it is fit to be entered when the family is convened, or the church assembled, that so the receiving of new members thereinto may be homologate by them; that the parents engagements may have the more witnesses to them, and the children have more prayers put up for them, and also, that the whole congregation may be edified by this solemn ordinance, and excited to remember and improve their own baptisms. Of which afterward.

As to the feasting part of this solemnity, I do not think it proper on the Lord's day This may well be delayed ti[illegible] the day after

V Making public collections for the poor, is a proper duty on this day, 1 Cor xvi 1 2 This day being instituted to keep up the memorial of Christ's infinite charity to mankind and for our meeting to receive new blessings and mercies from him we are, in gratitude bound on this occasion to be liberal to his poor This doth not wrong, but promote our Sabbath-day's frame Let no Christian then neglect his duty, which is so plainly commanded by Christ, and has been practised by the Christian church for near these two thousand years.

Think it not enough that you give something privately to the poor this day, and that this may excuse you from any public contribution For this would be a slighting of an express command, and making one duty to justle out another, and besides, would tend to frustrate Christ's institution of deacons and church rulers, who are appointed to receive and distribute the collections for the poor, according to their various necessities When the apostle injoins the Corinthians to " lay by them in store on the first day of the week that there might be no gatherings when he came," it is plain he chiefly means their depositing their charitable contributions with the church rulers For, if it were not so, there would still be need of gatherings when he came.

I grant indeed, it were very proper for every man, besides the public charity he gives on the Lord's day, likewise to set apart something this day, and lay it by him in store, according to his gains and incomes through the week, as a stock or fund, out of which he might give to pious and charitable uses, as occasion should require; and so, the stock being prepared before-hand, you will give the more bountifully and more willingly to such uses, than otherwise you will find in your hearts to do If not only rich men, but even tradesmen, labourers and servants, would thus lay up every Lord's day some very small thing by them, they might, without any sensible damage to themselves, have somewhat to give to proper and needy objects: And I am persuaded this would not be the way to impair, but to increase your means.

Quest. II. What are the private duties required of us upon the Lord's day?

Ans. It is not enough that we spend some part of the Lord's day in public worship; but since (as I proved before) the whole day is consecrated to God, the rest of it is also to be kept holy, and taken up in holy duties, in private and secret

Domestic and private duties are necessary on this day, both for preparing us for the public ordinances, and for improving and reaping advantage by them.

These duties are, family-worship, by reading the word, singing the praises, and calling upon the name of God, family-catechising, repetition of sermons, christian conference &c

I Family worship is a duty incumbent on masters of families every day, but more especially upon the Lord's day It is to be regretted that there should be any need to adduce arguments to prove this But since there are some who call themselves ministers, who either deny it, or else have not so much conscience or courage directly to assert it in their preachings or writings, (they neither press the performance of this duty, nor reprove the neglect of it in others, and, as it is generally said, they do not practise it themselves, whereby many are encouraged to slight family-worship and think it no necessary duty, to the great hinderance of the advancement of piety) I shall therefore prove it to be the duty of all masters of families, especially on the Lord's day, and that, in the first place, from the fourth commandment

The fourth commandment is principally directed to masters of families because families, as such are chiefly to be concerned in the keeping of it both negatively, and positively For as the command enjoins every master of a family, with 'all that are within his gates, his son, his daughter, his man servant, &c to forbear all manner of work on the Sabbath, so it likewise enjoins them to "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" Now, to keep the "Sabbath holy to the Lord," without all doubt, implies the worshipping of God This cannot be understood only of worshipping of God in the public assemblies, for these cannot be always had, yet still the command for sanctifying the Sabbath is binding on families. Again, the public worship takes up only a part of the Sabbath, but families are bound to sanctify the day throughout This cannot be duly done by the members of the family worshipping God apart in secret, for families, as such, are bound to do it The command binds a master to do it jointly with his family, as well as it binds a minister to do it jointly with his congregation Moreover, if the command did only bind a master of a family to worship God in public, and in secret, upon the Sabbath, then he would be no further concerned in sanctifying the Sabbath than any other member of his family, also, he would sanctify the Sabbath as much in communion with the members of other families as those of his own, which were most absurd But it is plain that the command lays it especially on the master of the family to take care of the sanctifying of the Sabbath in his family, which must be by worshipping God, as well as by resting from labour; otherwise he would do no more than is required of the beasts And this he can never account for, unless he do it in communion with his family, go before them in it, and by his example, direct and encourage them in the holy worship and service of God upon his holy day We have Joshua's practice sufficiently explaining this precept, Joshua xxiv. 15. He saith not "My house shall serve the Lord," but "I and my house will do it," *i. e* We will jointly worship God, and sanctify his Sabbath, which are the principal parts of his service This he would do, and we ought all to do, though there were no public worship in the world And this is confirmed by Lev. xxiii 3 which requires the Sabbath to be religiously observed in all our dwellings or private houses, as well as in holy convocations, by every family apart, as well as by many families together.

But I shall demonstrate the indispensible necessity of this duty of family worship, from several other topics

I The light of nature and sound reason pleads for it on many accounts 1 It teacheth that all societies should jointly honour their founders Now God is the Author and Founder of families, Psal lxviii 6 "God setteth the solitary in families,' and ought not families to worship him who instituted them, and that for this very end, that 'they might glorify him and shew forth his praise '

2 The light of nature teacheth masters of families to use all proper means for preventing the hurt of the family, and rescuing them from danger And it is plain, that family prayer is a special mean for this effect The light of nature taught the heathen mariner, with his ship's crew, Jonah i 4. to use joint prayers to save them in a storm: And we see it was the master of the ship that called this duty. Now, shall a heathen master of a ship do more in his society, by nature's light, than a Christian master of a family will do in his, who is privileged with the clear light of the gospel?

3. The light of nature teacheth men to do all they can to promote the good of their families, to provide food and physic for their servants and childrens bodies And doth it not teach them also to use means to preserve their souls from wrath, and further their eternal well being? And what mean more proper for this end, than family-worship and conjunct prayer? O masters of families, your examples herein will have happy influence upon your children and servants, both to excite them to pray, and teach them how to pray

4. Nature's light directed the heathens to have their Lares and Penates, or household gods, whom they worshipped in a special manner and to whom they offered sacrifices for the protection and welfare of their families So we find in scripture that Laban and Micah had their Teraphim, or household gods Now though these were vain helpless gods, yet it shews they believed a necessity of family-worship Alas! heathens will rise up in judgment against many who are called Christians

II We are commanded in scripture to 'pray every where, and with all manner of prayer,' 1 Tim ii 8 Eph vi 18 Now, if we must pray in all places, then surely in our families: if with "all manner of prayer,' then surely with "family prayer '

III Masters of families are bound to love God "with all their hearts, and their neighbours as themselves," and consequently are bound to bring their families along with them to the worship of God. God's people are filled with such love and zeal, that they frequently call the inanimate creatures to join with them in God's praise, Psal lxix 34 Psal cxlviii 2, &c and how much more should they call their neighbours and fellow-christians? How oft doth David invite and exhort others to praise God with him? And will not masters of families, who love God and their neighbour, invite and exhort those to whom they are so nearly related, to join with them in the praise and worship of God?

IV. Families have many joint errands to the throne of grace, which call for joint family-prayers and praises: They often sin together, and therefore it is fit they confess and mourn together. They need many family-blessings, and it is fit they jointly seek them: They are exposed to many family-dangers, therefore they should jointly deprecate them: They receive many family-mercies, which call for family-thanksgivings: They work in their employments and labour together, and it is very fit they seek a blessing on them together.

V. All churches ought to worship God in a joint and solemn manner: Now, the Spirit of God frequently calls Christian families *churches;* which honourable title they would by no means deserve, if they had not communion together in the worship of God.

VI. It is plain from 1 Tim. iii. 4, 5, 12. that as ministers are bound to rule the church, so masters of families are bound to rule their families; which is not only by instructing them, but going before them in God's worship, and being their guide and mouth in prayers and praises. For every head of a family is a prophet, priest, and king, in his own house: He is a prophet, to teach and instruct his household, a priest to intercede and pray for them; and a king to protect and govern them; and especially, to maintain God's worship and true religion among them.

VII. It is clear from 1 Pet. iii. 7. that husbands and wives are bound to pray together, and consequently the whole family: For there they are exhorted from strifes and contentions, because of their tendency to hinder their conjunct prayers.

VIII. The examples of the saints in scripture do invincibly prove family-worship to be our duty. We read not only of Abraham's instructing his household, and commanding them to worship God by themselves, but also wheresoever he sojourns with his household, " builds an altar," and with them " he calls on the name of the Lord;" as is clear from Gen. xii. Gen. xiii. Gen. xxi. 33. I took notice of Joshua's family-devotion a little before. David, Psal ci. saith, " He will walk in his house at home, with a perfect heart;" and we find him coming home from the public worship, 2 Sam. vi. 20. to bless his own family, which was certainly to go about family-worship with them, and pray for God's blessing on them. We find Daniel about this work three times a-day, Dan. vi. 10. It was open family-prayer which he performed; for, if it had been secret prayer, strangers would not have known so well of it, nor would they have found him at it, as it is said they did: So great a prince would have had servants in his outer rooms, to have stopt them ere they came so near as to hear him at his secret devotion. We have our great pattern Jesus Christ singing psalms, and praying with his family, viz. his disciples, Matt. xxvi. 30. Luke ix. 18. John xvii. This was Cornelius's practice, Acts x. 2. it is said, " He feared God with all his house;" which implies, that he " worshipped God with all his house," for fearing of God comprehends worship.

Lastly, We find Paul, Philem. ii. 3. making mention of the church in Philemon's house, which was his religious praying family: And then, ver. 22. he speaks of their joint " prayers, through which he trusted he should be given to them."

Since then the duty is so clear, let us be concerned and zealous to promote the worship of God in our families. Consider how zealous some are to promote a false or superstitious worship: God bids the prophet look and wonder at their diligence, Jer. vii. 17, 18. There we see both fathers, children, husbands, wives, and all are taken up about it. Where, alas! is there any family so earnest for the true worship of God?

Objections against Family-Worship answered.

Object. 1. " We pray in secret, and that is sufficient."

Ans. 1. This is not sufficient, as hath been proven; one duty will not supply the want of another: Family-prayer is your duty, as well as secret prayer; and you ought to go the round of duties, and slight no known duty, if you would prosper in any duty.

2. Secret prayer, O man, would be your duty, although you had no family; yea, although you had no tongue nor faculty of speech. O master of a family, why hath God blessed you with a family, and with the faculty of speaking, but that you might be more capable to glorify him with and before others? Hath not Christ, in that excellent pattern of prayer, taught you to pray conjunctly, by saying, " Our Father which art in heaven, give us this day our daily bread?" Have you any charity to your neighbours, any love or pity to the souls of your family, and will not take them alongst with you to the throne of grace? Did you enjoy any communion with God in secret, or taste any sweetness in the duty; would you not invite them to come taste and see that God is good, and partake of the same heavenly cheer with you?

Object. 2. " We have not gifts to pray before others."

Ans. 1. The great hearer of prayer doth not look to gifts as we do; no, he looks to the heart. Say not then, because you cannot pray as a minister, or such a gifted man, that ye will not pray at all; bring a humble and broken heart to God, and he will accept of you, though you had but two or three words, or broken sentences. It is not fine words, or eloquent expressions, that God is delighted with; it is the sincerity of the heart.

2. Use the one talent, trade with it, and it will increase; do as you can, and God will teach you to do better; I never knew any that tried it sincerely, but God helped them. Can ye not say with the disciples, " Lord, teach us to pray?" Yea, say but the Lord's prayer, if ye can say no more, and, if ye do it sincerely, more shall be given.

3. Make use of the helps which God affords you for prayer. 1. Acquaint yourselves with the scriptures, frequently read the Psalms, and particularly the xxv. li. lxxxvi. cxix. psalms, and others, where you will find variety of fit expressions and petitions to be used in prayer. Take with you these words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, they are the most acceptable words. Likewise study the Ten Commands, view the large extent and meaning of them, the duties required, and sins forbidden in each of them, and they will furnish you with vast matter for confession and petition. Also study the Lord's prayer, and the import of the several petitions thereof, for there are many petitions wrapt up in every one of them.

2. Study well the attributes and works of God, and they will afford manifold matter, both for prayer and praises. View the work of creation; and more especially, the work of redemption, the eternal contrivance of it, the glorious

Mediator, his nature, his offices, life, death, sufferings, and infinite love; his fulness, graces, offers, promises, and well ordered covenant; and then, I am sure, you will not be barren of suitable matter, and words for prayer. " A very " child (as one saith) when he sees a merchant's pack opened, " where there are variety of things which he desireth, will " learn, without book, to say, O father, buy this, or give " me that." So the soul will not want what to say, that sees the treasures and riches of Christ opened.

3. Study to be acquaint with yourselves, your hearts and lives: Consider your state and circumstances both in soul and body, and the providences of God towards you. Think upon the vanity and inconstancy of all worldly things, the frailty of man, and brevity of life; and particularly, think much on the four last things, death, judgment, heaven and hell, and you will have abundance of matter for prayer.

Besides all which, there are four words ye should always keep in mind when you go to prayer, which would prove a lasting fountain for suitable matter to you, viz. your sins, miseries, wants, and mercies.

1. Your sins. Have you not a great multitude to confess, and seek mercy for, sins original and actual, of omission and commission, of heart and life? What indwelling corruptions, and heart plagues have ye to lament, hardness, deadness, carnality, unbelief, backsliding, hypocrisy, &c. Look into your lives, and behold what sins ye have committed, and what duties ye have omitted, and make particular confession of them.

2 Your miseries How many have ye to complain of, and beg deliverance from in prayer? Are you not born in a lost state, a child of wrath, an heir of hell, under an unsupportable burden of unpardoned guilt, most loathsome and polluted in God's sight; under the tyranny of satan, liable to all the miseries of this life, cares, toils, losses, crosses, sickness and death; yea, exposed to the wrath of God, the curses of the law, the sword of justice, to a strict and severe judgment-seat, to unquenchable fire, and everlasting burnings, and to banishment from God's favour and presence to all eternity?

3. Your wants Are ye not poor beggarly sinners, full of wants and necessities? " In us dwells no good thing "— Do you want the bread of life, the balm of Gilead, pardon of sin, peace with God, deliverance from wrath, a new nature, a soft heart? Do you want "eye salve, white raiment, gold tried in the fire?" Do ye want " faith, love, repentance, victory over lusts?" &c. And have ye not matter for prayer and supplication? Have ye not temporal wants to lay before God? Ye can tell them to your friends, and complain to them, though they afford you little help; ought ye not far rather go to God with them, who is both able and willing to help? Do you want health to your bodies, bread to your families, provision for your children, a blessing on your labours? Then seek them from God: " The ravens cry to him, and he hears them," how much more will he hear you?

4. Your mercies. God daily loads you with his mercies; they are new to you every morning: It is of the Lord's mercies, that your houses are not consumed with fire, in the night, and ye buried in the ruins thereof; that sudden death doth not smite your children, servants, cattle, or relations; that you waken in safety every morning, and not in everlasting flames. Doth not the Lord set a hedge about you, and all that you have, and preserve you from devils, enemies and manifold dangers; give you health and strength, bless the work of your hands, cover a table for you, and rain manna about your tents? And have you not plenty of matter for thanksgiving? Yea, he hath contrived a way to save you, sent his Son to redeem you, makes pressing offers of his salvation, and waits patiently for your repentance. Now, if you think on these mercies, can you want words in prayer to bless God for them? I say then, remember your sins, miseries, wants, and mercies, and ye will never be scarce of matter for prayer.

Object. III. " We have not confidence to pray before others."

Ans 1. Mind what Christ saith, " They that are ashamed of him before men, he will be ashamed of them before his Father in heaven."

2. Many are ashamed to pray before others, who are not ashamed to sin, curse, swear, drink drunk, and break the Sabbath before others.

3. Why should you be ashamed to pray before your own family, these you constantly converse with, and of whom you have the command? Will you have confidence to plead this frivolous excuse, at the day of judgment?

But, *lastly*, You will not plead such excuses in things relating to the body. If your children and family were starving for want of bread, ye would neither want words nor confidence to make known your case to a rich friend; if you were mortally sick or wounded, you would freely tell your case to a physician; if ye were drowning, ye would call aloud for help: And now, when ye and your families are ready to perish in your sins, will ye not make known your case to God, and cry with the disciples, " Lord, save us, or else we perish?" The common beggars, that go from door to door, will rise up against you: they think no shame to cry at the rich man's door, hear them who will; they want not words enough, ye need not teach them what to say; their pinched bowels make them both eloquent and importunate; they weary not to stand and cry, though they be but expecting a small morsel: And shall we, whose needs are far greater, whose expectations are far higher, want words or confidence to cry and knock at God's door, since he declares that our importunity is nowise a trouble but a pleasure to him? Are not everlasting life, and deliverance from hell, worth the seeking? Shall men do more for the welfare of their dying bodies, than we for the salvation of our immortal souls?

Object. IV. " We have not time to spare for family-wor- " ship our labour is so great, and business so throng."

Ans 1. Is not the worship and service of God the greatest business you have to do in the world? All other things are trifles in respect of this.

2 Better want time for sleeping, for eating, or any thing, than want time for this, which is far more necessary than any thing else.

3. God, in his providences, may soon cast greater hindrances in the way of your worldly business than this, as ye suppose, would be: He may send fevers among children and servants, that will stop your labour much longer than a little time spent daily in family-worship would do. When sickness or death comes, they will not be put off by telling that you have no time for your labour to be sick; no, ye must find time to be sick and ly on beds, though it were in the throng of harvest. And must ye, whether ye will or no, find time to be [illegible] and die; and will ye find no time to pray with your families, in order to prepare you and them for sickness and death? And further, it is likely, that

if ye prayed more in your families, your labour would be less stopt by sickness and other troubles; you should have fewer crosses and perplexities in your business; and, whatever they were, you might expect they would be sanctified. Family-prayer would be a sweet vent and ease to the mind, under all family cares and anxieties.

4. Family-prayer will not hinder your business, though in the throng of harvest. What stop would it be to your work, to be every morning and evening a quarter of an hour upon your knees with your family? Nay, it would further it, and procure a blessing on the work of your hands. And I have observed, that in those parts of the nation where husbandmen and tradesmen take time for family-worship, they are in a more flourishing condition in worldly things, than in those parts where it is neglected. Remember, that all the success of your labour depends on the special blessing and providence of God, and there is no way more likely to obtain this than family-prayer. If God vouchsafe not his blessing, your labour will be labour in vain, Psal. cxxvii. 1, 2 How soon may God blast all the labours of prayerless persons?

5. Whatever you pretend from want of time on week days, to excuse you from family worship; yet there is no shadow for this objection upon the Sabbath-day, in which you have no other business but to serve and worship God. He is graciously pleased to free you this day from your labour, that ye may apply yourselves entirely to his worship without distraction. O ye are straitened for time through the week for family and secret prayer, be busy on the Lord's day in the performance thereof, and be thankful to God for allowing you this day for these exercises.

In the name then of the great God, who hath founded families, and is the God of all the families of Israel; and in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, in whom only the families of the earth can be blessed, I beseech and obtest all you that are masters of families, to honour the Creator and Redeemer of the world in your families; erect him a family-altar, and dedicate your houses to be temples for the worship of God Perform this duty conscientiously every day, but more especially upon the Lord's day; let your family sacrifices this day be doubled. I shall add some more motives to it.

I. This is the way to procure you all sorts of family-blessings Would you have God to build your houses, bless your substance, dwell in your families, and be a guard to them night and day? Would ye have your relations comfortable, your affairs successful, and your enjoyments sweet? Then set up, and keep up family-worship, make your houses little churches.

1. You may expect family-protection. If you, by family-prayer, lodge your families "under the shadow of the Almighty, you need not be afraid of terrors that fly by night or by day." for you are under the tuition of him "that keeps Israel, who neither slumbers nor sleeps."—Praying families are preserved from many more evils and mischiefs than they are aware of; sometimes divine providence makes a visible distinction between them and others. I have read of a little town in the canton of Bern in Switzerland, consisting of 90 houses, that in the year 1584, was all destroyed by an earthquake, except the half of one house, where the master of it, with his family, were at the time on their knees at family-prayer. This is a noble pillar for supporting your houses.

2. You may expect family-provision; "your bread shall be given you, and your water shall be sure; you shall dwell in the land, and verily have food." God feeds the ravens that cry to him, and will he not much more feed Christian families that cry, "Lord, give us this day our daily bread?" O poor tradesmen, who can hardly get your credit kept and families maintained; O poor tenants, who can scarcely get your farms, and children provided for, by all your sore toil and labour; will you try family-prayer sincerely? I dare say, that the Lord, who "blessed the house of Obededom, and all that pertained to him, because of the ark of God which he lodged," will from that day forth bless you, prosper the work of your hands, and make your affairs more successful. It will not hinder your labours, but procure a blessing on them. I say then, make a fair trial, and I hope in a little time you shall find a sensible change in your affairs. Some have observed this in their experience.

3 You will have the more comfort and satisfaction in your family-relations; this is the way to keep up your authority among them, and to procure you more respect from them If a master of a family exert his authority to bring those under his charge to attend family-worship, he will find them more observant of his other commands, children would be more obedient, and servants more faithful, the fear of that God, whom they daily worship with you, would be an awe-band upon them, to do their duty to you, and act for your interest.

II. Family-worship is an excellent mean to advance religion and reformation through the whole land. If every one would begin with his own family, reform it, and plant piety therein, what happy cities and parishes would we soon have? If ye would recover decaying piety in the land, and banish cursing, swearing, drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking &c out of the town and parish where you live, then begin with your own family, set up prayer and religion therein. Satan and vice will not dwell contentedly beside prayer. The way to make a clean street is, for every house to sweep before their own door Religious families are excellent nurseries to the church, and seminaries of piety. Do you wish then to see religion flourish, and reformation carried on? and do you desire to be instrumental therein? then worship God, promote piety in your own family. Your example might influence your neighbours about you to the like; it would excite your children and servants to secret prayer; and, when they come to get families of their own, they will readily do as you do, and so will their children and servants after them And thus you will be instruments of handing down religion to the rising generation, and for "turning many unto righteousness" O! if God would persuade the hearts of people, both in town and country, to set about family-worship, how soon would religion put on another face? The streets and fields would not be so thronged with old and young on the Sabbath, people walking and discoursing idly, and boys playing and sporting themselves; the church would be better frequented, and people more attentive and devout in time of sermon, and public worship. Family-worship also, is a notable help to prepare us for public-worship, and the right observation of the Sabbath.

But the domestic sanctification of the Sabbath, enjoined by the fourth command, includes more duties than prayer, reading the word, and singing of psalms in families: And so I come to speak of others.

A Second Domestic Duty on the Sabbath is, Family Catechising and Instruction.

Masters of families are bound to instruct and teach those under their charge, viz. their children and servants, in all things necessary to salvation. Yea, they are bound, not only to instruct them in the knowledge of the principles, but also to enjoin them the performance of the duties of the Christian religion, and to admonish and reprove them for the neglect thereof. The necessity of this duty may be proven by many arguments.

1. From the law of nature, that binds us to do what we can to promote the welfare and happiness of our children and families, and to help them, when in misery and distress. Children are a part of the parents wrapt up in another skin; and therefore parents should do for them as for themselves. 'Tis not enough that ye provide for their bodies; for the very birds and beasts do this; nay, even "the sea monsters draw out the breast, and give suck to their young ones!" Lam. iv. 3. but you ought to provide for their souls, which are their better part, yea, a thousand times more precious than their bodies. You would think it barbarous cruelty in a parent, to suffer his child or servant to starve for want of bodily food; O but it is far more cruel, to suffer their precious souls to perish and starve for want of spiritual food, or necessary instructions.

2. From the clear light of God's word, that binds this on masters of families as a duty. We see, the fourth command obligeth masters to be answerable for their children and servants, touching the sanctification of the Sabbath, and the service of God on that day; which certainly imports their instructing them in their duty. The Lord commits their souls to their care, and they must account for them to him. When God gives any of you a child, he charges you, as Pharaoh's daughter did Moses his mother, Exod. ii. 9. "Take this child, and nurse it for me; and I will give thee thy wages:" Or, as the prophet said to the king, 1 Kings, xx. 39. "Keep this man; if by any means he be missing, thy life shall go for his life." If this child or this servant perish in his sins or ignorance, through your neglect, his blood will I require at your hands. Nay, we have express scripture precepts binding you to this duty; read Deut. vi. 6, 7. Prov. xxii. 6. Eph. vi. 4. Also we have the examples of the saints, who were careful in performing this duty.—God takes special notice of it in Abraham, to his everlasting commendation, Gen. xviii. 19. "I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord," &c. It was David's practice, Psal. xxxiv. 11. Prov. iv. 3, 4. and also Hezekiah's, Isa. xxxviii. 19.

3. You are concerned, in common justice, to instruct your children, that ye may, so far as lieth in you, repair the injury done them, by your conveying original corruption to them. Has God provided a cure for them in the gospel, and will ye not do so much as shew it to them? If you had rashly given a wound to any of their bodies, would ye not in haste provide a cure, or send for a physician? and will ye do nothing for their souls, that are dying of the wounds of sin given them by you?

4. It doth highly contribute to advance Christ's kingdom in the world, to train up a seed for his service. This is likely to prove a more successful mean of reformation, than any other that can be used, either by magistrates or ministers, laws or sermons. Therefore, as Pharaoh sought to destroy the Israelites by killing their young ones; so satan, who is filled with spite against the kingdom of Christ, knows there are no such compendious ways to ruin it, as by perverting youth, and suppressing family religion: This is a blow at the root, which causes him to employ all his power and policy this way.

5. It is also very much for your own interest and comfort, to instruct your families in the knowledge of Christ, and ways of religion. Ye may expect, that your children and servants will prove dutiful to you. Well educated children will take care of their parents in time of old age, sickness, or poverty: Whereas those that are not so, often neglect their parents in the foresaid cases, or wish them dead. If you conscientiously instruct your children and servants, God will reward you for it, even in this life.—Abraham, as we heard, made conscience of it; and God blessed him with a dutiful son Isaac, and a faithful servant, Eliezer of Damascus. What an unparallelled instance have we of Isaac's profound obedience to his father's commands, in submitting patiently to bear the wood, yea, to be bound, and laid upon the altar to be sacrificed? And, what a wise and faithful servant was the steward of his house, Eliezer, whom he trusted with all he had, and with the great concern of his son's marriage, which he managed with great prudence and integrity, and prayed earnestly for the good success of it? So that, if ye sow the seeds of piety in children and servants, yourselves shall reap the fruit thereof, even in this world.

Again, it will be very comfortable to you on a deathbed, to leave a religious praying family behind you. What though you leave your wife and children poor? yet if you leave them praying, God will provide for them while here, and ye shall shortly have a joyful meeting with them in heaven. Your children here will "rise up and call you blessed;" they will praise you, and follow your pious example: And as you took care to hand down religion to them, so will they do to their children and servants, when they come to get families; and, when you are blessing God in heaven, they will be blessing God for you on earth. Nay, they will meet you at a judgment-seat with blessings in their mouths: Your children will bless God that ever they had such parents; your servants will bless him that ever they had such masters, that ever they saw your faces, or came under your roof. It has been known, that many, at a dying hour, have blessed God, for determining their lot to fall into such and such religious families, where first they became acquainted with Christ and religion.

A third Domestic Duty on the Lord's day, is Godly Conference.

According to Isa. lviii. 13. we ought not this day to speak our own words; and consequently we ought to speak religious words, and entertain spiritual discourse, when we are together, concerning Christ and heaven; or about the sermons we have heard, telling one another what we remember thereof, and that which did mostly edify us.

Godly conference is well pleasing to God; he notices and records all the good words his people do speak, Mal. iii. 16.

When the two disciples going to Emmaus were about this exercise on the Lord's day, Christ is so well pleased, that he comes to them, and makes the third man; he entertains them with heavenly discourse, and opens their understandings to know the scriptures. We see, when Elijah is so employed with Elisha, 2 Kings ii. 11. he is taken up and transported gloriously into heaven. This is a heavenly exercise, and the employment of the glorified in heaven: It was Christ's work, when he was transfigured on mount Tabor, and met with Moses and Elias: he conferrred with them upon the blessed subject of his death and sufferings. O how holy and fruitful was Christ always in his discourse? "His lips dropt as the honey-comb, and his tongue was as choice silver." He spiritualized earthly things, and turned them into heavenly instructions; when he conferred with the woman at the well of Samaria, concerning the water of that well, John iv. he quickly drew her from ordinary water to the water of life. And, when eating bread in the Pharisee's house on the Sabbath-day, Luke xiv. he discoursed of eating bread in God's kingdom: So let all the disciples of Christ on this day imitate his example: see that your speech be seasoned with grace, and your lips like those of the righteous that feed many. Speak much this day to the commendation of Christ, and invite others to acquaintance with him; and, when you see it for edification, communicate the experiences you have had of his love; "Come here, all ye that fear God, and I will tell what he hath done for my soul." Psal. lxvi. and thus one live coal will help to kindle another.

Upon this day of holy rest, Christians should be oft thinking and speaking of the everlasting rest above, and conferring together of the way to it, and their meeting there. Do you believe you are going to that rest, and yet never speak of it? If two or three of you had entered into an agreement to go to America, and seek the golden mines which are there, would ye never be speaking of that country, or desirous to hear of it before your going? O Christians! are ye shortly to be "caught up together in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so to be for ever with the Lord?" and will you not "comfort one another with these words?" according to 1 Thess. iv. 17, 18. It hath likewise been the practice in many places, when religion comes to to be in esteem, for young persons to meet together in the evening of the Lord's days for godly conference upon spiritual subjects, or the sermons they have heard, and for prayer and praises to their mutual edification. And it is always observed, that such religious meetings on Sabbaths or week-days are set up in parishes where the gospel begins to thrive, just as naturally as birds draw together in spring; young converts are Christ's "singing birds." Cant ii. 12. And the scripture affords good ground and warrant for such meetings, Mal. iii. 16. Psal. lxvi. 16. Psal. cxix. 63. Jer. xxiii. 35. Acts xii. 5, 12. Heb. iii. 13. Heb. x. 24, 25. 1 Pet. 4, 10.

A Fourth Domestic Duty on the Sabbath, is a holy Care in Masters of Families to restrain all Profanation of the day by Children and Servants, or any within their Gates.

The fourth command expressly requires this. Though you be not magistrates, yet God has clothed you, who are heads of families, with power and authority in your families, to see to the honour of this day: Use it then for God, as ye will be answerable. Let none under your charge profane this holy day, by working, sporting or playing; or by idleness or neglect of the duties of the day. See that they duly attend public ordinances and family-worship; suffer them not to absent therefrom.

O masters of families, concur frankly with the minister of the parish, to suppress the abuses of this day: you will see them, and know of them, when ministers cannot. Testify against them in your stations, and this will make the ministers work the more easy. O what a sad thing is it in many places, to see ministers left to fight against sin alone, without having one to join with them, or once open a mouth against it! Hence it is, that many are turned impudent in sinning, particularly in Sabbath-breaking, and value not a miniser's rebuke. Alas! have ye neither love to God nor your neighbours souls? Have ye no concern for God's glory, nor grief to see him dishonoured? Have you no charity to your near relations, no love to your own children, no concern for your servants or nearest neighbours, no desire to keep them from falling into everlasting burnings; that you will not speak one word to pervent it, or warn them of their hazard?

Let none say, with cursed Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" For God requires you to be doing good to all in your station, and to love your neighbour as yourself And the fourth command expressly makes you accountable for all within your gates.

Object. "I have stubborn servants, that will not be restrained by my admonitions or reproofs."

Ans. 1. You should be more careful in the choice of the members of your family, and particularly of your servants, since God gives you a free choice in this matter. Consider David's care therein, Psal. ci. 6, 7. "Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. He that worketh deceit, shall not dwell within my house; he that telleth lies, shall not tarry in my sight." Do ye think that he, or she is fit for your service, that cares not for God's service? Can you expect a blessing on the work of their hands, who are enemies to God? A godly servant (though I confess he is rare enough to be found) is a greater blessing than many think; he not only works for his master with his hands, but with his prayers, as did godly Eliezer, Gen. xxiv. 12. and to be sure he did his master Abraham as good service by his prayers as by his prudence.

But, 2. If it be your lot to be concerned with stubborn and disobedient servants, let them know that you have authority from God, to oblige them to keep the Sabbath, by attending ordinances in public and private, and to restrain them from profaning this day; and, if they will not be reclaimed, to expel them from your house: If they neglect or mismanage your work, would ye not use your power and authority with them, to cause them help their faults? And, were you in as good earnest for God's service on the Sabbath, as for your own upon week days, I am persuaded ye might bring your children and servants to serve God, and keep this day far better than they do.

Quest. III. What are the secret duties requisite upon the Lord's day?

Ans. It is not enough that we worship God this day in conjunction with others, whether in the congregation or in families: The right sanctification of the Sabbath includes secret duties also, such as prayer, reading, meditation, &c.

Of the Duties requisite upon the Lord's Day.

That religion is not true, which is all visible to the world; for the life of religion lies in the secret intercourses which are betwixt God and the soul, that the eyes of men do not penetrate into. Secret duties are the best trial of our sincerity; the Lord, that seeth in secret, takes special notice of them, and, if duly performed, he will openly reward them. Let us therefore make conscience of them, and that specially upon God's holy day, which is entirely set apart for holy duties: And labour to time duties so this day, as one duty may not justle out another. As you must not let family duties interfere with public duties, so you must take care that secret duties do not interfere with family ones. But, more particularly:

1. Secret prayer is a duty necessary on the Lord's day both for preparing us to attend the public ordinances, and for improving and reaping benefit by them afterwards. I do not mean, that this duty is to be confined to the Sabbath only. No, it is necessary every day, according to David's example, Psalm lv. 17. but that is especially requisite as a part of the worship of this day. Prayer is so necessary, that it is put for the whole worship of God, Acts ii. 21. It is the character of a converted soul, "Behold he prays," Acts ix. 11. but it is the mark of an atheist, that "he calls not upon God." Psal. xiv. And, in a special manner, secret prayer is what every carnal man hath an aversion to. The devil can allow men their church prayers, their family prayers, but for closest prayer he cannot away with, especially when they are frequent and constant, because they are too much an argument of sincerity. A hypocrite takes no delight in secret prayer, nor in any duty but what is seen of men, and will gain him a name. But, reader, if thou art sincere, thou wilt consider that God's eye is upon thee in private, as well as in public, and therefore wilt seek to approve thyself to God in secret duties, as well as public. As secret prayer was our Saviour's constant practice while on earth, so it was his special injunction to all his followers, Mat. vi. 6. You need not fear that your secret prayers will be forgotten. No: God is every where; he has an ear to hear our secret groans, and an eye to see your secret tears. Yea, he has a bottle to preserve them, so as a drop of them shall not be lost.

In our secret addresses, which are more stated and solemn, let us carefully remember the three parts of prayer, confession, petition and thanksgiving. Let us confess the sins we are guilty of, cry for the mercies we want, and thank God for those we enjoy. Let us mind that this is not only a commanded duty, but our dignity and privilege. What an honour is it for dust and ashes to be allowed access to the great God! for a worm to speak freely to its Creator! for a poor beggar to converse familiarly with the King of heaven? O sinner, would not all thy neighbours envy thee, if thou wert so honoured by an earthly king? Be exhorted then to value and make use of this liberty.

2. Consider at what a dear rate Christ hath bought this freedom for us. How much did it cost him to erect a throne of grace, to which we may repair with confidence? And, will not we make use of this privilege with thanksgiving?

3. Consider the profit of it. It is like the "merchantship, Prov. xxxi. 14. that brings our food from afar." By it we trade with heaven, and bring down Christ's unsearchable riches. It is a key to open the treasure of God's mercies to us in the morning, and to lock us up under God's protection at night. By it we prevail with God, screen ourselves from wrath, and put satan to flight. In a word, prayer is a key to heaven, a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge to the devil.

4. It is the way to make up and preserve acquaintance with God, which will be of great use to you in the time of trouble, or at the hour of death. It is no small encouragement to you to address one for help, with whom you have had long acquaintance and familiarity, and of whose kindness you have had frequent experience. But, prayerless man, it will be a most melancholy case, when you are going out of the world, to be put to cry to that God you have been an utter stranger to all your life, or to be forced to appear before that God you never loved, or desired to converse with, or to be fain to challenge acquaintance with him who will utterly disclaim you, and say, "Depart from me, I never knew you." But, O praying soul! that hast acquaintance with God, death will have another view to thee, thou mayst look on it, as Jacob did on the waggons sent to carry him to his friend Joseph, and say, "Now I am going to God whom I know, I am going to "meet with that Friend, with whom I have had a long ac-"quaintance, to whom I have paid many a visit, and with "whom I have had sweet secret converse, and whom I have "longed to see, and who will embrace me in his arms, and "welcome me to glory."

5. Consider what a mercy it is, O man, that God is yet calling thee to prayer, and continuing thee in the land of prayer, when so many thousands as deserving, are beyond prayer, and lost for ever. O then pray now, while thou hast time to pray, health to pray, helps to pray, and encouragement to pray. Read the gracious promises of life and salvation to you, if you do it, Psal. lxix. 32. Rom. x. 13. Make this world a time for prayer, and the next shall be a season for praise. Dost thou think to be saved without prayer? Dost thou expect to have thy life without begging it at God's hands? O what oil will it add to thy flames in hell, when conscience will tell thee, If thou hadst prayed, thou hadst not been there! Well then, now thou hast a season for prayer, but remember, it will not always last. If thou improve it not, expect that God will turn a deaf ear to you in the day of your calamity, at a death bed, or a tribunal. Read and tremble at that word, Prov. i. [illegible] 28. God says, "He will not hear you when you cry." And if he refuse to hear you, then who will hear you? Angels will not, saints will not, nearest relations will not, hills and mountains will not. And, what a wretched forlorn and forsaken creature wilt thou be? There will be none to own thee then, if thou acquaint not thyself with God by prayer now. See the answer the foolish virgins got, when they came after the door was shut, Matthew xxv. See what an answer the rich man got, when he begged for "a drop of cold water to cool his tongue," Luke xvi. "Seek God, then, while he may be found, call on him while he is near." Otherwise your late untimely cries will no be regarded.

Object. "O say some, we have not the gift of prayer, we cannot pray."

Ans. I have said enough in answer to this a little before. I shall only add one word, Art thou a Christian, O man, and canst not pray? Thou mayst as well say, thou art a scholar, but canst not read, a soldier, but canst not fight. Prayer is as essential to a true Christian, as breath is to the body. Why? prayer is the very breathing of the soul to God. So it is called, Lam. iii. 56. O man, have you nothing to say in prayer? then go to God, and tell him so; sit down on your knees, and say, "Here a poor ignorant

creature, that cannot pray; Lord, teach me to pray." The publican made a very short prayer, Luke xviii "God be merciful to me a sinner," yet it was accepted, since it came from a humble heart Oh! if your heart be broken, your words will be accepted, although they be broken and few The silliest beggar will find something to say at your door, though he expect but a crumb, and can you find nothing to say at God's door, when you have a soul to save, a hell to shun, and Jesus Christ and a kingdom in your view?

But, besides that sort of secret prayer which is more stated and solemn, there is prayer that is more sudden and ejaculatory, when we lift up our hearts to God with some short petitions, on any occasion or emergency Ejaculatory prayers are useful on every day, but you should have them more frequent on the Sabbath day For, since on this day you must "not think your own thoughts, or find your own pleasures," heavenly breathings and pious ejaculations should issue forth continually By seeking pardon for such a sin, strength against such a lust, victory over such a temptation, and grace to spend Sabbath-time suitably Are you going to the church, or returning from it? Are you reading, hearing, communicating, praising, or about any other duty? be frequently making use of this kind of prayer, particularly begin and end every duty with it, look up before for assistance, and look up after it for acceptance, and that infirmities in it, for Christ's sake, may be pardoned These prayers, of all others, are the freest of distraction they being put up and over before ever satan be awakened to tempt us. As for other prayers, our preparations to them, though only by the alteration of our posture, give notice to satan what we are about to do, but ejaculatory prayers are so quickly darted up to God, that they will be in heaven before satan can shoot any of his darts against us. They are used to keep up communion with God in the intervals of other duties, and for keeping the heart in the fear of God all the day long As the priests, under the law, were not only to "offer up the morning and evening sacrifice duly," but "to keep the fire burning on the altar all the day," so we must not satisfy ourselves with solemn and stated duties only, but should study to keep in the fire always by holy thoughts and ejaculations, Christ saith of the spouse, that "her lips drop as an honey-comb," which is either still dropping, or in a continual forwardness to drop. Some of God's people have more devotion this way in their shops than others have in their closets; and while walking in the streets, or working in the fields, than others have when praying on their knees They have stricter communion with God this way at their common tables, than others have at a communion table.

A Second Secret Duty on the Lord's Day is Reading of the Scriptures and other good Books.

This is a duty necessary every day, but especially on the Lord's day It is the character of the blessed man, that "his delight is in the law of the Lord and he meditates therein both day and night," Psal i This should be particularly verified of us on the Sabbath Read the word, that you may be taught what to believe of God, what duties you owe to God, and what sins you are guilty of against him. Who can set forth the excellency and usefulness of it? It is a glass to discover our spots, a lamp to guide us in the dark, a fire to warm our cold affections, a magazine to supply us with armour against our spiritual enemies. It is a physic garden, wherein grow all sorts of medicinal herbs for our spiritual maladies. The promises are as fragrant flowers and spices in this garden, believers take many a pleasant walk among these beds of spices. It is an apothecary's shop, out of which we may have eye-salve for our blindness, sovereign cordials in all our soul distresses David found this to his sweet experience, Psalm cxix 50. "This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me." Here are suitable cordials for all our various cases, be it desertion, temptation, poverty, sickness, reproach, persecution, &c. Here are the waters of the sanctuary for cleansing us from our pollutions. Here is the heavenly rain, for making soft and tender our hard hearts — The scriptures are both food and physic to our souls, here is meat for strong men, and milk for babes. "The two Testaments (as Augustine saith) are the two breasts which we must suck for spiritual nourishment" And there is none of God's children that will call them dry breasts or empty cisterns, they have often afforded them strength, nourishment, light, life, and comfort O how highly have God's people in all ages prized God's holy word, and the liberty of reading it! It hath been 'sweet as honey to their taste." I have read of one who, being a prisoner in a dark dungeon, when light was allowed him for a short time to take his meat, he would take his Bible, and read a portion of it, saying, "He could eat without light, but he could not read without it" I am persuaded there is no better way in this world for improving the faculty of sight, and benefit of light, than by reading the word of God So far as time can allow you upon the Sabbath, I judge it very profitable to read other good books also such as our Confession of Faith, Vincent's Catechism, Vincent on the last Judgment, Guthrie's trial of a saving interest in Christ, Allan's Alarm, Baxter's Call to the Unconverted, Pearse' Preparation for Death, Fox's Time and the End of Time, Doolittle's Call to delaying Sinners, Baxter's Saints everlasting Rest, his Poor Man's Family-book, Gray's Sermons, Flavel's Touch-stone of Sincerity, his Saint indeed, Mead's almost Christian, the Treatises of Doolittle, Campbell and Henry upon the Sacrament, Rutherfoord's Letters, the Fulfilling of the Scriptures, Clark's Martyrology, Beard's Theatre of God's Judgments These, and such like books, next to the Holy Bible, I recommend to the perusal of all private Christians, as being easy and plain to common capacities, and some of the most generally useful, instructing, awakening, soul searching, and heart-warming pieces, that I have seen among human writings, and which have been blessed to the edification of many thousands.

A Third Secret Duty on the Lord's Day is, Meditation upon Divine Subjects.

This duty is proper every day, much more on the Sabbath, which is sequestrated for divine employments. It is the character of the blessed man, that "he meditates in God's law day and night," Psal i 2. It is an useful and necessary duty; it excites the affections, and quickens the

graces; it strengthens faith, Psal. cxix. 92. It nourisheth hope, and inflames our love; deep musing makes the fire to burn. Meditation is a great help to every duty, Psal cxix 59. It helps to read and hear the word aright, and to know the truths thereof practically; it helps to pray, and yields matter to the tongue, Psalm xlv. 1 It prompts us to confess sin, and mourn for it, Psalm li. 3

Be persuaded then to engage your hearts to this necessary but much neglected duty, for, though it be most useful and profitable, yet I know no duty more slighted and forgotten. The best of God's people have cause to lament this most bitterly before the Lord: Who can say with David, Psal cxix 97 "O how love I thy law, it is my meditation all the day" As for the generality of the world, they have no sense of the obligation of this duty upon their spirits, they live without thinking and that proves their ruin O! if sinners would retire from company, and spend some little time now and then in secret thinking, it would, through the blessing of God, work some change in them. I remember a passage I have read of a dying father, that on his death-bed left it as a charge upon his only son, who was a great prodigal "That he should spend a quarter of an hour every day in retired thinking," and, to encourage him to undertake it, he gave him liberty to choose any subject he pleased The son thinks this an easy task, and engages to do it, and accordingly sets himself to perform his promise. One day he thinks on his bypast pleasures another day he contrives his future delights After a while, he begins to reason with himself what was his father's design in laying this task upon him, at length he thinks his father was a wise and good man and therefore intended and hoped that, among the rest of his meditations he would some time or other think of religion When this had truly possest his thoughts, one thought and question comes upon the back of another, about his bypast life and future state, that he could not contain himself in so short a confinement as a quarter of an hour, but was that night without sleep; yea, and afterwards could have no rest till he became seriously religious

O careless sinner, if you think it too much to spend a quarter of an hour every day, I would beg it of you to spend a quarter of an hour every Lord's day in retired thinking upon some spiritual subject Who knows what it might produce? Do you say this is a hard task? Will it not be far harder to ly in hell a whole eternity thinking on your bypast folly, when there is no remedy? O sinner, will you perish for want of thinking?

Be not scared at the difficulty of it, for though at first this duty seem hard, and corrupt nature shew aversion to it, yet press your heart to it, and afterwards you shall find it pleasant: Though it be difficult to climb this mount of meditation, yet, when once we get up, we will be ready to say with Peter, on the mount of transfiguration, "It is good for us to be here" David found it so "My meditation of him shall be sweet," Psal. civ 34 The more we meditate on God, the sweeter we will find him. Yea, so sweet did he find this duty, that he spent whole days in it, Psal. cxix 97 and, as if the day had been too little, he borrows a part of the night too, Psal lxiii. 6.

Object "Alas! (some say) our minds are barren of good thoughts."

Ans. 1. If you would accustom yourselves more to the duty, you would have less ground of complaint this way. 2. When your hearts are barren, there are two subjects you can never exhaust: Fix your thoughts upon any one of them, viz God's mercies to you, and your sins against him The Psalmist acknowledges them both to be innumerable, in the same psalm, Psal xl 5, 12

Quest What subjects of meditation are most proper for the Sabbath day?

Ans Natural things may be spiritualized, and common things may afford us ground for spiritual instructions, if we had our eyes enlightened, and minds spiritually exercised But it is fit that on the Sabbath, we choose those subjects of meditation that are most edifying, and most suitable to the great ends of the day In general, we ought this day to think upon God, upon ourselves, and upon eternity. But, more particularly,

I Meditate upon the goodness of God Both that which is common, and manifested to you in his works of creation and providence, and that which is special and distinguishing, discovered to you above others. That this is a suitable subject for the Sabbath, is clear to any that reads the xcii. psalm with its title.

1 Think upon his common goodness to us, represented in that great looking glass of the creation He hath made the world a commodious habitation for us, arched it over with the bespangled heavens, and floored it with the solid earth. He hath set up great lights in it for our accommodation. He hath placed a tabernacle for the sun, at a due distance from the earth and the upper heavens, to enlighten the stars above and enliven the earth below. And, that we might neither be starved with cold, nor burnt up with heat, he gives us the clouds as fans to screen us from the scorching heat, and as cisterns to water the parched ground He gives us the wind to purify the air, the sea to be a pond for fish, the valleys to be granaries for corn, the mountains to be a treasure of minerals, the rivers to be as veins to carry refreshment to every part of the earth Let us admire both the goodness and wisdom of God displayed in his wonderful works Psal civ 24 "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: The earth is full of thy riches" The Psalmist also saith, "The heavens declare the glory of God," Psal xix 1 and indeed we may look up and read it in these shining capital letters of sun, moon and stars His being is legible in their existence, his wisdom in their frame, his power in their motion, his goodness in their usefulness, and his faithfulness in their continuance The book of nature, as well as the scriptures, shew much of God to us "The book (as one saith) consists of three leaves, heaven, earth and sea, the creatures therein are so many letters whereby we may spell out the attribute of God Some whereof are capital letters, and more legible than others Man is a capital letter on earth, the sun in the heavens and the whale in the sea"

Again, we ought to meditate upon his goodness manifested in his works of providence He hath curiously formed us in the womb, and carefully watched over us therein He preserved us several months in that dark cell, without air or breath He brought us safe out of it, and presently thereafter provided two bottles to sustain us, and ever since hath succoured us in distress, rescued us from danger supplied us in wants, yea, he hath set us at his own table, and made us live upon his cost, Acts xvii 28. He hath given us all the creatures for our use and service, yea, the most glorious of them, the angels are our ministering spirits, the lower heavens serve to give us breath the middle heavens to give us light and heat, and the highest heavens afford us a dwelling place. The sun shines, the fire burns, the wind

blows, and the water flows, nay, all the creatures are at work, both day and night, and all for the service of a poor worm of six foot long.

If a friend give us our bread for a month or two, we think ourselves much bound to him; but how much more beholden are we to God, who keeps an open free table for us all the days of the year, and all the years of our life, and even to us when enemies to him? Behold, these who have their mouths opened wide against God, he mercifully puts bread in their mouths. How great is God's goodness to us! and, how great is our ingratitude to him! I know not which of them we should most wonder at. God gives us peace, money, health, and wealth; but, instead of serving him therewith, many offer them up in a sacrifice to the devil and base lusts, according to Hosea ii. 8. God gives some folk strength, and they waste it among harlots; to others money, and they waste it in drunkenness and prodigality; to others power, and they waste it in oppression; to others honour, and they abuse it to pride and vain glory. Many make use of the mercies of God as darts to shoot against the heavens; they pervert and misapply them for dishonouring God, wounding Christ, and grieving the Spirit; for debauching their bodies, damning their souls, and dashing both tables of the law in pieces before God's face. And yet even while they are doing so, God is guarding them by his providence, and feeding them by his bounty. "O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works," to such undeserving and ill deserving creatures! We ought this day to "triumph in the works of his hands," according to Psal. xcii. 5. and cry, "Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him?"

2. Meditate this day upon God's special and distinguishing goodness to us beyond others, both with respect to soul and body: he hath not dealt so with any nation as with us. Both our national and personal mercies are singular, and ought this day to be remembered by us. Hath not God delivered many of you from death, when some dangerous accident, or violent sickness, was threatening to break the slender twig of life, and to let you fall into the grave, and into hell both at once? Hath he not mercifully recovered you, and given you further space and place for repentance?

Hath not God long preserved this land from the famine, sword, and pestilence, and such destroying judgments as have been making havock in other nations about us, laying heaps upon heaps? He hath mercifully removed that dearth and scarcity wherewith we were almost consumed some years ago, when the poor swooned in the streets, and fainted in the high-ways for want of bread. God hath secured our lives, liberties, and estates from rapine and violence, and lengthened out our peace and tranquillity, when other nations have been turned into a seat of war and sea of blood.

Consider the goodness of God to us this day, that we are not among the Jews or Pagans on the earth, that never heard the news of Christ; or among the damned in hell, who are beyond the reach of the offers of Christ. Let us also bless God, that we live not under the Old Testament times, but under the New; not under that darker and harsher dispensation of the covenant by Moses, whose first miracle was the "turning of water into blood;" but under the clearer and sweeter dispensation of the Messiah, whose first miracle was the "turning of water into wine," that cheers the heart of man; and hath mercifully freed us from the heavy yoke of Levitical sacrifices and ceremonies.

Let us also this day thankfully remember God's goodness in delivering us from the yoke of Antichristian [illegible], popery, idolatry, and persecution, and frequently blasting the hellish plots and contrivances of our enemies against the gospel and Protestant religion, and preserving us from being invaded in our consciences, or cut off from the wells of salvation, and barred from the springs of ordinances, and having our teachers murdered or driven into corners. Let us bless God, that we have the peaceable enjoyment of pure ordinances under the protection of protestant magistrates, and are allowed to serve God according to our consciences, to read the bible in our own tongue, and examine the doctrines delivered to us by this rule; and that we are not under the tyranny of bloody papists, forced to hide or burn our bibles, to bow to stocks and stones; or otherwise to hazard ourselves to be burnt in fires, or banished our native land.

Let us bless God that we live in a land of light, "a valley of vision," while others about us "sit in darkness, and in the region of the shadow of death;" and that he allows us such rich gospel feasts, while others are visited with cleanness of teeth, and a famine of the word of God. That every Sabbath-day there is a free market of grace publicly proclaimed in our ears, whilst others enjoy silent Sabbaths; yea, though we have slighted his goodness, and lothed the manna and honey comb, his goodness is renewed and continued with us. "What shall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards us?"

II. Another subject of meditation upon the Lord's day is the work of man's redemption this day completed by Christ's resurrection.

This is a subject the angels are still prying into; and ought not we much more, who are the persons immediately concerned? Christ never testified such love to them, he never forgave them one sin, he never shed one drop of blood for them; and shall not we, for whom he poured out streams of blood, and to whom he hath forgiven ten thousand talents, be employed in prying into this mystery?

1. Meditate upon the spring of this work, God's infinite free love, that moved him to pity lost mankind, and contrive a way to redeem him; when, in the mean time, he passed by a world of fallen angels, who were the elder brothers brothers by creation, had a more natural claim to the inheritance, and might have been far more serviceable to their Maker than we. Yet, behold, there is not one word of their redemption, no sacrifice provided for them; there is not one devil spared, not one of all the thousands of fallen angels recovered; God presently took vengeance on them all! But O how did his bowels yearn, his heart pity, and his eye spare poor fallen man in his miserable condition! Indeed he drove Adam out of paradise, but it was a wonder he drove him not presently out of the world into hell, where he had a little before plunged far more excellent creatures than Adam was. Christ took not on him the nature of angels, but he was content to clothe himself with the rags of human flesh, that he might become our Saviour. O glorious incomprehensible love!

2. Think upon the wise contrivance of our redemption. It would have eternally nonplussed the wisdom of angels, to find out a method how to satisfy God's justice, and secure man's happiness both at once, how to save the life of the law breaker, and yet maintain the honour of the Lawmaker: But here's a way to do both, here's a device for reconciling justice and mercy, and satisfying both their demands. Sin is severely punished, as justice required, and

yet the sinner is pardoned, as mercy pleaded. It would never have entered the thoughts of angels, that God would have parted with his Son and their Lord, to die a cursed death for vile worms; it would have been blasphemy for any to have thought or spoken it. Though fallen man might have had the liberty to chuse any way of redemption he pleased, he could never have proposed this. Indeed, when he had been perishing, he might have cried, O Son of God have mercy on us; but who would have said, O Son of God, come make thyself a man, come die a cursed death, come suffer hell's pains for me? This noble device bred only in the breast of the eternally wise God; for, had he waited till men or angels had devised a way for our redemption, we had been miserable to all eternity. But what do I speak! the wonders of man's redemption can never be told: Here's a large subject for meditation and admiration, that can never be exhausted by men or angels to all eternity. Let this work be the delight of our souls, especially on the Lord's day. O believers, think much this day upon the love of your Redeemer; remember what he hath done and suffered for you; consider how much he hath given and forgiven to you; view what he hath laid out and laid up for you; think what he hath performed and promised to you; and so you will not want matter of meditation.

III. Another subject of meditation on the Lord's day is our state, and here we may take a view of man's fourfold state. 1. What he once was in a state of innocency. 2. What he now is in a state of nature. 3. What he may be in a state of grace. 4 What he shall be in a state of glory.

O sinner, retire this day and think on your misery. If thou be yet in a state of nature, thou art without God and without Christ in the world, thou sleepest and walkest in danger of hell; thou liest still under the heavy load of unpardoned guilt, there is not one of all the numberless millions of your sins forgiven, and they are heavier than ten thousand milstones hung about your neck; for every one of them hath the fearful curses of the law hanging at them; and in the mean time thou liest on the very brink of the fiery furnace, like a man sleeping on the top of the mast in time of a storm, there is but one step betwixt thee and eternal death, nothing but a rotten thread of life keeps thee from dropping into everlasting burnings. Thou knowest not, when thou risest in the morning, but ere night thou mayest make thy bed in hell; and when thou liest down, thou canst not tell but thou shalt wake in the flames; all the men in the world, nay all the angels in heaven, cannot assure thee of the contrary. O what a doleful condition is this, to be always in a state of damnation, not sure to be one hour out of hell! A serious meditation upon your natural state, O sinner, might cause your heart of stone to tremble.

But hast thou any happiness while thou art on this side of hell? No surely, for your best worldly comforts and enjoyments are accursed to you: "Thou art cursed in the city, cursed in the field, cursed in thy basket and thy store, cursed in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy ground," Deut. xxviii. 15. Nay, every bit of bread thou eatest, the curse of God goes down with it. All your blessings turn into curses, and your mercies into judgments: "your table is a snare to you, the word is the savour of death," and the sacraments are seals of condemnation to you. The best actions you perform are but an abomination to God; they bring the more guilt upon your head, and treasure up the more wrath against you. Better you had perished in infancy than continue to live in a Christless state; for, the longer you live, still the more miserable you are: For every day, every night, every hour you live, you heat the furnace hotter by your new actions, which are all sins, even the very best of them. O is this a state to be continued in? Canst thou ly down contentedly to sleep another night in this condition? God forbid that thou live and die in this state; for, if thou dost, thou wilt rise in the same condition at the last day. Nay, your state then will be more dreadful than ever, for then thou wilt see above thee the Judge frowning, beneath thee hell gaping, within thee conscience gnawing, without thee the world burning; on the right hand your sins accusing, on the left hand the devils terrifying, the good angels keeping thee out of heaven, and the evil angels pulling thee down to hell. O poor Christless soul, continue to think on this subject till your heart begin to melt, your eyes to weep, and your tongue to cry, "O what shall I do to be saved! O that I knew where to find Christ: O to be found in him! I would give ten thousand worlds to be sure of this, it will be terrible if death or a tribunal find me before I be found in him." Is it not worth your while to spend some time upon this soul-concerning subject? Hath not God given you reason for this very end, and will you not exercise it? can you think to be saved otherwise? Do you expect that God will carry you to heaven like a stone, or save you without or against thy will? Doth the world and your bodies deserve to be remembered the whole day, or whole week or year throughout? and doth not God and your soul deserve to be thought on one day in the week, or one hour of the day? Say not that you have no spare time for this work: for, if you will spare none of your own time for it, I beseech you to spend God's time well this way. Is it not better to spend some part of the Sabbath in thinking upon your souls state, than in thinking upon the world? Spiritual things, alas! trouble you little on week-days, and why should worldly things intrude upon God's day?

2. Think upon your happiness, if you be in a state of grace, and in Christ; you are delivered from sin's guilt, from satan's fetters, from the law's curses, from death's sting, and hell's terror. Thou hast now peace with God; justice itself is thy friend; all thy enjoyments are sweetned by Christ's love; all your afflictions sanctified by his blood. God himself is your God, your Father, your Friend, your Portion; yea, all things are yours.

IV. Death is a proper subject to be meditated upon on the Sabbath-day; for, in the xcii. Psalm, wherein the exercises of the Sabbath are described, God calls and teaches us to consider our latter end. First, the end of the workers of iniquity, who, though they spring up as grass, and flourish for a season, shall yet in the end be destroyed for ever, verse 7, 9. And again, the latter end of the godly, whose horn, though it be abased to the dust for a while, yet in the end, shall be exalted. It is one principal work of ministers this day, to be proclaimers of mortality, and remembrancers of death, according to Isa. xl. 6, 7, 8. So then it is our duty every Sabbath to have serious thoughts of death. Think with yourselves, What if this be the last Sabbath that ever I will see on earth? I may be called to die, before I be called to hear another offer of Christ. Have I sitten the gospel summons this Sabbath, to come and embrace Christ, or to surrender my heart to him? What if I get a summons by death to come and appear before him before the next

Sabbath? this I cannot say. Death is a bold messenger, he cannot be kept out, when he comes and takes a man by the throat, the proudest, stoutest, and strongest in the world must go, whether willing or unwilling, all is one. There are many in the world, at the church in health this Sabbath, who will be on a death bed, or in eternity, the next; and, why may not I be one of them?

Think seriously upon your latter end. Think what will be your case in a parting hour, where you will take up your lodging, whether in Abraham's bosom, or in the devil's arms? "O what will be my thoughts, when I am taking my last look of husband, wife, children, and relations? What will be my cordial when the world fails, when friends are weeping about my bed, when my senses are losing their office, my heart and eye strings are breaking, and all turning dim and dark about me? O what if my sleepy conscience awake then, and my old buried sins revive and fall on me, to tear me in pieces? O what will Christless sinners do in that hour, when there is but one single step betwixt their departing souls and the state of devils? O it is fearful to die in your sins, as it is threatened, John viii. 24. "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." O better die in a dungeon among toads and serpents, than die in your sins, for these are serpents that never leave stinging, and will fasten so upon thee, as never to part with thee again; they will go to the grave with thee as thy companions, to a tribunal with thee as thy accusers, and to hell with thee as thy tormentors. O it is terrible to die out of Christ, and without sight of an interest in him; to make a leap in the dark over a bottomless gulf, not knowing where your feet may light; or to launch into the great ocean of eternity, without sight of a landing place for your soul. O how will the poor soul shrink back into the body in such a case, when it begins to awaken out of its dream, and look out into another world, saying, "How shall I venture forth, where I see nothing but darkness and horror, or a flaming sword ready to meet me?"

Think upon the continual hazard you are in of death; its arrows are flying thick about you, and many are falling slain on every hand of you, and God knows but the next dart may hit thee. And what if thou be unprepared, and behold the pale horse?

Think upon the sottish stupidity of many, who though they stand tottering day and night upon the brink both of the grave and hell, yet can spend whole weeks, yea months, without a serious thought of eternity. Yea, in the house of mourning, and in the sight of the dead, they can think, and jest, and laugh, and never have one grave thought or word about their latter end. Foolish sinners are rightly compared to a company of blind men dancing about the mouth of a very deep pit, which they do not perceive, nor hear the groans of those who fall to the bottom of it. Now and then one drops in, but still the rest continue the dance. This day a swearer dies, and tumbles into hell; the next a drunkard, the next a whoremonger. But still their companions in sin go on in their mad career, till they drop in too.

Think what a fearful surprise death is to many careless sinners; it lights upon them like a falcon out of the air, they must flit, and they were not thinking on it; they have their lodging to seek, and they know not where. O it is sad to be turned out of the clay tabernacle, and to be put to knock, and cry, "Lodging, lodging for God's sake," and yet get no other answer but a frown, or, "Depart from me, I know you not!" What cause have we to pray, "Lord, Let us not have our work to do, when our day is done; our weapons to seek when the enemy is at the gates; our oil to buy, when the market is ended, and the bridegroom come."

Think also upon the happiness of a dying believer, who can go forth half way and meet death, and bid it welcome, as a friend. Death ends his sorrow, and begins his joy. It is an outlet to misery, and an inlet to happiness; it frees him of his greatest grievance in the world, that is sin. As sin was the womb that brought forth death, so death is the tomb that buries sin; thus God in his wisdom, causes the daughter to destroy the mother; and hence it is, that death is put in the believer's inventory of goods, 1 Cor. iii. [illegible] "Death is theirs." It is their Father's servant sent to carry them home to their Father's house, a palace all bespangled with light, where they shall sigh no more, and which is infinitely better, where they shall sin no more for ever. They shall be troubled no more with an ill [illegible] tempting devil; they shall complain no more of darkness and distance from God; but shall spend a whole eternity in praises, doxologies, hosannas, and hallelujahs to God and the Lamb. Think on the blessed change, O believer, that death will make in thy circumstances ere long. It will transport thee from a cottage to a palace, from a wilderness to Canaan, from a stormy sea to a safe shore, from a vile dunghill to a glorious city, a city whose walls and foundations are of precious stones, its streets of gold, and its gates of pearl, whose light is the Lamb, and whose temple God. Hast thou not cause then to love the Lord Jesus Christ, who has provided this city for thee, and found out a way to it, who by his death has unstinged death, and by his blood has paved a way through its dark valley for thee to walk in, and fear no ill? O believer, fear not though the trance be somewhat dark, the passage is safe, and the end is light; the day is here betwixt thee and home, 'tis but wink and see God.

Lastly, Think often how holily and spiritually you will wish you had spent this day, when you come to a death-bed, and death and eternity begin to stare you closely in the face. You will then begin to wish, O that I had spent more of my time, and especially of the Lord's day, in meditation and prayer. O if God would try me again, how serious and diligent would I be! Consider, on the other hand, what a pleasant death-bed the righteous will have, who have spent the Sabbath religiously! what satisfaction they will have in the review thereof! and what comfort in the prospect of an everlasting Sabbath above, to which they are hastening! They will be rejoicing when others about them are weeping; they will be smiling when their eye-strings are breaking, and inward strength failing. They will be longing to be with Christ, which is best of all. It was a choice saying of one near death, "My head is in heaven, my heart is in heaven, it is but one step more, and I shall be all in heaven." And must not the latter end of such be peaceable and pleasant? Many, doubtless, with Balaam, would wish to die their death, however ill they like their life; many, like that young man, who said to his loose companion (after they had visited holy Ambrose on his death bed, and saw how cheerfully he was triumphing over approaching death) "O that I might live with thee, and die with Ambrose!" But it is vain to think to dine with satan and lusts in this world, and hereafter to sup with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven;

"For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Gal. vi. 7.

V. Another subject of meditation on the Sabbath-day is, the saints everlasting rest and employment in heaven. You are called this day to have frequent thoughts of it, since the Sabbath is an emblem thereof, and serves to keep us in mind of it. Take care then, O believer, to spend every Sabbath in the view of heaven, and live every Sabbath as it were to be your last, and behave this day as one that believes you may be in heaven before the next Lord's day, celebrating an eternal Sabbath.

Let your worship this day below, put you in mind of that more perfect worship above, where you shall see him whom you worship, and enjoy immediate communion with him.— O the difference betwixt that worship there, and ours here, is great! There is no weariness there in beholding God, no wanderings nor excursions of the heart from God, no inclinations there to drowsiness or sleep in worship, no dull or low conceptions of God, no deadness of heart or frame; their harps are never out of tune, their hearts are always [illegible] and fit for the high praises of God. There is no note lower there than "Glory to God in the highest;" every one sings his hallelujahs on the highest key, and all of them join harmoniously in the work of praising God with one heart and soul. Are congregational assemblies of saints pleasant on earth, especially when they jointly and melodiously sing God's praise? O what will it be then, when they all meet above in that great "general assembly of the [illegible] of the first born" together with the "innumerable company of angels," and there with one heart and voice [illegible] God's praises? How ravishing will it be, to hear that eternal music of the bride chamber, that sweet melody of the church triumphant, where there is no jarring string, no displeasing sound, no discord between heart and tongue, no willows there to hang their harps upon, no bad news to be heard, no sad sight to be seen, no evil to be felt or feared to all eternity. Poor discouraged believers, are ye now troubled with ill hearts and vain thoughts? Are ye plagued with wandering and wearying hearts in duty? These complaints ere long shall be taken out of your mouths, read Ephesians v. 27. the church above "hath neither spot nor wrinkle." Once the glorified saints faces were as black and wrinkled as yours, but now they have none. Once their hearts were as bad as yours, but now they are as fixed "pillars in the temple of God, they go no more out."

Take a view this day, by faith, of the glorious company above, behold Christ upon his white throne, Paul with his crown of righteousness, and all the faithful ones in Abraham's bosom. How gloriously do they shine in the kingdom of their Father! The sun is a very glorious creature, but it would be useless there, it would not be seen for the brightness of the Lamb; nay, every saint shall be as glorious as that sun. Who can tell the happiness of the inhabitants of that place, where every head wears a royal crown, every hand a palm of victory, every eye overflows with joy, and every tongue with songs of praise? O believer, think with yourself, what a difference there is betwixt your state and theirs! "Oh, I am sighing, they are singing; I am sinning, they are serving God; I am groaning out my complaints, they are trumpeting forth God's praise; I am in darkness, and cannot see God; they dwell in light, and see him face to face. O my Lord, must I stay behind, when they are going? Must I ly groaning and sighing here, while they are triumphing above, and dividing the spoil? My Lord is gone and left the earth, and entered into his glory; my brethren and friends are gone to their blessed rest, and must I wander in the wilderness, absent from home, far distant from my Father and my God? Shall I be satisfied in this state? No, I will look after them with a longing eye, I'll ly knocking at the gate till God open to let me in, I'll still pant, breathe, and cry, O Lord, how long! How is my pilgrimage prolonged! How am I detained in this valley of tears, wandering in the dark, and can scarce get any sight of Canaan! When shall the days of my banishment be finished, that I may get home to my country and friends above? O when shall I sit at the fountain head, and drink plentifully of the living streams that make glad the city of God?"

O believer, rejoice in the forethoughts of [illegible] thou shalt meet with thy Father and thy brethren, and when thou shalt see thy elder Brother on the throne ready to pass sentence in thy favours. O how sweet will it be, when he is frowning and thundering against the wicked, to see him turn and smile on thee as thy Redeemer! O what love will be in his looks! what melody will that sentence sound in thy ears, "Come ye blessed of my Father!" &c. How ravishing a surprise, O believers, will it be to meet with your godly acquaintances with whom ye prayed, praised, and conversed here! O then, may ye rejoice together and say, "This voice of joy we now hear, is not like our old groans and complaints, not like the oaths, curses, and reproaches our ears were grieved with on earth. What is become of our hard hearts, our worldly unbelieving hearts? Where are all our lusts, corruptions, temptations, and burdens now? What is become of a body of death, indwelling sin that lay so long on us a dead weight? What is become of the church's enemies we often complained of?" O! these are all gone, they shall trouble you no more; you shall triumph over them as Israel did on the other side of the Red sea, when they saw the Egyptians drowned and lying dead upon the shore. These Egyptians, O believer, whom thou once sawest to thy great vexation and trouble, "thou shalt see them again no more."

I might mention many other subjects of meditation proper for the Sabbath, such as the evil of sin, the vanity of the world, the worth of the soul, the sufferings of Christ, the last judgment, and many others which the sermons you hear that day will bring to your remembrance. But, fearing that I have been too tedious already upon this head, I must pass them, and proceed to another private duty necessary on the Lord's day, which is,

IV. *Self Examination.*

This duty is near of kin to the former, it being a sort of reflexive meditation, the mind turns inward and communes with itself, according to Psal. iv. 4. It is absolutely necessary that we should take some time to commune with ourselves, and ask what we are, what we have been, and what we have done, Jer. viii. 6. And is not the Sabbath a fit time for this duty, when we retire from the noise of the world, and are not disturbed with secular affairs? This is a most important duty, and nearly concerns our eternal well-being; but yet it is a duty very much neglected. Many have lived fifty or sixty years in the world, that never spent one hour in communing with their own hearts: There are many going out of the world, who never yet began to enquire why they came into it, and never yet asked the [illegible]

tion at their souls, Are you to flit hence, or live here for ever? Why came you hither, and where are you to lodge when you go hence? Many live in a crowd of worldly business, are hurried from one thing to another, leap out of their beds to the world in the morning, and from the world to their beds again at night, and so never find one minute on the week days to take their soul aside; and for the Sabbath, though they have time for it, yet such is their aversion to the work, they shift it all they can, and avoid meeting with themselves; they rather converse with any in the world, than with their own hearts. It is against self-love and carnal ease, for a man to turn his own accuser and judge: Therefore many would rather drudge and toil their bodies whole days and weeks at the forest labour, ere they spent one quarter of an hour at this exercise; and so they live their whole lives strangers to themselves. We would think it strange to hear of two men that conversed every day for fifty or sixty years space, and yet all this while did not know one another; and yet this is the case betwixt many and their souls; for as long as they have lived together, they are utterly unacquainted, they never turn inward to converse with themselves, they have no serious thoughts about their own state or condition. It is said of the rich man in the parable, Luke xvi. that "in hell he lift up his eyes," as if he had never considered nor bethought himself till that time; and indeed it is the want of retired consideration, and people's serious bethinking of themselves, that is the ruin of many thousands. O then, resolve in God's strength, that, in spite of the devil and your own corruption, you and your souls shall have a meeting, and live no longer asunder; that ye will imitate David, Psal. cxix. 59. "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet to thy testimonies." Seeing then ye have free time for this duty on the Lord's day, take your souls aside, and enquire into their state; say, "O my soul, where art thou? Art thou under a covenant of works, or a covenant of grace? Dost thou belong to Christ's family, or the devil's? Art thou in the narrow or broad way? Suppose I should die this night, (for God knows if ever I shall see the morrow's light,) what hope will I have in a dying hour? Where will death land me? Whether with God in heaven, or with devils in hell? Would Christ smile on me in the dark valley, or be my Advocate at God's bar? Is there any saving change yet wrought on my heart and life by a work of conversion? God forbid I undergo my great and final change til' this happy change be wrought. Can I say, I am not the man that once I was; "once I was blind, but now I see?" Study and enquire into the marks of the converted and unconverted, with the greatest seriousness and anxiety of soul, and see which of them you can apply to yourself; cry, that God may open a window in your breast, to let you see into your own heart, and soul's state; and, whatever you be deceived in, beg it of him, that he may not suffer you to be deceived in this momentous point, where your soul and your all is at the stake. And, if you find yourself in a bad state, "give no rest to your eyes, no slumber to your eye-lids," till, in God's strength, you resolve on a thorough change.

Lastly, It is incumbent on every private Christian on the Lord's day, to practise the works of charity and mercy, both to the souls and bodies of men. Study to promote the edification of others by good counsels, instructions, admonitions, and reproofs. Comfort the afflicted, supply those that are in straits, visit the sick and those that are in misery.—These are proper duties on the Sabbath, and God is highly pleased with them, James i. 27. If we practise these duties conscientiously, we may both do good and get good; we may both give direction and comfort to the distressed, and receive instruction and comfort to ourselves: Though we may not enquire at the dead, yet we may learn many wholesome lessons from the dying. And would to God that both the persons visiting and visited were more spiritual in their converse than ordinarily they are! for then this duty would be found very edifying and profitable. But if, when we visit the sick this day, we spend the time in worldly discourse, and not for the spiritual advantage of the sick, and others present, we profane the Sabbath, instead of sanctifying it.

Do we see some oppressed by continual slumbering and sleeping, when death is supposed to be near, so that they cannot think on their everlasting state? Let this teach us to remember our latter end, and awake our souls to their work, while we are in health.

Do we see others troubled with ravings? Let it teach us to employ our reason for our souls advantage while we have the use of it.

Do we see some sadly discomposed with extreme pains and agonies? Let it mind us to dispatch our work while health and ease remain with us.

Do we observe their sight failing, tongue faultering, or hearing growing worse? O let this teach us to "make a covenant with our eyes," and *turn* them "away from beholding vanity;" to use our tongues for God's glory, and beware of abusing them now, while we have the use of them; and to employ our ears for hearing spiritual instructions, while they are in case for it.

DIRECTION III.

Concerning the Special Order, Method, and Manner, wherein the Duties of the Sabbath are to be performed.

THE Lord requires us, not only to take heed to the matter of our duties, but also to the manner of them; not only to do what is good, but to do it well. As we must seek God in due ordinances, so we must seek him in a due order, 1 Chron. xv. 13. Very much depends upon the circumstances of our actions, therefore we must look narrowly to them.

That we may take a view of the sanctification of the Sabbath complexly, and the order and circumstances of the duties therein required; there are three things to be considered:

1. What is requisite in order to prepare for the Sabbath, before it come.

2. What is requisite in performing the duties of the Sabbath when it is come.

3. What is requisite at the end of the Sabbath, or when the work thereof is over.

I. *Concerning*

I. Concerning our Preparation for the Sabbath.

As to the first, that it is needful to prepare for the Sabbath, cannot be denied, if we consider the word *remember* prefixed to the commandment, "Remember the Sabbath to keep it holy." We must remember it before it come, so as to provide for it. Moses calls the people, Exod xvi 23. to mind that "to morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath."

Again, if we consider the nature of the Sabbath-work, and our unfitness for it, preparation for it will be found very needful. We are called this day to make solemn and near approaches to that God, who is a glorious Spirit, and to hold communion with him who is infinitely holy; and is it not very necessary that we, who are naturally carnal, and much involved in worldly business through the week, should endeavour to abstract our thoughts from earthly things, that we may draw nigh to so great a God upon this holy day? For holy performances God requires us to make holy preparations; and therefore David saith, Psal xxvi 6 "I will wash mine hands in innocency, so shall I compass thine altar, O Lord." The mariner that intendeth a voyage, he not only provides his tackling but he is careful before he sail, to put his ship off from the land, that he may catch the first fair wind. In like manner Christian if thou wouldst launch heavenwards upon a Lord's day, be concerned to get the vessel of thy heart put off from the earth on the evening before.

Wert thou a person of great quality and estate and the king should send thee word that he would dine with thee to morrow thou wouldst make preparation for his entertainment the day before, by cleansing the house, and putting all things in order suitable to the dignity of so great a prince. Now, when King JESUS gives thee notice before hand that on such a day he is to sup with thee, wilt thou not testify thy respect to so great a potentate, by making preparation for him? When Christ prepares a table for thee in the gospel, and furnishes it with all the dainties of heaven pardon, peace, love, grace, and eternal life, shouldst thou not empty thy stomach, cleanse thy heart, adorn thy soul, and make ready to feast with thy Redeemer? At this gospel table others sit and feed their souls are filled with marrow and fatness, and their mouths praise the Lord with joyful lips, but alas! many have no stomach, they can eat little and savour nothing. Their stomachs are foul, their hearts unclean, the world fills their thoughts, they taste no goodness in hearing, in prayer, praises, or any duty of God's worship. Why? They are at no pains before hand to empty their minds of the world, and prepare for this heavenly fare.

Reader, were I to counsel thee how to improve a market-day so as thou mightest gain much wealth and treasure, I doubt not but thou wouldst hearken to me. And wilt thou not regard me, when I am to advise thee how to spend the Lord's day, the market-day for thy soul, so as thou mayest get the true treasure, even durable riches and righteousness? Lay aside worldly cares, remember, and prepare for this market-day, before it come, and beg skill from God how to improve it aright to the enriching of thy soul. Anciently there were laws obliging people to lay aside their work at such a particular hour on Saturday's afternoon, that they might remember and prepare for the Sabbath. Likewise it was a custom in some places to have public divine exercise and worship on the Saturday's evening, so that, at the ringing of a bell for it, people gave over their work, and repaired to the church to worship God, and hear something suitable and preparatory to the Sabbath. I cannot but commend this practice, as a good way to conclude and shut up all the labours and cares of the week, and publicly to give God thanks for prospering the works of our hands, and also to confess and mourn for the carnality of our hearts, and our little minding of Christ and heaven in our weekly business, and our manifold short comings in our duties both to God and man, and our forgetting and not practising through the week the sermons we heard the preceding Sabbath. Likewise it is a good way to take off our hearts from the world, and to compose and spiritualize the thoughts for the work of the approaching Sabbath, and also to pray and wrestle together for a blessing on the same, and for special assistance to ministers and people in the duties of the day, that the ensuing Sabbath may be one of the best Sabbaths we ever had, and that it may be one of the days of heaven to our souls.

But more particularly, the preparation needful for the Sabbath consists in these things.

1 In your dispatching and ordering your labour and business through the week with such prudence and foresight, that it may nowise hinder or disturb you on the Sabbath day.

2 In leaving off your work timeously the night before, and going seasonably to rest that both your servants and you may be in case to rise early on Sabbath morning, and not to be drousy or sleepy through the day. It is a great incroachment upon the Sabbath that some are guilty of, they sit up and work later on Saturday's night than any other night of the week; they ly longer on Sabbath morning than any other day; they go sooner to bed on Sabbath night than any other night, and they rise sooner on Monday morning than any other day of the week. Now, what is this but a grudging God his due time, a wearying of his day, and making it as short as you can and seeking to win it, if possible, from off the Saturday's night and Monday's morning?

Under the law, the latter part of the day, preceding the Sabbath, was called "the day of preparation for the Sabbath," Luke xxiii 54. intimating that it is our duty to prepare for the Sabbath before it come, and to do it upon the day preceding. Likewise, we find that Nehemiah ordered the gates of Jerusalem to be shut when it began to be dark before the Sabbath, Neh xiii 19. thereby teaching us timeously to give over our trafficking and worldly business on the evening before the Lord's day, and not to follow our business too late lest our thoughts be too much embarassed with secular affairs, and we thereby indisposed for the religious duties of the ensuing holy day.

3 It would be a good way to prepare for the Lord's day, sometimes to take your children and servants on the Saturday's night, when you call them together for family-worship, and instruct them concerning the end and institution of the Lord's day which is approaching, and the nature of the service that is requisite upon it. The Lord commends Abraham, for "commanding his household and children after him to keep the way of the Lord," Gen xviii 19. And he frequently directs the Israelites to instruct their children concerning the meaning of their rites and observations; and particularly concerning the passover, he saith, Exod xii 26, 27. "And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? that

ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians," &c. So, in like manner, concerning the observation of the Lord's day, you should tell your families, "The day of sacred rest, now approaching, is a memorial of God's wonderful love to us, that when we were lost and undone by sin, cursed by the divine law, and excluded out of God's rest, our Lord Jesus Christ undertook a great work for us to make up our peace, become our surety, and bear the curse and wrath due to us; and when he had so done, and finished his work of redemption, he, on the first day of the week, entered into his rest by his resurrection, and thereby made known to us that we should keep this day as a day of holy rest to him, in remembrance of his glorious work, and as a pledge of our celebrating an everlasting Sabbath with him above, in admiring his love, and singing his praise: And therefore let us make suitable preparation for this solemn day, and the duties of it." Alas! the omission of such instructions as these to young persons, doth cause the observation of this day, with many, to be built only on custom and example; and hence follows the great neglect of Sabbath sanctification, which is so common among us.

4. If you would prepare for the Sabbath, call off your thoughts timeously on Saturday's night, from worldly cares and business, that you may think on the great work of the approaching day; and labour to put yourselves in as solemn and as serious a frame, as if you were to die and step into eternity, and clear counts at God's tribunal, or as if you were visibly to tryst and meet with God, and solemnly treat with him concerning your salvation.

As godly Nehemiah took care to shut the gates of Jerusalem on the evening before the Sabbath, that no burdens might be carried in on the Sabbath-day; so secure you the gates of your hearts on the Saturday's evening, that no worldly thing may enter to disturb you in the performance of the great and solemn duties of the Sabbath

5. Look back on the bypast week, and examine your actions therein as particularly as you can, and repent for all the sins thereof, whether omission or commission, and flee to the blood of Christ to be cleansed from the guilt and filth of them, that so you may be prepared to appear before a holy God, who is "of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity." O seek to get all quarrels through the week removed, that you may have a reconciled God to meet with upon the Sabbath.

6. Study to have a deep sense of your wants upon your spirits, that you may get suitable supplies for them upon the Sabbath. If you were going to a great market next day, you would be thinking the night before what you wanted or needed thereat: The Sabbath is the great market-day for your souls, when you may hear Christ crying, as Rev. iii. 18. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed," &c.

7. Think upon the great design of the Sabbath, the commemoration of Christ's redeeming love, and entertain serious and thankful thoughts of the goodness of God manifested in the glorious work of redemption; and with godly Nehemiah, Neh. ix. 14. bless God for giving you the Sabbath, since it is such a pleasant and profitable day for the soul

8 Beg earnestly for God's help to sanctify the Sabbath, and that God may put you in a spiritual frame for the work thereof, and that you may have grace to leave all your worldly care "at the bottom of the hill, while you go up into the mount to worship God, and return again to them." Beg that the sins of the bygone week, and the misimprovement of former Sabbaths, may not hinder God's presence upon the ensuing Sabbath. Pray that ministers may be directed to a suitable word for your souls case, that your hearts may be prepared, your enemies restrained, and God's ordinances blessed; so that it may be a good day, "a day in God's courts is better than a thousand elsewhere."

And then, having so ordered and disposed matters, lay yourselves down to sleep in Christ's arms, and under his protection, leaving your hearts in heaven, that when you awake next morning, you may be still with God. Study to sleep, as well as "eat and drink, to the glory of God." Go to bed with this design, that your bodies may be refreshed, and fitted to serve your souls in the service of God upon the ensuing day.

II. *Concerning the Duties of the Sabbath*

As to the second thing proposed, What things are requisite in doing the work of the Sabbath, when it is come? This is a large subject, I shall reduce all I have to say upon it to three heads;

1. What is necessary before the public worship
2. What is necessary in time of public worship.
3 What is to be done after the public worship is over

As to the *first*, take these directions;

I. When you awake on Sabbath morning, rejoice at the approach of this blessed day: As the birds chirp and sing at the dawning of the morning's light, so let believer's account the light of this day sweet, as being a day of signal mercies, a day of communion with God, a day wherein the Spirit's dews fall upon the soul' As "Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day," John viii 56. so ought you this morning saying with the Psalmist, Psal. cxviii. 24. "This is the day the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it."

II. Let your souls be breathing forth holy meditations and ejaculations upon your very first awakening. Lift up your hearts in thanksgiving to God for that comfortable rest and sleep he hath vouchsafed to you the night past: for 'it is he that giveth his beloved sleep," and who renews his mercies to us every morning. Likewise give up and dedicate yourselves wholly to God and his service this day: And, betwixt your walking and rising, you may have such meditations as these: "O if I could say this morning with Isaiah, chap. xxvi. 9. 'With my soul have I desired thee in the night, and with my spirit within me will I seek thee early!' Let me this morning awake early from sin to righteousness, 1 Cor. xv. 34. or that in Rom. xiii. 11, 12. 'It is high time to awake out of sleep. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let me cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light." Or, think on your awaking out of the sleep of death, and rising out of the grave at the sound of the last trumpet, what a solemn wakening that will be: Or, think of God's goodness to thee, that thou awakest in life, health and safety this morning; say, "What a mercy is it, that God has kept my house from firing, and falling on my head! that he hath chained up satan my enemy, that he could neither hurt nor fright me in a visible manner! Many have lien down this night without sleep, and been full of tossings to the dawning of the day; but,

blessed be God, I have laid me down in peace, I have slept and waked again, and my sleep hath been refreshing. How would I value this mercy, if I were in sickness, and could not get sleep! Many have lien down and slept, but never waked again in this world; their first waking has been in eternity: and O! how sad, if it be in the flames of hell! But, O what shall I render to the Lord, that I wake again in the land of prayer, and of hope; and upon a Lord's day morning, wherein I hope to hear again the joyful sound, and see his power and glory in the sanctuary!"

If it is a summer morning, when the sun may be up and shining when thou awakest, then think, Christ the light of the world rose early this morning from the dark grave, wherein he lay buried for my sake. "The Sun of righteousness was up this day before the natural sun." Or think, This is the day wherein God said, "Let there be light, and it was so." Is the light so sweet, and is it so pleasant a thing for the eyes to behold the sun? O how much more to see Christ the bright Morning-star this day by the eye of faith, to see the Sun of righteousness shining in the firmament of gospel ordinances! Let me rise and prepare for this sight; O that my eyes may be cleared, and the mote taken out of the eye of faith, that I may this day see him, in comparison of whom the sun is but a dark clod of earth! O my soul, rise from the earth this day, get the moon under thy feet, and clothe thyself with the Sun; draw nigh to God in Christ, and set thy affections on things above; thou art capable of communion with God, do not debase thyself in raking always in the dung-hill of this world, in licking the dust with the serpent, or feeding on husks with the swine, as if thou hadst no higher end to serve than the world. Why wilt thou ly among the pots, and wallow in the puddle, when crystal streams are so near?"

Or think, "How happy are the angels, who are exempted from the necessity of sleep! They never rest, nor weary of God's work, but "praise him day and night." Behold, the sun never wearies to serve his Creator: How many thousand miles has the sun travelled since the last night I went to rest, that he might bring the light of a new Lord's day to me, a poor undeserving creature! And, shall not I rise with cheerfulness to celebrate this day, and serve my God and Saviour upon it? It is a mercy the natural sun is risen; but a far greater that the "Sun of righteousness" is up, and hath ascended to his meridian, that he may the better diffuse the influences of light and heat upon poor cold and blind souls, such as I am: I will get up this day, and ly in his way as he passeth by, and cry with the blind man, "Son of David, have mercy upon me."

Lastly, The morning sun may mind thee of the danger of secure Christless souls. The sun shone bright on Sodom that morning it was destroyed: Little did they think that fair morning, that the clouds would gather on a sudden, and drop fire on their heads; neither knowest thou, O Christless sinner, what a storm of wrath may fall on thee before night: Wherefore flee presently out of the Sodom of a natural state, to the Zoar of Christ's righteousness.

III. Rise full as early this day as on other days, and be as soon at God's work this day, as you are at your own work on other days: God is the best Master, his work the sweetest, and his wages the greatest. Yet alas! there are many who ly long on the morning of the Lord's day, they are loth to rise and fall to God's work; when they rise, they have no time for secret and family duties before the public worship: So that they are either slightly performed, or wholly neglected. O foolish sinner! dost thou think thy worldly business more worthy of thy early rising, than thy spiritual employment? Or, wilt thou shew greater regard to thy worthless body, than to thy gracious God, and thy precious soul? You owe thanks to God, that you have had the bypast week for your own affairs, and that now you have the prospect of another for them, and that God lets you see the first day of it; but O consider, that your Creator and Redeemer puts in for some time with you: All your time is not your own, neither is it in your own hands, God alone is the Author and Disposer of it. Well then, now is the time, this is the day that he requires: O let him have it wholly, seeing he gives you six times as much for yourselves. And grudge him not the morning of his own day. Remember that promise, Prov. viii. 17. "They that seek me early shall find me." In the morning the spirits are most fresh and lively, and fittest for contemplations and prayer. We are told, Exod. xvi. 13. that in the morning the dew and manna fell: Wouldst thou have the dew of a blessing to fall on thy soul, and to make thee as a watered garden? then rise early to wait for it. This was the practice of the saints; Job rose early and offered his sacrifices, Job i. 5. David prevented the dawning of the morning with his prayers, Psal. cxix. 147. Christ rose early this day before the sun. And for what end did he rise? Even to justify and save his people. O believers, did your Saviour rise early this morning to justify you, and will you not rise early this day to glorify him? This is the great design of the Sabbath. And the xcii. psalm, which is intituled, A song for the Sabbath-day, saith, "It is good to shew forth God's loving kindness in the morning." Timeousness at God's work on this day, or diligence in it, will not prove prejudicial to health; for, since God hath pronounced a special blessing upon the Sabbath, you have ground to expect that less sleep, food and refreshment, than at other times, will be blessed for your support in his work, and that you shall live in the doing thereof.

IV. When you are up, hasten to put on your clothes, and spend as little time this day in dressing yourself as possible, that you may have time for secret duties, and retired converse with God. But, since the body must be clothed this day, let your thoughts be well employed in the time you are doing it: Think on sin, that was the cause of your soul's nakedness, and of your body's need of apparel. Remember from whom you have your clothes, to cover, keep warm, and adorn your bodies, even from God, it is his wool and his flax; therefore give thanks to him for your raiment, as well as your food. And though your clothes be not so fine as you would wish, yet mind, that "these of whom the world was not worthy, wandered about in sheeps skins and goats skins:" And, if you be not so outwardly splendid as others, seek that decking which will "make you all glorious within."

When others are following vain fashions, seek ye to be "covered with the robes of Christ's righteousness." And, since you are this day to make a solemn appearance before God your heavenly Father, you must be sure, like Jacob, to come in the garments of your elder Brother, otherwise you cannot expect your Father's blessing Put no confidence in your own righteousness; for it is no better than rags, or a garment full of holes, the least whereof is sufficient to let in the curse of God upon you. Therefore "put on the Lord Jesus," if you would this day appear before God, and be accepted of him. Take care also, that your bodies this day

be gravely and decently apparelled, and beware of pride and vanity this way, if ye would have God to own you; the adorning which he recommends, is not that "of platting the hair, wearing of gold, and putting on of apparel, but the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price," 1 Pet. iii. 3, 4. Most people on the Sabbath are concerned to adorn their bodies with their best clothes; but, alas! who among you is careful to attire his soul as he ought on this day, when he is going to meet the blessed Redeemer of souls, the King of glory?

Mind your souls chiefly this day, and take care, whatever you be doing about your bodies, that your hearts be employed in spiritual meditations. Do you comb your head? you may think how numerous your sins are; they are "more than the hairs of your head," so that "none can reckon them," Psal. xl. 12. And to be sure, if you cannot reckon them, you are far less able to reckon for them. Do you wash your hands? think on the necessity of "washing your hands in innocency, that so ye may compass the altar of God." For these that would "ascend the hill of God, and stand in his holy place, must have clean hands and pure hearts." Holiness both in heart and life is absolutely needful, in order to our enjoying communion with God in ordinances.

V. As soon as possibly you can, retire this morning for the duties of secret prayer, praise, reading the word, meditation and self-examination. Much of the Sabbath, and especially the morning of it, should be spent in praising and thanksgiving, upon account of God's goodness both common and special, manifested in the works of creation and redemption. It is a most necessary and proper duty, to "shew forth God's loving kindness on the Sabbath morning," Psal. xcii. 2. Thanksgiving is the great end of the day, and of the mercies of it; "the redeemed of the Lord" ought this day to sing, "His mercy endureth for ever," Psal. cvii 2. for God sent his Son to redeem us for this very end, that he might have from us "the praise of the glory of his grace," Eph. i. 6, 12, 14. And if you deny him praise, you do what you can to disappoint him of the design of this wonderful work: Many serious souls think the Sabbath should be spent only in prayer, mourning, mortification, &c. and almost wholly neglect the duty of praise, which ought to be the principal, and wherewith God is best pleased. Remember, that praise is not only the end of the day, but the end of your lives; yea, the design of all God's works: God made man the tongue of the creation, to trumpet forth aloud what the rest of the creation do but silently whisper.

Directions in Performing the foresaid Duties.

Before I proceed further, I shall give some special advices concerning the duties of secret reading, prayer, and self-searching.

I. *Of Reading the Word.*

1. As to the reading of God's word, if you would do it with profit, then, 1. Look up to God for his blessing upon it: When you begin, pray that he may "open your eyes to see the wonders of it," and that he may "open your ears and hearts to hear and comply with it as the voice of God."

2. In reading the word, quicken yourselves to all possible attention. As children will rouze up themselves at the reading of their father's will, out of expectation of some portion or legacy bequeathed them therein by their father; so ought you to rouze up yourselves in reading of the word, in regard of the many rich and precious legacies which our Saviour hath bequeathed to you, in that last will and testament of his, sealed by his own blood.

3. Read the word with holy reverence, as if Jehovah himself stood by, and spake these words unto you; for reading is a kind of holy conference with God, and therefore ought to be gone about with a holy awe and concern. I do not mean that this reverence is to be shewn to the paper and print, but the matter contained therein; though even these, as the dead bodies of saints, ought not to be used dishonourably, as I have heard some graceless merchants do, by rolling up their small wares in leaves of the bible. In this like the practice of the ancient martyrs, who made more account of a leaf of the bible than of a treasure? And indeed the leaves of the bible, in some sense, are the field where the treasure is hid, and the pearl of price may be found, they are the swadling clothes of the holy Jesus. And therefore, in the next place,

4 Have an eye to Christ in every thing ye read, for he is the end, scope, and substance of the whole bible, and every thing in it is reducible to him.

5 Read it with application to yourselves, as if God spoke to you by name and sirname in every line of it. Read it as if it were a letter sent straight from heaven to you, to warn you against sin, and to persuade you to faith and holiness. Let us accept of its reproofs and admonitions with thankfulness, and say, What a mercy is it that we may read our Father's will in our mother-tongue, and that God speaks his mind so plainly to us in his word?

6. Mark the special passages of the word, either these that are most important in themselves, or most applicable to you. Mark the duties enjoined, and sins forbidden, with the promises to the one, and threatenings against the other. Fasten these upon your memories, and hide them in your hearts, meditate on them, and pray that God may keep them in your minds, ready for use against the time of need

II. *Of Secret Prayer.*

As for secret prayer, take these directions, if you would speed in it:

I. See that you be new creatures, and born again, if you would pray aright. A child, while in the womb, cannot cry; so no more can you cry, *Abba, Father*, while in the womb of a natural state. An unconverted man's prayers are not accounted prayers before God: The long prayers which Paul had, while a Pharisee, were not reckoned prayer at all, but, when he is a converted man, we are told then, with a *Behold*, that he prayed, Acts ix. 11.

II. Be frequent in this duty, for your needs are many. God hath erected the "throne of grace for the time of need," Heb. iv. 16. And he hath left the more needs upon us, that he may the oftener hear from us; he loves to hear his people's voice, and great need have we to let him oft hear it; for we have many lusts to be subdued, many graces to be strengthened, many doubts to be resolved, and many grievances to be redressed: Therefore be frequent in your addresses to God. Frequency begets familiarity, and fami-

liberty confidence; we go boldly to his house, we often visit. Eusebius tells us of the apostle James, sirnamed the Just, that he kneeled so oft and so long in secret prayer, that his knees became as callous and insensible as a camel's. And he tells us of the first Christian emperor, Constantine the Great, that he kneeled very much in secret prayer:—And, for an example to others, that he had his image in his coins, pictures, and statues, represented in the same praying posture, with his hands spread abroad, and his eyes lift up to heaven. King David was frequently in this exercise, Psal. lv. 17. "Evening, morning, and at noon, will I pray and cry aloud." And, if that be not enough, he says, Psal. cxix. 164. "Seven times a-day will I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments."

III. Affect privacy and retirement in it. Strive to let no ear hear but God's; for his ears are open to the most whispering prayers that can be put up: Not that we should be ashamed of our duty, but that we may evite misconstruction, and hide pride from our eyes; for, when there is a desire that men should take notice of our prayers, God takes no notice of them, unless it be to abhor and reject them. But if you be so circumstanced, that you cannot pray without being observed, you cannot help it; for it is better to hazard the censure of others, than the neglect of prayer: Only take care there be no ostentation in the doing of it.

IV. Pray with holy awe and reverence of God, before whom you sist yourselves. Labour for as much devotion and seriousness in prayer, as if you were taken up and presented before God on his royal throne, with millions of glorious angels ministering to him; or, as if you saw death and the grave on the one hand, and heaven and hell on the other; or, as if you heard the saints singing in heaven, or the damned roaring in hell. Do you not believe these things as well as if you saw them? and why are you not as serious as if you did see them?

V. Study to pray in faith, eying the power, mercy, and promise of God, and relying upon the mediation and righteousness of Jesus Christ; for these who pray thus, shall not seek God in vain. This kind of prayer is like Jonathan's bow, 2 Sam. i. "that never returns empty."

VI. Pray with fervency and importunity: Why? for ought you know, this may be the last Sabbath you may see, the last sermon you may hear, and the last prayer you may put up. Pray therefore as a dying man would and should do. Remember how fervent you have seen some dying persons in prayer, and labour for the same frame and fervency. You should seek this day, to have such a feeling of spiritual wants, and to have your bowels so pinched with a sense thereof, that, like the hungry and almost starved beggars, you may cry aloud for the bread of life. Let your prayers be the travail of your souls, and not the labour of your lips. Let your hearts be suitably affected in all the parts of prayer; never leave confession without some sorrow for sin, nor petition without some sense of the worth of mercies, nor thanksgiving without some solace and joy in God, the Author and Fountain of all our happiness. Let your affections correspond with your expressions, and continue instant in prayer. You ought this day, like Samson, Judg. xvi. to "bow yourselves with all your might" in prayer, to pull down the pillars of Dagon's temple, and the strong holds of sin in your souls. "Lift up your hearts with your hands to God in the heavens, and stir up yourselves to take hold of him:" Cast yourselves down at his feet, and say, as once a great man did to his prince, "I am resolved never to rise till I obtain mercy."

VII. Use arguments with God in prayer, either taken from God's power and mercy, or from your misery and necessity. Dost thou doubt, O man, if thou be converted? then lie sobbing before God, like that leper, Matth. viii. "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean;" *q. d.* Lord, thou mayest do as thou wilt; but this I know, tho' thou should never help me, that thou can do it. Thou hast power enough, yea, it is easy for thee, and will be no manner of trouble to thee, to change my heart, and give me an alms of mercy. Thou hast mercy as well as power; I have heard a good report of thy mercy, that "the King of Israel is a merciful King, and delights not in the death of a sinner," and that "his mercy endures for ever." Lord, here a poor condemned rebel comes in upon the proclamation, to accept of the King of Heaven's indemnity. I lay myself at thy feet, content to accept of mercy upon any terms: "Hast thou not one blessing for me, even for poor me, O my Father?" If there be not enough of merit in Christ to save me, I do not seek salvation; but in him I know there is a fulness of redundancy, a treasure that cannot be emptied. And, Lord, art thou not willing as well as able? Hast thou not opened thy side, that I might look in and see the yearning of thy bowels? yea, I have heard many times sounding towards lost sinners: Why then should I go dwell with everlasting burnings? "What profit, Lord, is there in my blood? The dead cannot praise thee, they that go down to the pit cannot celebrate thy goodness." Is it not better to make me a friend, than let me be an enemy? Is it not better that I should eternally sing thy praise, than live for ever blaspheming thy name? "Lord, what shall I do to be saved? Is there no balm in Gilead for a wounded soul?" Is there no hope for a distressed sinner? Is there no city of refuge for a pursued criminal? Lord, I am come like a starving beggar to the last door for relief, if thou help me not I must perish at thy threshold, I can go no further. Could we believingly make use of such arguments as these, Christ's pitiful heart would burst out in the midst thereof, and say to us as to the woman of Canaan, Mat. xv. "O woman, great is thy faith, be it to thee even as thou wilt."

VIII. As on Sabbath morning we should address God with more solemnity and intenseness, and with greater length than ordinary; so also with special petitions for the day. 1. Pray for yourselves that God may give you hearts and frames to sanctify a Sabbath to the Lord; that he may prepare your hearts for hearing, strengthen and sanctify your memories, go alongst with you to the sanctuary, and allow his presence there. Before you enter upon the public work of this day, labour to get your hearts possessed effectually with these truths: That God must work his own work in you and for you, or it will never be done; and without him you can do nothing: That there is no healing virtue in the waters of the sanctuary, unless the Angel of his presence descend and move them: That as in the first creation the Spirit moved on the waters, and then the living creatures were formed; so the Spirit must move upon the waters of ordinances, before they can produce or increase spiritual life: and as he must move upon the ordinances, and give virtue to them, so he must move upon your souls in attending on them. Pray earnestly then, that God may give you his Spirit to prepare you for hearing of his word, and to assist you in hearing; and, particularly, that he may

give you attention to hearken, understanding to conceive, wisdom to apply, judgment to discern, faith to believe, memory to retain, and grace to practise what you shall hear; that so the word may prove unto you "the savour of life unto life," and not "the savour of death unto death." O pray fervently, that it may not be your condemnation to go to the sanctuary every new Sabbath to get new bands laid upon you, to get your hearts more hardened, your affections more deadened, and your souls slain by the words of God's mouth; but that the word may be attended with saving power, for your conviction of sin, and your conversion to God in Jesus Christ the Mediator. Be so intent for Christ's presence this day, that no Lord's day may satisfy you without the Lord of the day. O what is the best day that ever was without the Ancient of days? What are the ordinances of God, without the God of ordinances? What are the assemblies of saints, without the Master of assemblies? What is a sermon, without a Saviour? What is a communion table without a communion with God? What is a Sabbath-day, without the Lord of the Sabbath? Protest therefore in a humble but an importunate manner, that you will be satisfied with nothing this day, without his presence; say with Moses, Exod. xxxiii. 5. "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." And cry to him with the church, Isa. lxiv. 1. "O that thou wouldst this day rend the heavens! O that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow at thy presence."

2. Pray for him that dispenseth the word, that God may open to him both a door of utterance, and a door of entrance; and particularly, that God may direct him to speak something that may be suitable to your case. It is a great loss to yourselves, as well as to ministers, that you pray so little for them: What is the reason that many times ministers are straitened in delivery, do not reach your hearts, nor speak closely to your case? it is because you pray not for them. Mind that sad threatening, Ezek. iii. 26. where the Spirit saith to the prophet, "I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover; for they are a rebellious house." O pray against this sad judgment, and beg that God may loose the minister's tongue, and put a word in his mouth for you. Can you expect a blessing on your food, when you will not so much as seek it from God, by praying for him that is to break the bread of life to you?

3. Pray for the whole congregation, that the Sabbath may be a day of the Son of man, and a day of God's power unto them: Pray that Christ may mount the white horse of the gospel, gird his sword on his thigh, and ride in triumph among them; that the arrows of his word may be sharp, and pierce hearts. Beg that some may be convinced, others strengthened, and others comforted: Pray that God's word preached, may not only be as a living song to the hearers, as Ezek. xxxiii. but as a lively song to them, that many may have it to say as David, Psal. cxix. 50. "Thy word hath quickened me." Pray that God may this day make his word as a "sharp two-edged sword." to divide betwixt sinners and their sins; that he may cause its point prick their hearts and savingly wound their consciences, and make its edge fetch blood from their lusts, yea hew them in pieces like Agag, before the Lord. Pray that God may make his word both as a fire and a hammer to the congregation; a fire to burn up the stubble of their corruptions, and a hammer to break the rocks of their hearts into pieces. Pray that it may be as the key of David, both to open and shut many hearts on this day; a key to open hearts, so as they may never more be shut upon Christ when he stands and knocks at them; and a key to shut hearts, so that they may never open to sin and satan when they knock for entrance. Pray that the whole congregation may get grace to hear sermons, and put up prayers this day, as if they were the last that ever they were to hear or put up in this world: And that Zion's King may take to himself his glorious conquering power, and in his majesty ride prosperously; and that he may make the arrows of his word "sharp in the hearts of his enemies, so that the people may fall under him."

IX. You must take care, that your secret prayers on Sabbath morning be early and seasonable, that they interfere not with family-worship, which ought this morning to be timeously performed before the public worship begin; for one duty must not justle with another, every duty is beautiful in its season. And in family-prayer you must be more solemn and particular than at other occasions; our sacrifices this day ought to be doubled. O it were happy, if secret and family duties were our souls delight on this day; and if we had such spiritual skill to perform them, that they might be helps, not hindrances to public ordinances.

Lastly, Having this morning put up your fervent prayers to God, you ought to look and wait for a return of them through the day. A wise merchant, that sends a ship to the sea, will enquire after her. Prayer brings your food from afar, look what becomes of it. If you present a petition to a prince, you wait what answer will be returned; and are ye not much more concerned in this case to do it? If you look not after your prayers, it is a sign you have little sense of your needs; little sense of the burden and yoke of sin; little sense of the preciousness of Christ, or the excellency of these mercies you have been seeking. You ought this day to be able to say, as Psal. xxv. 5. "On thee do I wait all the day." Your souls should be still panting after God and the light of his countenance, saying, "O that I may this day behold the beauty of the Lord! O that I may see his power and glory! O that I may taste that he is good! O that I may hear his voice, may bear his image, may be brought into the chamber of presence, and see him through the lattess of ordinances!

If ye would have a gracious return this day, you must be looking above ordinances and duties to him, who is "the dew of Israel," and expect the heavenly rain from himself; otherwise your fleece will remain dry, for all that men or angels can do. Therefore plead with God that he will bless and concur with the means, and "breathe upon your dry bones," without which the breath of men can never make them alive.

III. *Of Self-searching.*

As to the duty of self-searching, it is very necessary on the Sabbath morning, in order to prepare your souls for the work of the day.

1. Enquire into your own state; try whether you be in nature or grace, that, when you hear the word, you may know what belongs to you: For, if you be ignorant of your condition, you may apply promises for threatenings; conclude for heaven, when you are heirs of wrath; per-

suade yourselves of the love of God, when you are in a state of enmity.

II. Enquire into your particular necessities, what are these wants you would have supplied by the word, these sins and lusts you would have slain by it, what are these weak graces you would have strengthened by it, what are these doubts you would have resolved by it, and these heart-plagues you would have cured.

III. Enquire into the frames of your hearts, and see if they be duly qualified and disposed for attending the public ordinances.

Quest. What sort of hearts ought we to bring with us?

Ans. 1. Bring humble hearts. Consider that you are pieces of mean and vile dust venturing into the presence of an infinitely glorious God, to hear the "voice of the Lord, that is full of majesty," and solemnly to converse with him, before whom the "angels vail their faces."

2. Bring soft hearts, that the word may make some impression on them; for an arrow shot against a stone sticks not, but falls to the ground. Labour to get the "fallow ground of your hearts plowed up, and broken," before you come to receive the "seed of the word," according to Hosea x. 12. If you would have the fallow ground plowed up, you must seek the Lord by fervent and heart-breaking prayer.

3. Bring hunger and thirst with you to God's banqueting house, bring a deep sense of soul wants and necessities, and longing desires to meet with Christ in the ordinances. For he "fills the hungry with good things, when the rich are sent away empty." O for the hungry appetites of God's children, when we come to God's house! Say, "O that, like a new born child, I may this day desire the sincere milk of the word for my nourishment! and, O that, like a true child of my heavenly Father, I may love that milk best which comes warm from the breasts of public ordinances!"

IV. Search into these lusts and evils that hinder the success of ordinances, cast them out, and guard carefully against them. If you would have God this day to hear your prayers, and accept of your sacrifices, you must "regard no iniquity in your hearts" you must throw out all bosom lusts and idols. Christ saith to you this day, as once he did to Judas in another case, John xviii. 8. "If therefore you seek me, let these go their way:" Let your pride, worldliness, prejudice, &c. go away; for they bar Christ out of the heart.

1. Throw out worldliness, and all thoughts about the world, that you may with your whole souls this day attend upon God: Say to the cares of the world, as Abraham to his servants, Gen. xxii. "Stay ye here till I go yonder to worship God." Suffer not a vain thought this day to take up its lodging in your heart, according to Jer. iv. 14. It is said of Bernard, that, when he came to the church door, he would say, "Stay here, all my earthly thoughts." Nay, say this also before you come from home. Worldly hearts will hinder you from getting good of the ordinances; they will make the church like the market-place to you, full of tumult and distraction; they will make such a noise and buzzing in your ears, that you cannot hear; or they will make you wander in time of hearing, as those, Ezek. xxxiii. 31. Nay, they will make you weary of all Sabbath work, as those, Amos viii. 5.

2. Lay aside self-conceit, or a good opinion of yourselves, your duties and performances; count all these but "dung and loss for the saving knowledge of Christ." For, if you lean upon your prayers and preparations this day, as any piece of righteousness before God, this will mar your access to God this day, and make the ordinances prove dry breasts to you.

3. Throw out all prejudices against ministers, and against the laws of Christ; and with meekness lay your ear and heart open to receive instruction, saying with Paul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" and with Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

4. Guard against doubtings concerning the truths of God, and mysteries of religion: Let us captivate and subject reason to faith, and deal with it, as Joshua did with the Gibeonites; he made them "hewers of wood, and drawers of water, for the service of the temple:" So let us make reason subject to faith, and serviceable to religion; but no-wise set it up as a standard for examining its mysteries by, since they are above its reach.

5. Beware of erroneous principles; for these will mar the good of ordinances to you; while there is an error in the foundation, you cannot be "built up in the most holy faith." Christ bids us "be wise as serpents;" and serpents (they say) whatever injury is offered to them, their great care is to preserve their head. Let it be our great care, then, not only to preserve our hearts and hands from sin, but our heads from error; especially when there are so many false teachers going abroad, seeking to "pervert the simple, by fair words and false speeches."

6. Beware likewise of schism and division, and guard against those who are instruments to divide and scatter Christ's sheep. Do not straggle from Christ's flock, but abide close by the place where the good Shepherd feeds his flock, "and makes them to rest at noon," and do not "turn aside after the flocks of the companions," Cant. i. 7.

I refer the handling of the duties of masters of families, as such, till afterwards: Only, it ought to be their care early to call their families together to pray with them, and praise God; and to cause them rise as early this day as others. Let not your servants and children waste away this morning in sleep and idleness, but call them up as early to God's work this day, as you do to your own upon other days.

How blame-worthy are these families, and especially the masters thereof, who on week-days can rise betimes to follow their worldly business, but on the Lord's day do ly longer in bed than ordinary, giving themselves to carnal ease and rest? Is this to keep holy the Sabbath-day, thus to sleep and loiter away the first and chiefest part thereof? Is this the way to accomplish the work of the Sabbath, to promote the glory of God, and carry on the work of your salvation? All of you have great work to do this day; therefore rise early to it, as the Israelites did to the besieging of Jericho: They had been encompassing the city six days before; but we are told, Joshua vi. 15. That "on the seventh day, they rose early about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city seven times:" And so that day they became masters of the city. And, according to the best expositors, this seventh day, on which the walls of Jericho fell down, was the Sabbath. Now, O Christian, as the Israelites had the strong walls of Jericho, so hast thou the strong holds of sin to batter down this day; thou hast these Canaanites to conquer, which would keep thee out of the promised land: Therefore imitate the Israelites, and rise early this morning to your work: The walls are thick, your enemies strong; if you would expect then to conquer on the Sabbath-day, and triumph against night, see that you begin the siege early.

And, if you would manage the work successfully, you must set about and carry it on conjunctly, as well as separately; by family-prayer, as well as secret-prayer: And see that all in the family attend family-worship this morning. Likewise, as occasion offers, exhort your children and servants to prepare themselves for the public worship by the performance of secret duties, particularly reading and prayer. When you are at meat this morning, shew by your holy speeches, that your minds are not forgetful of the work of the day. Check playing and idle talking, both in children and servants, and labour to engage them by your example, to shew a more grave and serious air in their countenances this morning, than upon other occasions.

Let as many of them as can be conveniently spared, accompany you to the public ordinances; and suffer none of them to be absent therefrom, except in cases of necessity. Remember the fourth command, "Thou, thy son, thy daughter, thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and all within thy gates." Let not the dressing of meat for you, keep servants from the house of God this day; but see that you be able to say with Cornelius, (who feared the Lord with all his house) "We are all here present before God." Though children be young, yet bring them with you; for they are capable of getting good by the word sooner than we are aware. The scripture takes several times notice of little ones in the solemn assemblies, Deut. xxix. 11. Ezra x. 1. Acts xxi. 5. If we lay our children by the pool-side, who knows how early the Spirit of God may help them in, and heal them? Take your families alongst with you to the church; leave them not behind you, to come straggling to the church after worship is begun; nor allow them to drop away before it be ended. This is very indecent and disorderly; you would not allow them to do so with respect to your work. If you were going to the harvest field, you would not suffer them to come or go when they pleased. No, you would oblige them all to be ready timeously to come forth together, and fall to their work at once, and tarry till they loosed from work together: And should you not be as much concerned for God's work, as for your own; or the business of eternity, as for the affairs of time?

Concerning our going to the Church.

In the next place, let me give some advices relating to your behaviour in going to the church, proper especially for you whose houses lie somewhat remote from it.

Having dressed your souls, as well as may be, this morning, according to the foresaid directions, go forth, watching over your hearts and senses, having the lively impression of God's eyes upon you, and believing that he takes special notice of all your thoughts, words, and actions this day.

If you walk in company with others, take heed to your words, that they be savoury and suitable. O that people would guard against worldly discourse in their going to the church (which very much discomposeth the heart for the public worship) and would talk of spiritual subjects, of the design and work of the day, and encourage one another to it! How pleasant would this be! This was the ancient practice of God's people, Zech. viii. 21. and we see how much David is taken with it, Psal. cxxii. 1. "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord:" *q. d.* It was the most pleasant sound I heard all the week through, to hear people encouraging one another to assemble to God's public worship, in God's house, upon God's day. This to him was the most pleasant journey ever he went; he was not backward to it, he did not weary of it: nay, it was "the joy and life of his soul;" he was glad of it. How few among us are in this frame! Alas! instead of it, there are many in our day glad of any trifling excuse to stay them at home, or take them away from the afternoon's sermon.

If you live at some distance from the church, and be trysted with carnal company by the way, who savour nothing but the world; it is best for thee to retire from them to thine own meditations, lest thou be infected with their carnal and corrupt communications: For even a Peter, when he is conversing and warming his hands with the enemies of Christ, his heart turns ice-cold and frozen to Christ his Master, till a love-blink from the Sun of righteousness thawed it again.

If better meditations offer not to thee by the way, I shall furnish thee with some very suitable from natural things, which are objects of your senses.

If it be in a winter morning thou goest out, when the sun is but rising, think, if one sun make so bright a morning, what a shining morning will that be, when Christ, with all his bright angels and saints, shall break thro' the clouds, when there shall be as many suns as we see stars in a winter's night? O! shall I be one of those that "shall shine as the sun, in the kingdom of my Father?"

If it be in the spring time, and when a pleasant rain is falling upon the grass and corn, think, the Sabbath should be a grow-day for believers. This day God is as the "dew to Israel." O that my soul may "grow as the lily, and revive as the corn!" O that I may grow inward in sincerity, and outward in good works: downward in humility, and upward in heavenly mindedness! Let the doctrine of God's word drop this day on my soul, as "the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass," that I may wax taller in grace, and stronger in faith and love. This day I should be "going from strength to strength," according to Psal. lxxxiv. 7. As the bee is busy in going from flower to flower, still gathering honey as she passeth; so should I this day go from duty to duty, from one ordinance to another, from praying to reading, from reading to hearing, from hearing to meditating, still gathering grace and strength as I go.

Dost thou look to the heavens? Think I have my Saviour and my all there; there is the place of my everlasting abode. Sense tells me what the outside of it is; yet that spangled roof over my head is but the pavement of that glorious palace, where I shall enjoy my eternal Sabbath, and my everlasting rest in Christ's bosom. O my soul, yonder is Goshen, the region of light; yon twinkling stars, shining moon, and flaming sun, are but as lanterns hanging out at my Father's house to light thee, while thou walkest in the dark streets of the earth. Little dost thou know the glory, mirth, and joy, that are within: O what are worldlings joys to them! O let my affections and desires this day mount thither, that this may be one of the days of heaven to my soul!

Again, think, the Lord hath spread out the "heaven as a curtain," Psalm civ. 2. and, notwithstanding of its rapid motion, this curtain hath continued spread near these six thousand years, and not one hole is to be seen in it to this

day. Is not heaven then a safe place for me to lay up my treasure in, where none can break through and steal it from me? O that my portion and treasure may be there; "that, where my treasure is, there my heart may be also!"

Dost thou see the clouds? Think on the day when Christ will rend and break through them; as he went up triumphing in a cloud to heaven, in like manner he shall come again. Are the heavens of such bright and pure matter? Think on the purity of the inhabitants thereof. There is no room, no, not a foot-breadth, for impure persons in the heavenly Jerusalem, where the gates are of pearl; no profane sinner, no unclean thing shall enter there.

When thou walkest on the ground, think, this whole earth is but my Father's footstool, that he hath given me to tread on: O how glorious then must his palace be! yet it is mine in Christ. Again, this earth "hangs upon nothing," Job. xxvi. 27. O shall I be so foolish as to hang my hopes upon that which hangs on nothing? Again, wonder at God's power and faithfulness, that, notwithstanding it hangs as a ball in the air, and hath had many dreadful tempests upon it, and terrible earthquakes within it, yet God hath kept it from moving out of its place for near these six thousand years past.

Dost thou tread upon the grass? Think how God calls thee thereby to remember thy fading life and withering condition, every step thou makest, Isa. xl. 6. "All flesh is grass," and death is coming with his scythe to mow down this grass: And, though some grass escape the scythe in summer, when it is fresh and green, yet the winter frost will wither it away; so, though you escape the scythe of death in the summer of your youth, yet the winter of old age will come and wither you.

Dost thou pass over a little brook or rivulet in the way? Think, O if I could say this day with the Psalmist, Psal. xlii. 1, 2. "As the heart pants after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God; my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?"

Dost thou go up an ascent? Think, the way to heaven is all up the hill, Psal. xxiv. Lord, strengthen me to climb it, without fainting or sliding back. O that my soul this day may be ascending to God, and God may be descending to me!

Dost thou behold the sea? Wonder at the ebbing and flowing of it, and at God's power and goodness, that sets restraining bounds to it. How easily might that power, that makes it to flow 20 feet, make it flow 200 feet? and so it would overflow our sea-towns and adjacent coasts; but the Lord's goodness commands it back again by its ebb.

Dost thou see a ship in the sea? Think, Christ's church is compared to a ship; this world is the sea through which she sails; believers are the passengers; God is her pilot: the angels are her rowers; faith is the helm; hope is the anchor: For a mast, she hath, in midst of her, erected the saving tree of the cross; the graces are the sails hanging thereon; the Spirit is the wind that fills them; but Christ alone is the bottom that carries all safe and sure to the haven of eternal rest and felicity. O let my soul lean upon no other bottom. Again, think how mercifully Christ delivered his disciples, when tossed in a ship on the sea, in a dark night. My soul is a little ship, often ready to be overwhelmed with the waves of temptations: O then, when it is in this danger, let me awake Christ by my prayers.—Again, as it is said of the mariner, with respect to his ship, that he sails always within four inches of death; so it may be said of the soul in relation to the body, that it lives still within four inches of eternity. If these earthen vessels break, then our souls are immediately set a-drift into the bankless and bottomless ocean of eternity. Lord let not my soul launch out into that deep, while I am uncertain whether it sink or swim.

Doth it rain upon thee while the sun is shining? Think, if the sun of God's countenance shine on me, I may well be content to be wet with some rain of affliction: This easily doth counterbalance any trouble whatsoever.

Art thou drawing near to the church? Then put up some fervent ejaculations and prayers for God's blessing and presence. Say, as Abraham's servant did, when he came to the well of water near the city, Gen. xxiv. 12. "O Lord God, I pray thee send me good speed this day."—"Let me not miss my errand; let it be the day when salvation shall come to my heart and house; let it be the day of my new birth, the day when my hard heart will be broken; let it be a day to be had in everlasting remembrance. As I am drawing nigh to thy house, Lord, draw nigh to my soul, and let me have a meeting with thee this day. As thou art to knock at the doors of my soul by the hammer of thy word this day, Lord, come and make patent doors for thyself, and command thy loving-kindness to break in. Lord, open my eyes, that I may see the wonders of thy law; open my ears, that I may hear the charming voice of the Son of God; open my heart, that the King of glory may enter in; and open my lips, that my mouth may shew forth thy praise."

Dost thou come within sight of the church? Let thy heart rejoice to see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, and pray that God may still "create a cloud of defence upon every dwelling place in mount Zion, and upon all her assemblies;" and that "the mountain of the Lord's house may be exalted above all mountains." We ought to be much concerned for the church, and "prefer Jerusalem above our chief joy." Let us do, in a spiritual way, what Simon Maccabæus did in a natural, who, with three years labour, took down the top of the mount Acra in Jerusalem, that no hill there might compete in height with the temple of God. So let us cause the greatest mountain of secular interest vail to the mountain of the house of the Lord.

Do you see a poor man begging by the way? Let it awaken your gratitude and thankfulness, that you are not in his case, and he in yours; and that you are not begging from him, instead of his begging from you. Hearken, how importunate some beggars are; with what warm and feeling expressions do they plead? they uncover their sores, and shew their maladies, and use all methods to move our compassions; when we think to put them off with excuses or refusals, yet they follow us, and by their importunity draw an alms from us: Then think with yourselves, O why do not I thus with God? why am I so careless in seeking an alms of mercy from him? is not my need greater than any beggar's? is not the alms I am seeking far better? is not the fulness and pity of the Giver infinitely more? and shall I be so formal and lifeless in prayer? It was a good counsel of one, that he bade people learn to pray of beggars.

As it is one of the duties of this day to make collections, and bestow alms for the relief of the poor; so you should take heed that you perform this duty in the right manner.

that you do it not for a praise of men, but for the glory of God. Pray that your alms may be perfumed by the incense of Christ's merits, that they may be a "sweet smelling sacrifice unto God." Would you have a bountiful alms from God this day? then give liberally to his poor. Remember Christ's eye is upon you, and noticeth from heaven what every one casts into his poor this day, as well as he noticed the poor widow's casting in her two mites into the treasury, when he was here upon earth. Though you have not much to yourself, yet you are bound to give somewhat; and, if it be given in sincerity, God will graciously accept of it, though it be but two mites. But sure this will never break you, nor waste your substance, but rather increase it, and obtain a blessing thereon. I pity those miserable persons who want not money to tipple and drink with, but yet have none to bestow upon God's poor.

Directions concerning the Public Worship.

I proceed to the second thing proposed, What is necessary to be done in time of public worship, and when we enter into the church.

I. "Keep thy foot when thou goest into the house of God," Eccl. v. *i. e.* Look to your affections, which are the feet of the soul, by which men go to God, and walk or converse with him. Firmly believe, and constantly remember, that God's eye is very much on your behaviour while you are in his house. Therefore in the tabernacle, which was the place of public worship, it was commanded, Exod. xxv. 37. "Thou shalt make seven lamps, and they shall light the lamps, that they may give light;" to teach us, that nothing there could escape God's sight; for in his house there was always light. You cannot sin in secret there, for there are seven lamps to discover your miscarriages in the Lord's house. And, when the temple succeeded the tabernacle, God says of it, 1 Kings ix. 3. "Mine eye shall be there perpetually." God hath an eye, 1. of Observation, Jer. xvi. 17. to notice with what sincerity and liveliness you offer your services and performances. 2. An eye of good will, Amos ix. 4. to approve and bless you, if you worship him sincerely and faithfully. 3. An eye of indignation, Jer. xxi. 10. to bring wrath on you, if you approach God irreverently, worship him carelessly, and profane his day. Now, you may be assured of it, that God is as jealous of his courts under the gospel, as he was under the law, and doth take special notice of his people's behaviour there; for he tells us, "Where two or three are gathered in his name, he is in the midst of them," Matth. xviii. 20.

As you ought to have a lively sense of God's omniscience when you enter God's house, so you ought to have awful impressions of God's greatness, into whose presence you come, and a deep sense of your vileness and unworthiness to appear before him: And therefore be putting up ejaculations to God for acceptance in Christ Jesus. I do not mean that you should stand up (as some do) to private prayer in a public way, as the Pharisees did of old in the synagogues, to be seen of men, for which our Saviour reproves them, Matth. vi. 5, 6. telling us, that secret prayer should be performed in a secret manner. And far less should this be practised (as some do) when the congregation is employed in other worship: for this were a confounding of worship, and unacceptable to him who is the God of order, and is plainly reproved by the apostle, 1 Cor. xiv. Alas! it is to be suspected of many that do so, that these are all the prayers they use on Sabbath morning, for preparing themselves or their families for the public worship. But, if you come in before worship be begun, it is very proper you have your private ejaculations, and be lifting up your thoughts to heaven in a private manner: and, when you are set down in your seats, see if you be able to give a satisfying answer to that question the Lord put to the prophet, 1 Kings xix. 13. "What dost thou here, Elijah?" Can you say, "Lord, I have come, at thy command, to the place where thy honour dwelleth, to the place where thou usest to tryst with thy people, that I might meet with thee, and get a glimpse of thy countenance?" Alas! it is much to be regretted, that many come to church, they cannot tell for what end, like those Ephesians, mentioned Acts xix. 32. "The more part knew not wherefore they were come together." They come for nothing, and they ordinarily go away with nothing.

But as for you, whose errand is to meet with God, and get quickening to your souls, look to the frame of your hearts, set yourselves to hear God's word, and join in his worship with great reverence and fear; consider, not only ministers (God's ambassadors) are present, but the glorious angels are present, nay, the God of angels himself is present; therefore say, as Jacob did of Bethel, Gen xxviii 16, 17. "Surely the Lord is in this place. How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and the gate of heaven." In every part of God's worship, this day, whether singing, praying, hearing, partaking, study to behave as one that believes he is sisted in the presence of the all-seeing God, as one that is working for his immortal soul, as one that, within a few days, shall enter the gates of death, and render an account at the bar of the great Judge of the world.

II. Study to be at the beginning of worship, that you may be able to say with Cornelius, Acts x. 33. "Now we are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." Think not that you are in time if you win to the lecture or sermon, though you miss the prayers that went before; for, if you sinfully miss these, you have no ground to expect good by the whole day's preaching, since it is by the means of the public prayers that the word is sanctified to you, and you are prepared for it; and what good can the word do you, if God bless it not to you? and how can you look for the blessing, if you come not to seek it? It is not the way to profit by one ordinance, to neglect another. To be late of coming is offensive to God, stumbling to serious Christians, and injurious to your own souls. Alas! upon what small and frivolous excuses do many stay back from the public worship, or linger in coming to it? A little business, a little rain, snow, or cold, will detain them from the means of salvation. You that cannot hear the word, or come in time to God's worship for a little cold now, consider what an alteration there will be in hell; there it will be hot enough, and you shall not have the liberty of hearing. Did the cold hinder you? There the heat shall punish you for it. Doth a little rain or snow keep you at home, when Christ is calling you to receive him? How then will you endure that horrible tempest, which he will rain on gospel-slighters, even a flood of kindled brimstone that will never cease nor quench.

III. When you first see the minister this day in the pulpit, think, "O how welcome should I make him that

bringeth glad tidings, even the news of reconciliation to a perishing world? Lord, how great is thy clemency to us this day, in sending thy ambassadors with an olive branch of peace, and not a trumpet of war in their mouths?" Consider our reiterated rebellions and provocations, it might have been expected we should have had a fearful message sent us, like that of the flying angel, Rev. viii. *ult.* "Wo, wo, wo to the inhabitants of the earth," &c. But, instead of this, we have the sweet message in Isa. lv. 1. renewed, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come to the waters, and he that hath no money, come, buy," &c. and that in ver. 7. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him," &c. That is a joyful sound. "How then shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

IV. Study to be devout and reverend in the public worship, both as to the frame of your mind, and gesture of your body. It was a good advice of one, for this end, "Fix your eye on the minister, your ear on the word, and your heart on God." Awe your hearts into a holy reverence, by viewing the holiness and power of that God whom ye worship, and revolving his titles of majesty, so did the Psalmist, Psal. lxxxix. 6, 7, 8. "Who in heaven can be compared to the Lord? &c. God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his saints, &c. O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee! &c. Make a covenant with your eyes," that they gaze not about in spying your neighbours cloaths and gestures. A gadding eye is the ready way to make a wandering heart. The devil hath many objects to tempt and divert us; first men let loose their eyes, and then away goes the heart. Make a covenant with your eyes this day, that they neither shut with sleep nor wander after vanity. Though bodily service without the heart profiteth little, yet the worship of our bodies is not to be wholly slighted, God hath a right to the adoration of our bodies as well as our souls, for Christ suffered for both, 1 Cor. vi. 20. And we find Christ and the saints in the scripture using reverent gestures in prayer. I dare not precisely restrict people to any one particular gesture in public prayer, neither desire I to lay more stress upon gestures than they will bear, since I know communion with God may be obtained in any gesture; yet I must own, that it is the unhappy effect of our contention about gestures, that some serious persons, who have a devout respect to God and holy things, do yet seem more irreverent in their outward carriage, than some who are strangers to the power of godliness and immoral in their conversations. I know these place all their religion in outward gestures and forms, and go no further; yet this warrants none to run to the other extreme, to despise a decent or devout gesture. If weakness of nature require a person to sit in time of public prayer, I do not quarrel it, but, when no just cause can be pleaded for it, I cannot say that it is a suitable praying posture at public worship. A lazy sluggish posture in prayer tends to bring on sleep and drowsiness, and makes us forget what we are about, whereas, when we stand up, and universally change our posture when public prayer begins, it helps to awaken people to think upon the solemn addresses they are making to the great God. Only let us take care, that there be no vanity, self-conceit, or affectation, in the postures of our bodies at worship.

V. Come to hear the word with a sincere purpose to obey it, and comply with the whole will of God without reserve, be it pleasant or harsh to nature; be ready to perform every known duty, and part with every known sin, be it as dear as your right-hand, or right eye. It is not enough to say, We are all present to hear the sermon; but you must say, with Cornelius and his company, Acts x. "We are present to hear all things commanded us of God." And in a special manner you must be ready to hear and obey his "great command, of believing on the name of his Son," which is the great end of preaching and hearing. Wherefore, when Christ knocks by his word at the door of your heart, be ready to open, and welcome him in with joy, say to him, as Laban to Abraham's servant, Gen. xxiv. 31. "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without?" Though, alas, I cannot say what follows, "I have prepared the house, yet, Lord come in and prepare it for thyself,: And though "I be unworthy that thou shouldst come under my roof," yet a word from thee can cleanse and repair the house, yea, and "prepare an upper room" for thyself; "Lord, speak the word and it shall be done."

VI. Give close attention to the word. God looses you this day from the world, that you may "attend on the Lord without distraction," 1 Cor. vii. 35. Attend this day to what your Lord saith to you, as men who believe that every Sabbath and every sermon, that every prayer and exhortation, every call and offer of grace, bring you a step nearer heaven, or nearer hell; nearer to the mansions with Christ, or to a dwelling with devils; and that endless eternity depends upon your attention to God's word. How attentively would a condemned rebel hearken to his prince, every word being either life or death to him! Consider, it is matter of life and death to you, yea, your life through all the ages of never ending eternity, your life depends on right hearing, Deut. xxxii 17. And will you not take heed? You would have God attentive to your words in the time of your distress, and will you not be attentive to his words in the time of your health? Could a minister tell you how you might acquire a good estate, or where you might find a rich treasure, you would hearken to that; but, for an inheritance or treasure in heaven, many think it not worth their while to notice. Is not this an argument of strong carnality and atheism? O if we could imitate Christ's hearers, Luke xix. 48. it is said, "They were all very attentive to hear him,' the word *attentive* according to the original, may be rendered, *They hanged on him*, or *They hanged their ears at Christ's lips!* Let us, in like manner, hang upon Christ in hearing of the word, even as the child doth upon the breast, or as the bee upon a flower.

There is nothing that satan aims at more, than to divert your attention in time of hearing the word. This enemy of your souls is busy every day laying snares for you, seeking your ruin: But, O how active is he every Lord's day! The devil is still first at church; the children of God never gather together, but satan is among them: And his great design is, to render this engine of the word fruitless, because by it the strong holds of his kingdom have been battered and broken down. Now, the way he finds most success is, by tempting our eyes and thoughts to wander, in order to keep us from being attentive in time of hearing. O then, if we would have the word to profit us, let us

watch against satan's temptations and suggestions; let us guard against wandering, wearying, drowsiness, or any thing that may hinder our attention. And for those that can write quickly, to write down the heads of the sermon in time of hearing, is by some reckoned a good mean to engage the attention, prevent drowsiness, and help the memory afterwards; and some have found it very refreshing and edifying a long time after, to be looking over what they had written. But especially it is proper for young people to learn and use this way of writing.

VII. In a special manner, take heed to the word that suits your case, and most concerns your soul; particularly to that word that discovers the sinfulness and vileness of a poor soul by nature; and to that word that points out the misery of the unbeliever, and that shews the weight of those curses, the terror of that wrath, and severity of divine justice, to which he is hourly exposed; and to that word that sets out sin in its black and bloody colours; to that word that shews your inability to help yourself out of your miserable state: to that word that discovers your need of Christ, and his excellency, fitness and suitableness for you; and to that word that comes close home to your conscience, and tell you, as Nathan did David, "Thou art the man," thou art the poor lost sinner that is condemned, and for ever undone, without Christ. Take heed to that word that points out your particular sins, your predominate lusts and idols; take with the charge, and cry out, *Unclean, unclean.* While hearing the word, you ought to place your sins, and especially your darling lusts, in the front of the battle (as Uriah) purposely to be slain, and say, "Lord, let these smooth stones taken out of the brook of the sanctuary be thrown by so skilful and powerful a hand, that they may sink deep into the foreheads of these uncircumcised ones, to their utter ruin and destruction." And O it were happy, if, while the word doth touch our sins, our hearts were melted like Peter's, and moved to go home and weep bitterly. O what reason have we to weep, when we hear of the boundless mercy which we have despised, the matchless misery which we have deserved, the infinite love which we have abused, and the righteous law which we have transgressed!

VIII. Mix your hearing with faith, *i. e.* believe, 1. That it is God who speaks; the word is his, and not man's, 2. That he speaks to you in particular, as if he mentioned you by name and sirname. Put not reproofs and threatenings by yourselves, and say, They belong to your neighbour, and not to you; for this is a dangerous stratagem of the devil against your souls. But let every man open his ear, and hear what the Spirit saith to him, and apply the word particularly to himself; for the best plaister that ever was made up, can do no good unless it be applied. 3. Believe that what the Lord speaks to you by his word, is true and certain; that his doctrine is holy, and his laws just: that his threatenings will be strictly executed, and his promises faithfully accomplished. It is for want of faith that the word doth not profit. If but as much credit were given to the divine testimony and word of God, as we give to human testimony and the writings of men, the word would have more success and efficacy than, alas! it hath on the most part.

IX. Lay up what you hear in our hearts and memories, and be at all pains to retain it, for the devil, like the fowls of the air, is at hand to snatch away the seed of the word as soon as it lights, if we be not careful to hide it in our hearts. Therefore it is a good help in time of hearing, to be often recalling and repeating the heads of what has been spoken in our minds; for when we hear a head but once, and think no more upon it till the sermon be done, we are fair to lose it.

X. Join cordially with the congregation in singing the praises of God. This is a heavenly duty, pleasant to God, and profitable to yourselves: therefore be conscientious in the performing of it: "Sing with understanding," and meditate upon what you sing; "sing with grace in your hearts," Col. iii. 16. It is grace that sweetens the voice in God's ear, an old heart cannot sing a new song; nay, grace must be in a lively exercise when you sing, according to Psal. lvii. 8. you should cry to your hearts and to your graces, and particularly to faith, love and delight, as in Judges v. 12. "Awake, awake, Deborah, awake, awake, utter a song," &c. There should be a great warmness of love and affection to God when we sing to him, according to Isa. v. 1. Look well then to your hearts in singing, mind the matter more than the music, the cleanness of the heart more than the cleanness of the voice.

Non vox sed votum; non musica chordula, sed cor,
Non clamans, sed amans psallit in aure Dei.

I cannot pass some here, without a reproof, such as those, 1. Who sit dumb in the congregation, while their neighbours are praising God, as if the devil had tackt their tongues to the roof of their mouths: Think not this work below the greatest of you, for it is your honour. Excuse not yourselves by saying, you cannot sing musically; for, if you had any delight in the duty, you would sing as you can. 2. Those who in singing, notice the tune more than the matter, and mind the voice more than the "making melody in their hearts to the Lord." 3. Those that absent themselves from the singing of the psalms, who either come not at the beginning of worship till the psalms be over, or rise and go out at the close before the psalms be sung. Would you know whose disciples they are who do so, they are not Christ's, but Judas's; for when Christ sang the hymn on the back of the communion, Matt. xxvi. 30. all the disciples were present but Judas, who slipt out before the psalms; and, since he turned his back upon so sweet a duty, it could not be a good errand he was going about; it was first to betray his Master, and then to hang himself. O then, take warning, and follow Judas's example no more.

XI. Let none go forth before pronouncing of the blessing. God allows none, great or small, to go out before his worship be ended; both prince and people must meet and part at the same time, Ezek. xlvi. 10. Those that wilfully depart without hearing the blessing pronounced, and make a custom of it, if they repent not, it is to be feared they must one day stay to hear that sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed." You run away from the blessing, but you cannot run from this curse. Wherefore let us stay the blessing, and reverently stand up (as the congregation of Israel did, 1 Kings viii. 14.) to receive our share in it, hoping and praying that it may come down upon us, as it surely will, if we believingly look up to him, that "commands the blessing upon mount Zion, even life for evermore.

Concerning our Behaviour betwixt Sermons.

Having finished the work of the forenoon, you must take care how you dispose of yourselves betwixt sermons

1. If the intermission be somewhat long and your houses near at hand, then retire to them, meditating upon what you have heard, and fixing the convictions and directions into your minds, beware of worldly thoughts or words by the way

2 As soon as you come home go to secret prayer, and beg God's help to improve what you have heard that it may kill sin, and quicken grace in you, and that God may strengthen your weak memories to retain it, and pardon your failings in his service

3 Eat sparingly betwixt sermons, lest it dull your spirits, and indispose you for the afternoon's work, and see that your discourse in time thereof be suitable to the day

4 If time allow neglect not to call your families together for the worship of God

If you have any time to be alone, spend it frugally in reading praying or meditating, let not a moment of it be ... think on what you have been hearing or draw spiritual instructions from what you see Do you sit by the fire, and see the sparks fly up? Think, "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward," Job v 7 "Sin hath filled my short life with troubles, but blessed be God, that I am this day invited to come to Jesus Christ, who is a remedy both for sin and sorrow"

Dost thou see a spider in the window weaving cunning webs to catch the silly fly? Think, 'Satan that cunning enemy, is doing the like for my poor soul" Seest thou how the spider hides itself in its hole till once the fly be intangled, and then runs to seize it, and drag it into its hole? So doth the devil lie in wait till once sinners be caught into his snares, and then he lays on them, and hauls them away to hell with him Again, think how painfully and curiously the spiders weave their cobwebs to catch flies, never considering that, before their prey be caught, both they and their webs may be swept down by the besom, and trode in the dust What is this but a lively emblem of the curious projects which some frame for gaining the world? What are they else but a taking great pains to catch a fly? And oft, before it be caught, death comes with its besom, and sweeps them and their fine projects down in the grave altogether "For in that day all their thoughts perish," Psal cxlvi 4 But O how wise are those souls who are laying out all their thoughts, and using all means this day to win Christ! This is a project that will survive death, here is gain that death cannot rob them of Thus we see how every thing might learn us a spiritual lesson, if we were spiritually-minded

6 If you be far from home, and have not a house to which you can conveniently go betwixt sermons, then improve your time as well as you can, either in the church or church yard, by reading, meditating, private ejaculations, or spiritual conferences It is very sad to hear people in the church-yard this day talking about their markets corns, cattle, and other worldly subjects Alas! the devil is as busy sowing his tares in the church yard as Christ's ministers are in sowing the good seed in the church and hath far more increase than they Is it not strange that people should go forth from hearing a warm sermon ... a sermon exactly adapted to their souls case, and yet have never a word of it among them, more than they had been deaf or sleeping all the time, but no sooner is the word out of the minister's mouth, but presently the world is in theirs!

Quest May not we ask or hear news this day?

Ans Asking, hearing or telling news this day is sinful if it be done to satisfy curiosity, to divert or put off the time, this would be a "finding our own pleasure," which is forbidden on the Lord's day But if it be done that we may know how it fares with the church at home or abroad, and that we may get our hearts suitably affected with the case of Zion, as it was with Nehemiah, Neh i 2 'I asked them concerning the Jews and concerning Jerusalem,' I say in that case it is lawful, for thus we show our concern for the kingdom of Christ in the world and hereby we may be furnished with matter both of prayer and praise. Outward events and occurrences, if rightly improven ... be so far from unframing the spirit for the duties of the Sabbath that we may reap much spiritual advantage from them Let us therefore take care to make a spiritual improvement of the news we hear this day, for God's power, mercy and justice, may be seen and admired in the occurrences of providence as well as in the works of creation Dost thou hear any news that makes thee glad? Let it excite thee to bless God for the sweet gospel news of 'Christ's coming to save lost sinners," which thou hast been hearing this day Let it put thee in mind what glad tidings it will be to a believer to hear the sound of the last trumpet, and the absolving sentence of Christ his judge Dost thou hear of the raging contentions divisions and confusions that are in the world? Let it mind thee of the blest agreement and harmony that is among the saints and angels above Dost thou hear of bloody wars and rumours of wars? Remember the day is at hand O believer, when thou shalt be housed with Christ the 'Prince of peace' where there is nothing but perfect peace, union and tranquillity

But in case you sit or walk alone betwixt sermons in the church or church yard you may either think upon what you have been hearing, or meditate upon your latter end which the graves you see and tread on ... Think how 'one generation comes and another goes' Our fathers had their day upon the stage, and they were ... off to make room for us, now we have our day on the stage, but in a little we must go off too and give place to the succeeding generation As we draw on some upon the stage these do thrust us off it again and we must shortly be laid with our fathers Again think what a mortifying sight is before our eyes, there lies the rubbish of [illegible] sand generations What is the whole world almost but a heap of graves and dead men bones? Much of the ground we now tread on as well as these graves was once living so that we plow up and dig through our forefathers, and must shortly turn earth ourselves to bury our posterity What cause have we then to be humble? We are made of the same metal with the ground we walk on God's hands have kneaded our bodies of the same clay with others and his fingers will crumble us again into the same dust Let us abhor pride, for this piece of ground will lay us all low enough in a short time As six foot of a cloth ... us while we live, so six foot of earth here will suffice us when we are dead, and why should we boast of any earthly enjoyments? What is it we value ourselves upon? Is it our high extract Ah! the worms have as noble an extract as we, nay they are of an older family and rise, for ... creeping thing ... [illegible]

value yourselves for your riches? remember both the poor and you shall ly down in the dust together, and the worms shall cover you alike, Job xxi 26. Nay, the body of a beggar makes as good dust as the body of a king; the grave dust of the one smells as sweet as the other, there it makes no obeisance to it, nor keeps any distance from it.

Concerning the Afternoon's Worship.

When the time for the afternoon's worship is come, see that ye return again to it in due time; think not the half of the day enough for the service of God; remember the whole day is his: Your souls necessities also require your attending on all diets of worship; therefore miss no opportunity, for you know not when you may meet with Christ. Thomas, by being absent from one meeting of the disciples, lost a joyful sight of Christ which the rest got, and for some time afterwards laboured under sad doubting and unbelief: So you that withdraw from any of the meetings of God's people in the sanctuary, have reason to fear plagues upon your souls. You that go away unnecessarily from the afternoon's worship, (as many in the country do,) consider what a shrewd sign it is, that ye have got little good the forenoon, and that ye are very indifferent what become of your precious souls. Know you not that the loss of one opportunity may be the loss of your souls? It may be, in your absence, the Spirit, who blows when he listeth, did vouchsafe a gale, which might have melted your frozen heart; it may be, then the word was spoke, that, through God's blessing, might have begun a good work on your soul: And when you provoke him, by neglecting such an opportunity, what do you know if ever he vouchsafe such another gale to you all your life again?

As for your carriage during the afternoon's worship, I refer you to the foregoing directions; for they suit the afternoon, as well as the forenoon.

Only there are some few things more I would mind you of:

I. If there be sick persons who desire the aid of your prayers, as you ought to sympathize with them, so you ought also to remember God's goodness to you, that preserves you in health, when others are tossed on sick beds: that allows you to sing his praises, while others are groaning with pains; that gives you liberty to attend his ordinances, when others, better than you, are detained therefrom.

II. If baptism be administered after sermon, then take these directions concerning your carriage on that occasion. 1. Beware of removing before it is over, as many do, for this argues both a contempt of Christ's ordinance, which he hath solemnly instituted for his church's good, and want of charity to the persons to be baptized, in that you will not stay to pray for them, or receive them into the communion of the visible church: As also, it sheweth that you have little regard to your own souls, in that you turn your back upon such an excellent mean of edification as this is. You that are guilty this way, beware of it for the future. Consider what an irreverent and unbecoming thing it would be, if all would do as you do: And, do you not tempt others, by your example, to go off with you?

2. Stay still and pray for the members to be ingrafted, as others did for you: Pray that God may give the inward grace with the outward seal, and apply Christ's blood to the soul, as water is applied to the body.

3. Remember your own baptism, and solemn engagements to Christ in infancy. Remember whose name you bear, whose livery you wear, and whose colours ye are sworn to: And be humbled for your manifold pollutions, your falling short of the grace of baptism, and walking contrary to your solemn vows. Examine what fruits you reap from your baptism, and if you have got your interest in pardon of sin, sanctifying grace, and other blessings, sealed to you in that sacrament, cleared up and secured: And try if ye feel the efficacy of Christ's blood, represented and applied in that ordinance, melting your hearts, cleansing you from sin, and quickening you to holiness. I shall say no more in this place concerning our improving of our baptism, nor of the duties of parents who present their children to it, nor of those who are witnesses; seeing I have handled these points pretty fully in my Sacramental Catechism, to which the reader is referred.

III. If you be called after the dismissing of the congregation, and before you return home, to attend the funerals of any of your deceast neighbours, let your words and carriage be grave, and suitable to the occasion; abhor that levity and frothiness which many shew at such occasions. When you draw nigh, and see the open grave, think, God is causing the grave to open its mouth, to warn me of my latter end, and to tell me, "that I must ly there ere long." When you see the bones scattered about the grave's mouth in fearful confusion, think, My skull and bones will be thus lying and trampled on in a short time, and will not be distinguished from the bones of others; and what folly is it for men to be lifting up themselves, and despising others now? When you hear the doleful murmur that is made by the skulls and clods of earth striking upon the coffin, think with thyself, that it sounds forth these words, "Remember thou must die, consider thy latter end." When you see the grave filled up, and covered with earth, and people departing from it, think, Thus will I be carried out, and left alone by all my friends; and there will be none to bear me company in this dark cell, but the worms, who will feast themselves on me, without any to hinder them. O to be always humble and mindful of death!

Lastly, Let not the impressions of your neighbours' funerals wear soon off. Some are under a little concern at the time; but no sooner is the dead interred, and the grave filled up again, but all their serious thoughts evanish, and they return to their sins and pleasures as before. But see that your concern be lasting; go away thinking, I may be the next for whom the grave may be opened: Therefore "I will wait all the days of my appointed time, till my change come."

IV. If there be any public worship, lecture, or catechising, or repetition of the sermons this evening; let all, who can, attend the same: For as much of the Lord's day as can be, should be spent in the public exercises and meetings of God's people. I acknowledge, family duties and secret duties are likewise to be performed, and time must be allowed for them; and it is well when matters are so ordered, that public and private duties do not interfere on the Lord's day. But, whenever they seem to do it, let it be observed as a rule in this case, "the private ought to give place to the public;" for it is one chief end of setting apart

this day, solemnly to acknowledge God, and celebrate his worship in the assemblies and meetings of Christians.

Concerning our Behaviour after Public Worship.

I come to the third thing, to shew what is necessary to be done after the public worship is over.

I. If you be going home in company with others, then confer together upon the sermons you have heard by the way. For, Deut. xi. 18, 19. you are commanded not only to lay up "God's words in your heart" but to speak of them when "you walk by the way." We see Christ's hearers talked of the word by the way, Luke xxiv. 32. "Did not our hearts burn within us while he opened to us the scriptures?" I know this is the practice of the Christians in some places, though I fear there is little of this sort of conference among us. Instead of it, I fear it is the talk of many, when going home, of this and the other person they saw in the church, or spake with about worldly affairs.

II. If you have not occasion for converse, then meditate upon what you have heard through the day, Psal. lxii. 10. "God hath spoken once, yea, twice have I heard it," saith the Psalmist. That which God speaks, you should go over it again in your thoughts, and chew the cud upon it. Let it continue like the ringing of bells sounding in your ears after the bells are ceased. It was a good answer that one coming from church gave to another that asked him If the sermon was done? "Nay, (says he) the congregation is dismissed, but I hope the sermon is not done."

III. You may also be furnished with other occasional meditations very suitable to the day, from the things you may see by the way. Dost thou see the clouds turning black and threatening rain, which cause thee to mend thy pace and haste home? Think, surely afflictions are mercies to God's people; they, like a black cloud, cause them to mend their pace, and long to be home at their Father's house. If our sun should always shine with unclouded beams, we should not make such haste. Should we find too much friendship in our inn, and kindness in our pilgrimage, we would be fain to forget our Father's house, and our heritage above.

Dost thou see the sun declining, and hasting down to night? Think, the sun's motion is very swift, though insensible in the mean time. He runs many thousand miles in an hour, and flies with incredible swiftness about the earth, carrying our time about with him; so we (though the most part be insensible of it) are flying as fast to the grave. O then, should not our souls be posting as hard from sin and wrath to Christ our city of refuge? Dost thou see the sun setting, and the darkness coming on? It hath a voice to thee, the day of thy life posteth to an end, the dark night of death comes when thou must set in the grave. O! see thou have not thy work to begin, when thy sun is setting, and thy day ended; for, when the night comes, no man can work; there is no repentance in the grave.

Is the sky clear at the sun setting, so that it prognosticates a fair morning next day? Think upon the death of an upright man, the latter end of that man is peace. O believer, the evening of thy day shall be serene, and thy sun shall set without clouds. The morning of thy resurrection shall be bright, and thy eternity for ever glorious. No wonder then, though Balaam wished to "die the death of the righteous, and to have his last end like his."

Is it in the winter time that you are going home, when the sky may be full of stars; consider how glorious the mansion of the saints must be, since that bespangled roof is but the floor or pavement of their palace; yet that is my home, where I hope to lodge when night comes, and from which I shall never flit. O how many millions of blessed souls dwell therein! How lightsome is their life! And how pleasant is their employment! Shall I ever be satisfied till I be there!

Is it in the summer or harvest time, when you are obliged to go into the field to attend and gather your cattle? Beware of carrying an earthly mind alongst with you, but labour to learn some heavenly lessons from every thing you see.

Do your cattle stray from you? think, How ready am I to wander from Christ my Shepherd! "Lord, I have gone astray like a lost sheep." O! "seek me and turn me again; suffer me not to wander as far as hell, as I will certainly do, if thou let me alone; for of myself I will never find the way back to thee."

Do you see the sun returning from us, and the summer going away? Mind how the summer days of grace will at length go away, and the winter of sickness and old age will come on. Let me be busy now, and imitate the bee, who gathers her meat in the summer, and provides for the winter before it come. Oh let me not sin nor sleep away my days of grace, lest I have it to regret, as Jer. viii. 20. "My harvest is past, my summer is ended, yet I am not saved."

Is it in harvest, when you see the corns cut down through the fields? Think how death with his sickle will cut you down in like manner, Rom. xiv. 15.

See you a tree growing? Think how the ax of death and spiritual judgments is laid to the root of the barren tree, or fruitless professor. Again, think how night and day are like two axes hewing at the root of the tree of man's life, without rest; when the one is up the other is down. Every day a spell flies off, and every night a chip goes; and so, ere long, our bones will be "scattered about the grave's mouth as when one cutteth wood," Psal. cxli. 7. I see my neighbours as cut trees daily falling about me. I find myself beginning to totter and shake with the frequent blows I am getting. O that in the mean time I may be inclining Christ-wards and heaven-wards! for, "as the tree falls so will it lie." See you a worm crawling on the ground? Think upon the worm of conscience that never dies, but gnaws the wicked to all eternity. It is my highest wisdom to make conscience my friend, for it is a "friend that sticks closer than a brother;" it will faithfully attend us on a death-bed, and at a tribunal, and administer cordials to us then. But, if conscience be thine enemy, next to God himself, thou wilt find it the most terrible enemy that ever a poor soul had; thou canst neither resist it, nor flee from it. It is a messenger thou canst not deforce, a witness thou canst not cast, a judge thou canst not decline, and an executioner thou canst not withstand. Poor Christless sinner, it will serve instead of all these against thee. O labour to get it sprinkled in time with Christ's blood, and this will pacify it.

Again think, What is man but a worm? He is twice so called in one verse, Job xxv. 26. What a poor weak helpless creature is a worm; it is easily crushed by the foot, and can make no resistance. So weak and helpless is man,

with respect to God; he is more easily crushed by the feet of his justice, than a worm is by ours. What madness then is it for a worm to rebel against the Creator of the world? what are the kings and princes of the earth but as so many worms crawling upon his footstool? Each of us must ere long take up our dwelling with the worms, and say to them, "Ye are my brethren and sisters."

Again, behold, as worms, when they creep into the earth, leave their slime behind them about the hole's mouth; so believers, when they creep into the grave, leave all their sin and corruption at the grave's mouth, and their souls ascend to God, "without spot or wrinkle."

Concerning our Behaviour at Home on the Sabbath Evening.

As soon as possibly you can win home after sermons, set about your secret work, and family-duties: Consider, that though the sermons be over, the Sabbath is not over: Therefore study to spend the rest of the day in God's service, and keep still the impressions of what you have been hearing upon your spirits. And if you would do this, take these directions:

I. Retire presently for secret prayer and self-examination: Pray over what you have been hearing, and beg that "the Lord may keep it in the imagination of the thoughts of your hearts." This is a good way both to help your memories, and procure a blessing on what you have heard.—Consider whether you had any thing of God's spirit and presence through the day. If God withdrew, then lament after him, and search into the cause. If he "shewed himself through the lattice," then bless him for it, and go on to "walk in the light of his countenance." Hath any good motion been raised in your hearts by the word? Pray for the preservation of it. Hath the word been refreshing and edifying to you? Lay it up in your hearts, and commit that to God to keep for you, which your frail memories cannot retain, pleading, that God may make it forthcoming to you against the time of your need. Hath the word discovered any particular sin or lust to you? then bewail and mourn for it, and beg mortifying grace to subdue and conquer it. Have you been negligent in hearing? Lament it, put on new resolutions, and cry to God for strength; and forget not to employ your great Advocate Jesus Christ to apologize for your weakness and shortcomings, and to separate all the defects from your performances, and offer them up in his censer, perfumed with the incense of his merits.—Was thy conscience stupid, thy heart hard, and thy mind carnal, while hearing a soul-rousing sermon? Be ashamed of it before God, and chide with thy heart, and say to it, "Art thou worse than Felix a heathen? For his heart trembled, when he heard of judgment to come," Acts xxiv. Art thou worse than devils? For "they believe and tremble," James ii. Oh! shall heathens and devils be sooner moved than my hard heart? Hast thou reaped no benefit through the day? Let it be matter of exercise and lamentation to thee before the Lord. Let never bare ordinances satisfy thee, without communion with God therein. As Zaccheus climbed up into the sycamore tree to see Jesus, and when once he had got a sight of him there, "he came down joyfully;" so oughtest thou to go up to the sycamore tree of ordinances for this purpose, to see God in Christ; and, unless this sight be granted thee, "come down sorrowfully." When men go to meet their beloved friend at a certain place, and they miss him, how discontentedly do they go away? Alas! what are ordinances without God, but as a table without meat, a well without water, from which a needy soul must needs depart hungry and thirsty?

It concerns thee to call thyself to account for thy frame and carriage in hearing, reading, prayer, praise, giving alms, and every duty you have been employed in through the day. As God himself reviewed every day's work of his, and "saw it was good," Gen. i. So should we review every day, and, in a special manner, every Sabbath day's work, and see if it be good or no. Let us "judge ourselves, that we may not be judged."

II. Read over those portions of scripture which you have heard opened, with the scriptures cited by the minister, think on them, and beg the illumination of God's Spirit to make you understand them. We see the eunuch was reading the scripture upon his return from the public worship and God blessed it and sent him an interpreter; and if you do so, you may expect the same. He that sent Philip to him, will send his own Spirit to help you; who, when he comes, brings such a divine light alongst with him, as will make you see the truths of the gospel with another eye, and discover more in the word than ever you beheld in it before: So that, though you have read the same chapters and verses about Christ many times over, yet then you shall be made to say, O where were my eyes till now, that I never saw what was contained here?

III. Labour by all means to keep up the remembrance and impressions of the word thou hast been hearing, on thy mind: Let it not be as a wayfaring man to tarry with thee only for a night; but let it be an inhabitant to dwell with thee all the week over. Hath the Spirit made any warm impressions by the word upon thy soul this day? O watch over them and strive to preserve and entertain them through the evening, and look to God for help. "Oh Lord, let me not lose the heat of this day, in the cool of the evening.—Thy word hath wrought wonderful changes upon others, O that I may likewise experience the same, and have it to say, I went forth proud, but am come home humble: I went out careless and hard-hearted, but am come back thoughtful and contrite in spirit: I went to church a bond-slave of satan, but am returned a free man of Christ!"

Poor soul, much depends upon your care and watchfulness over yourself in the evening of the Lord's day, that you "lose not these things wrought in you by the word" thro' the day. There are many like those soldiers who are victorious in the day, but lose all at night through their security and sloth: they do not watch and stand to their arms, but suffer the enemy to surprise them, to beat up their quarters, and spoil their tents, when they are secure, dreaming of no hazard. Many are like Hannibal, that knew better how to obtain a victory, than how to improve it when got. Watch then against the devil, the world, and your own hearts, and beware of losing at night what you gain through the day.

I shall here give some advices, in order to the cherishing and improving of those good motions, convictions, or resolutions, that may be begot in you by hearing of the word on the Lord's day. These are sparks kindled by the breath of God, therefore do not smother them, but strive to blow them up into a flame by prayer and meditation.

1. Beg earnestly that God, who hath "begun a good work" in thee, may carry it on; that these convictions may terminate in thy conversion here, and thy salvation hereafter. Cry, Lord, suffer not these tender fruits to be nipped in the bud, or blasted in the blossom, by satan's frost winds, or the world's cold blasts; but mercifully cherish and preserve them to maturity, "to the praise of the glory of his grace."

2. Consider what a crying sin it is against God, to neglect or stifle thy convictions: He will treat thee as a murderer, if thou do it: It is murder to destroy the "conception in the womb." Christ also will take it as a solemn affront offered to him; for convictions are the messengers which he sends to prepare the way of his entry into the soul: And will he not heinously resent it, to see his messengers killed or maltreated? O what horrid ingratitude is it to Christ, after he hath opened the doors of our hearts half-way by convictions, to have it shut against him, when he is just ready to enter; or, when he is half-way in, to be thrust back again, and have the door thrown in his face!

3 Consider how prejudicial it is to thy own soul. The dying away of thy convictions threatens the life of thy soul. If you quench them, God may be provoked to pass that dreadful sentence, "My spirit shall no longer strive with thee:" And so there follows a midnight silence, and thou art lost for ever. O tremble for fear of God's judgments, for thy case is more dangerous than others: No water freezeth so fast, as that which hath been once warmed; and no iron is so hard, as that which hath been oft heated and oft quenched. Therefore,

4. Presently strike in with thy convictions. Bless God for awaking thee, when others about thee are lying in a deep sleep; for visiting thee, when others are passed by: Be content to have thy sore lanced, and thy wound searched: Suffer no other plaster to be applied to it but Christ's blood: Go not to heal the wound of thy conscience by the works of the law, and thy own duties; for these will at best but skin it over for a while. Neither go to shift off convictions by delays, as did Felix; for this is the devil's great stratagem to ruin thy soul. It is with the heart as with melted wax; if you clap the seal to it when it is soft, it receives an impression which abides; but if you delay, it soon cools and hardens, so that press on it as ye will, it is to no purpose. Let us then imitate David, who, when he was convinced of the evil of his ways, "without any delay turned his feet to God's testimonies," Psal. cxix. 59. Put forth thy utmost strength, and stir up thyself to turn from sin, and flee to Christ, while conscience is stirring, the Spirit striving, Christ waiting, his bowels sounding, and his blood pleading; for the loss of this season may be the loss of thy soul. God saith thrice in one chapter, Heb. iv. "To-day, to-day, to-day," but the devil cries, "To-morrow, to-morrow, to-morrow." Surely God is wisest, and his time fittest. To-day is thy living day, to-morrow may be thy dying day: To-day thou art on earth, to-morrow thou mayest be in hell: To-day mercy is inviting, to-morrow justice may be smiting; therefore, while thou art called "to-day, hear the voice of God and conscience, and harden not your heart."

IV. Labour to persevere in prayer this evening; do not faint in it, but endeavour with Moses, to "hold up your hands this day till the going down of the sun." Our frequency and importunity in this duty is no trouble, but a delight to the hearer of prayer. Christ saith oft this day to the spouse, "Thy voice is sweet, cause me to hear it." Continue instant in prayer this day, wrestling as Jacob, and saying, "I will not let thee go till thou bless me." And as orators, at the close of their speech, use all their art and skill to move the affections of their auditors; so do you, at the close of the Lord's day, put forth all your grace and spiritual strength in prayer, to prevail with God for a blessing. Pray this evening, as if it were to be thy last Sabbath, thy last night, or thy last prayer; knowing that, when death comes, thou canst pray no more: For, as death binds up the hand that it can work no more, so it strikes dumb the tongue that it can speak no more; according to Eccl. ix. 10. Isa. xxxviii. 18.

V. Study to be denied to all your Sabbath-prayers and performances. Beware, my friends, of secret trusting to them, as any piece of righteousness before God; for that will spoil all, like the dead fly in the apothecary's ointment. Say therefore this day, after ye have done all, "We are unprofitable servants." Look above all, as if you had done nothing at all, to the righteousness of Christ to answer for all. See that you join nothing of your own with this perfect righteousness, in the point of your justification and acceptance with God; for this is both dishonourable to Christ, and dangerous to yourselves: Therefore beware of it. There is a natural popery in the minds of all; we much incline to stand upon our own legs, and to have something of our own to found upon. But is it any other thing than blasphemy, to charge Christ's sacrifice with lameness, or his work with deficiency? or to think with our penny to make up Christ's sum, and with our polluted duties to add any perfection to the blood of Christ, which is infinite? Shall not we rest content with that wherewith God hath declared himself well pleased! Let us then, with Paul, "count all things but dung and loss for Christ and his righteousness," and desire only to be found in him.

Concerning Family Duties on the Sabbath Night.

In the next place, I proceed to speak of family-duties requisite this night, and now these are to be performed.

I. O heads of families, see that ye be more solemn, full and particular in family-worship this evening, than at other times: It is pleasant this night to hear universally the melody of God's praise in the tabernacles of the righteous. Lay out your family sins, wants, and mercies fully and plainly before God in family-prayer.

II. Confer about the sermons, and repeat over what you have heard; for the Lord, Deut. xi. 18, 19. requires you not only to lay up God's words in your hearts, but also to "speak of them when you sit in your houses, and to teach them your children." You ought also to call your servants and children to an account, as to what they remember, and how they have profited by the sermons. When you send your servants to the market, you examine what market they have made: Now, the public ordinances are heaven's free market for their souls, and will you never enquire what they have gained thereat? This way of rehearsing the sermons is very refreshing and advantageous, and hereby one of you would be useful to another; for, what one forgets, another may remember.

III Let parents and heads of families take some time this evening in catechising and instructing their children and servants in the knowledge of the principles of religion, and of their duty towards God, their neighbours, and themselves. We may observe, from the iv of Mark, and xiv of Luke, that after our Lord had instructed the people, as a public preacher, on the Sabbath day, he afterwards did examine and teach his twelve disciples as a private master of a family.

1 Begin with children, as soon as they are capable, and inform them, that there is such a Being as God, whom they ought to honour, reverence, and love above all things. That they are his creatures, the work of his hands. That he preserves them, and gives them all the good things they enjoy, and that every good thing is to be sought from God by prayer, and thanks returned to him for the same. Shew them the evil and danger of sin, and how much God hates it. That they have immortal souls. That there is a life after death in another world, wherein men shall receive a great and eternal reward, or a fearful endless punishment, according as they have done or neglected their duty in this world. And that God loves those who keep his commandments and pray to him, but hates wicked men, and those who do not pray. If these principles were early instilled and rooted in children, they would in some measure stick with them all their days. Likewise, as they are capable, shew them the great degeneracy and corruption of human nature, derived to us by the fall of our first parents. Also shew them the way of our recovery from this miserable state by Jesus Christ, who was sent by God to redeem and save us from the bondage of sin and satan, and from the damnation of hell.

2 Before they are capable to read, or get and repeat our Shorter Catechism, you ought to frame many short questions and answers concerning the foresaid principles, such as they are able to mind, and frequently examine them upon them. And for your help in this matter, you may consult the little Catechism I have published, called *The Mother's Catechism for the Young Child*. But as soon as your children are able to repeat our Shorter Catechism, enjoin them, and your servants also, to commit it to their memories, prescribing so much of it to them every week, and duly examine them upon it every Lord's day; for it contains an excellent scheme both of the principles of our religion which we ought to believe, and also of the duties thereof which we should practise. And is it not far better to repeat this, than ballads and idle stories, wherewith many burden their memories?

3. As you ought to learn them to read, so you should this day solemnly enjoin them to read the bible and other pious books, and enquire at them what they have been reading through the day and the bygone week. And because of the natural backwardness that is both in young and old to holy duties, you ought to contrive the most wise and effectual methods you can think on, to engage them to delight and diligence in reading of the bible, such as these, *viz.* Teach children the most profitable, pleasant, and affecting histories and passages of the bible, such as, "the creation of man, Adam's fall, the flood, the destruction of Sodom, the sacrificing of Isaac, the selling of Joseph, Pharaoh's cutting of the infants, and Moses's preservation, Moses his going up to the mount, and getting the tables of the law, the passages concerning Samson's killing the Philistines, and David's killing Goliath, the forty-two children destroyed by bears, the three children in the fiery furnace, Daniel in the Lion's den; Jonah in the whale's belly, Herod's destroying the young children," and the like. Endeavour to tell them these passages as much as ye can in their own language, and this will engage them to the greater delight and attention, and cause them to remember them the better; also, you would put them to rehearse them over again to you.

Again, cause them read a chapter of the Bible every night, and tell you some of the principal things in it before they ly down; or, when you read a chapter in the family, appoint each of them some one verse of it to repeat the next day. Moreover, when they come to learn to write, it is a good way to give them paper books, to write down what passages they think most considerable in the Bible, or what remarkable sayings and histories they find in other books. They might well spend the Saturday's afternoon this way, when they have most leisure.

In the next place, it would be of good use, when you examine them, to teach them to prove every point of religion by some pregnant place of scripture. This would be the way to beget in them firm, strong and fixed persuasions of the truths of Christianity. Many, alas! profess Christianity, merely because it is the national religion and they were so educate. They build their faith more upon the assertions and teachings of men, than upon the sure foundation of God's word, and all because they were not put to it when young, to acquaint themselves with the scriptures, or to bring proofs from them for the truths they learned. Are not there many professors of Christianity, who, if they were put to it, could not give one text of scripture to prove so much as the great fundamentals of their religion? It cannot be expected that such will be close adherers to it in a day of trial and persecution. A good way to mend this fault is, to get the Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, which are printed with the scripture proofs set down at large, and make much use thereof. *Lastly*, As you ought to cause them attend punctually this day upon the ordinances, so you ought carefully this night to ask an account of the text, and their notes of the lecture and sermons, reprove them for careless hearing, encourage them when they give any tolerable good account, and promise them some reward to do better the next Sabbath.

4 You ought this day to learn and enjoin your children to pray, and to ask a blessing, and give thanks for their meat: you may see some helps for them in the end of the Mother's Catechism before mentioned. Children cannot pray at first without help. Therefore it is fit to teach them some short forms, and, in the first place, the Lord's Prayer, the great pattern of all prayer. Teach them to retire every morning and evening to pray, and to pray frequently on the Lord's day, and also cause them go and pray together by turns, this would be a good mean to engage their love to one another, and to cause them study to be more grave and exact in their prayers: and therefore it were fit also to cause them pray sometimes in your own hearing. Enjoin them also to be fervent and sincere in prayer, and to pray with a lively sense of God's all seeing eye that beholds in secret, and with an awful regard to the judgment of the great day. Likewise, when they come to any capacity, tell them, That they must not restrict themselves to their forms, but must make additions of their own framing; tell them, That God loves these words best that come from the heart, and, for their help therein, tell them often of their sin and misery

by nature, and of their need of Christ, and his blood to wash and save them, direct them frequently to say, "Lord teach me to pray, give me thy Spirit to help me to pray." Also every Sabbath night enquire at them what new words and expressions they have got and added to their prayers, and encourage and reward them according to their diligence O parents, neglect not to teach your poor children to pray and read Will you teach them to work and not teach them to pray? If you do it not, the devil will teach them to ban, lie, and play on the Lord's day And will it not be a fearful reckoning that you will have to make ere long for their prayerless and perishing souls? A great many children neglect prayer, not so much from their aversion to it, as from this, that none takes care to teach them how to do it, and hence it is they often neglect it all their days Whereas, if they were early taught and put on the duty of prayer, the habit and custom of the thing would make it turn easy and delightful, but, when this is neglected, they cannot afterwards be brought to it, without great reluctance and difficulty So that you see, O parents, if ye improve not the season of youth the blood of your childrens souls will be laid to your door

5 It is very proper on this day, as soon as your children are capable, to take them aside, and solemnly to tell them the vows you took on at baptism in their name, and as sponsors for them and how you publicly engaged "that they would be the Lord's and renounce the world, the devil, and the flesh" And therefore, for your own exoneration, you should take them solemnly engaged to do and perform all these things which you promised in their name Put them to it personally and explicitly to own and renew their baptismal covenant to shew themselves Christians, not only by their parents dedication, but also by their own deed and voluntary consent. Let each of them profess and say, "I chuse God the Father for my God and Father, I chuse God the Son for my Redeemer and Saviour I chuse the Holy Ghost for my Guide and Sanctifier, God's word for my rule, God's people for my companions, holiness for my way, and heaven for my home'

6 Take care this evening to give both them and your servants, many serious and affectionate admonitions concerning their souls, and their duty to God and man Warn them solemnly against sin and vice, and particularly those vices that are too common among us, study to check and discourage the beginnings of vice in children, observe and watch the first appearances thereof and pluck them up by the roots For, if vice be connived at in the beginning it will turn afterwards too strong for you, but when it is never suffered to appear to pass without reproof or correction, this helps by degrees to breed in children an abhorrence of it Labour in a special manner to beget in them frightful impressions of the sins of swearing, and profaning the name of God, the sin of disobedience to parents, the sin of Sabbath-breaking, of lying, obscene words, stealing, pride, passion, revenge, neglect of prayer and reading, &c Study to persuade them to godliness with the most endearing language, and prevailing arguments, according to Prov xxxi 1, 2 3 that so you may convince them that in all your admonitions and reproofs, you have an earnest desire for their welfare, and that you and they may dwell in heaven together through all eternity It is sometimes needful solemnly to obtest and charge them to mind their duty, as Mr Bolton, a godly man, said to his children on his death bed, "I charge you, O my children, not to meet me at Christ's tribunal in a Christless and graceless condition"

7. Join fervent prayers this day with your endeavours for prayerless instructions will not profit Parents may plant, ministers may water, "but God only can give the increase" You ought to take some time this day to pity, mourn and pray for your children servants and relations, that are in the darkness of a natural state, and under the slavery of satan If any of them were taken by the Turks, and laid in dark dungeons, treated as slaves, scourged every day, and barbarously used, would not your bowels yearn, and your hearts bleed for them? Or, if any of your near relations were dead, would you not mourn for them? And are you not more concerned to mourn and pray for them that are satan's slaves, justice's prisoners spiritually dead, and sentenced to everlasting death? Have you any love to your children, and will you not carry them this day in the arms of faith and prayer to the blessed Jesus, beseeching him "to put his hands of mercy on them, and bless them as in Mat xix 13 yea, not only pray for them, but take them alongst with you, and let them be the eye and ear witnesses of your prayers, sighs and tears, for the conversion and salvation of their souls, and who knows but this might work upon their hearts? Let them hear you say to God, as Jacob, Gen xxxiii 5 "Lord, thou hast graciously given me these children but, Oh! (you may add) Lord, I have given them sin that is their portion from me Lord, though I cannot give them Christ and grace, yet thou canst do both, they are born to me once, O that they may be born to thee a second time!" Say as Abraham Gen xvii "O that my Ishmael may live before thee!" And Deut xxxiii. 'Let my Reuben live, and not die" Let these who are pieces of my bowels, and are now dead in trespasses and sin, live in thy sight, thou art the Lord of life, breathe on them, and they shall live Lord, let not these who are so dear to me fry in the flames for ever, one house hold us now, let one heaven hold us hereafter. Cry, as those in the gospel Mat xvii Lord, have mercy on my son, my daughter is grievously vexed' Lord, come and heal them, and let me see my children to be the work of thy hands in the midst of thy house, then shall not my face wax pale nor be ashamed but I will sanctify the holy One of Israel' Isa xxix 22 23

But in midst of these secret and family duties necessary on the evening of the Lord's day it is needful that our frail bodies be refreshed with meat and drink, and, the work of the day being near over you are at the more freedom to eat plentifully, yet still with holy fear and caution, and a desire spiritually to improve the time of eating and to make God's glory your end, in eating and drinking, 1 Cor x 31

If you be to have company or strangers with you, then look to God for wisdom to behave yourselves in all your words and deportment, that you may neither do them harm, nor get harm from them Say, "O that my lips this night were like those of the righteous which feed many!"

When you are called to sit down to supper this night, think or say, "How happy were I if I were now called to sit down and sup with Abraham Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven, at that higher table that shall never be drawn where they enjoy an everlasting Sabbath, that hath no night nor darkness to follow upon it, as this hath!'

When you see the table covered for you, O bless the Au-

hor of it and say, "When God remembers me, let me not orget him: Oh let not my table turn a snare to me; let me never make a god of my belly, nor employ my chief care for the meat that perisheth."

When the meat is brought, let us, according to our Saviour's example, look up to heaven, and pray for a blessing on our food, and for the sanctified use of God's creatures, that we may taste covenant-love in common mercies, and enjoy the Creator while using the creature. Then think, "O how sweet would these mercies be, if they come dipt in the blood of Christ, and through the channel of the everlasting covenant to me! If I could enjoy them, not as a creature, but as an heir, "and a joint heir with Christ," who is the "heir of all things," and hath been pleased to adopt believers in his right! O how sweet, if every morsel did come from my Father's hand, and sent from his table, as an earnest of greater and better things laid up for me above! Lord, I am not worthy of the least crumb that falls from the table of thy providence, and yet thou coverest a full table to worthless me; "what shall I render to the Lord?"

Is thy provision but small? Then study to be content therewith: Consider how cheerfully Christ the Heir of all things did thank God for coarse and mean fare, John vi. when he had but a few barley loaves and small fishes for himself and his whole family. How much better provided are we, than Christ and his numerous family was? And shall we not be easy and thankful?

Have you a full table? Then fear lest these outward things insnare your heart; and, for preventing of it, think, "O what a poor portion would these things be, if I get no better! O how miserable will I be, if, when God gives me bread to the full, he should send leanness to my soul!" Therefore remember Luther's solemn protest to God, when a bountiful present was sent him, he protested, "That he would not be put off with common mercies."

But, if you have any clearness concerning your interest in Christ, the sight of God's goodness to you in a full table, should cause you rejoice in him, and say, "All this and heaven too! O what a good Master do we serve!"

When you have eaten, and are full, see that ye forget not God your Maker and Benefactor, but with heart and mouth, in a solemn manner, give thanks to him. O believers, you have four things particularly to give thanks for: 1. That God gives mercies to furnish your table 2 Health to use them. 3. Peace to meet together. 4. That ye have a right to them; I mean not a common, but a covenant-right, a right by virtue of Christ's purchase.

It were very agreeable to conclude all by singing a psalm of praise.

I do not offer to stint any Christian family to any precise particular method of performing duties on the Sabbath evening, but must leave that to be determined by the prudence of masters of families, according to the circumstances of their families. Some may find it convenient to catechise their children and servants, and repeat the sermons before supper, some after; so some may perform family-worship before, some after; others both before and after. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind, only labour that no duty incumbent be omitted

I do not say that all the forenamed duties in all their solemnity are indispensably necessary every Lord's day; for time and circumstaances may so straiten us, that we cannot get them performed so fully as before directed, especially as to the instruction of children, and examination of ourselves; but what cannot be overtaken in one Sabbath let it be done in another. I have chosen to be pretty full in this directory, because it may be useful also for other days in the week.

Concerning Secret Duties at the close of the Day.

When family duties and supper are over, and the condition of our weak and weary bodies begins to call for sleep and rest, let us endeavour to close this holy day in a due and suitable manner. Take these few directions.

I. When you find sleep beginning to assault you, think, "O how soon are we tired of doing good! O that we could say, Though we may be somewhat weary with our work, yet we are not weary of our work! And it is our regret, that we should be laid under a necessity of losing so much of our time in sleeping, and should lie so long, incapable of serving either God or man. Let this make us long to be there, where there shall be no need of sleep, but we shall be like the angels of God, who never sleep nor rest from serving and beholding God.

II. Think how terrible is it for a Christless unconverted sinner to lie down this night with so many millions of unpardoned sins on his back, to sleep securely within the flood mark of God's vengeance, and within a step of hell! O unconverted man, consider your continual hazard; you never lay down with assurance to rise again; you never slept one Sabbath night, with assurance you would see another Sabbath, or hear another sermon; and how can you live at peace in such a condition? Death and hell are ever before you: it is a wonder you do not think on them by day, and dream of them by night, lie down in fear, rise in fear, and live in fear, lest death come before you be converted; it is a wonder you can get any sleep in this condition. If your body want but meat, drink or clothing, yea, if you have but an aching tooth, it hinders you to sleep, and yet wilt thou sleep, O sinner, when both soul and body are on the brink of hell, and the devil gaping and roaring for you? O then resolve you "will not give sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eye lids," till your soul be in a better condition; at least, till you pour out your heart, confess your sins, lay down your weapons of rebellion, and bemoan your case before the Lord, and look up to Christ for pity and pardon. We should not willingly venture to sleep in that case we would not venture to die in. How many have been hurried into eternity in a moment! O think with yourself, "Death may be within a day's march of me: to-day I am sinning, but to-morrow I may be dying. O what if death take me doing the devil's work? will it not send me to him to receive my wages?"

III. Before you lie down this night, confess and mourn over the sins of the bypast day; lament your manifold shortcomings in public, in private, and secret duties; say, "Alas for the mean and low conceptions I have had of God, the great object of worship this day! What formality and hypocrisy in my approaches to him! O how vain and wandering were my thoughts, when they should have been most fixed and intent upon God! How dark and blind was my understanding, when God's truths were laid before me! How little of the evil of sin, or beauty of holiness, did I see! Lord how hard and flinty was my heart, little afflicted by

all the strokes of the hammer of thy word upon it? How dead and carnal were my affections, little moved by all the rich displays and offers of Christ's love and beauty! How sleeply was my conscience, little startled by all the reproofs and threatenings of thy word! How false and treacherous was my memory, in letting slip the sweet counsels and comforts I heard! O what by-ends have I had in duty this day! How little have I been concerned for the interest of Christ's church and kingdom in the world! How idle and unedifying have my words been, when in company! Oh how little have I done for God's glory, or my neighbour's good this day!" And, having thus humbly confessed your sins and shortcomings this day, make application to the blood of Christ for pardon, and to his intercession for acceptance with God, that so you may lie down this night in a reconciled state with him.

IV. Commit yourselves by fervent prayer to God's tuition and protection through the night, even to the protection of "him that keeps Israel, who never slumbers nor sleeps." You cannot sleep in safety, unless God watch for you; for, while you are sleeping, there are many enemies and evil spirits about you, seeking your hurt; and you have no friend then but God to look to you: You are then both insensible of your danger, and unable to help yourself. Pray then that God may set a hedge about you, that satan cannot break through, and that he may appoint his angels to pitch their tents round about you, and all you have. Pray that God himself may watch over you while you are sleeping, and may keep you from being disturbed or defiled by evil dreams or imaginations in the night.—Would you have your rest refreshing, your sleep sweet, and your dreams instructing, and God himself to be your Keeper and Guard in the night? Then close this day with fervent and believing prayer to God in Christ: He were a foolish governor of a city, that would betake himself to rest before he set the watch for the city's safeguard.

V. Endeavour to lie down this night with thankful hearts to God; let us bless God for the Sabbath, and for all the mercies of it, especially for the joyful sound of the gospel, and the news of Christ. But O let us not be content with hearing the joyful sound, without knowing the same; with the news of Christ, without an interest in Christ; with Christ revealed to us, without Christ revealed in us. Let us not be like foolish children, that play by the light of that candle which is set up for their preparing for going to rest, lest the light be extinguished, and we go at last to the bed of the grave in the darkness of sin and sorrow. Have you any comfortable view of your interest in Christ? or had you any thing of his Spirit or presence this day in the ordinances? then rejoice in God, and say with the Psalmist, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."

Again, bless God for health and peace to lie down with. "Some are distressed, they dare not lie down for lack of breath; others are chased from their beds and dwellings by the raging sword or pestilence; and, behold, I may lie down without any to make me afraid."

Further, let us bless the Lord that we have warm beds to lie on, and not the cold ground, with a stone for our pillow, as Jacob had. Many of God's dear saints, of whom the world was not worthy, were put to lie "in dens and caves of the earth." Nay, "the Son of man had not where to lay his head," while he lived in this ungrateful world. Wonder at his humiliation, and say, "Had it not been for him, instead of a refreshing bed, I might have been lying down this night in the flames of hell."

VI. It is very proper this night, as well as every night, to lie down with thoughts of death and eternity. Think, now I have one Sabbath less to live in the world; and, O that thereby I may be a Sabbath-day's journey nearer heaven, where I shall celebrate an eternal Sabbath, that will never draw near an end! O to be there where there is no sleep, no night to interrupt the saints communion with God! When you are putting off your cloaths, think, the time is near when you must put off this earthly tabernacle. When you lay aside your garments, think, so must I shortly lay aside the garment of this body. O may I then expect immediately to be cloathed upon with glory and immortality! and, shall I not long for that time? This body, in its best state, is but a prison to a believing soul, and detains it from its happiness. Plato, though a heathen, had such clear apprehensions of the immortality of the soul, that he said to one that fed highly, "What mean you to make your prison so strong?" Am I a believer in Christ, and shall not I be looking long through the grates of mortality, till the jailor come and open my prison-door, knock off the fetters of sin, and set me at liberty, that I may with joy fly to my eternal rest? Moreover, think how willing we are to put off our cloaths at night, that we may go to rest, especially when we are weary; and wish and say, O that I were in a condition to put off the body at death with as great willingness and satisfaction! and, with Paul, long "to be dissolved," and to put off this clay tabernacle. Mr Dod, a holy man, saith, "If parents should tell children who have played all day, that they must go to bed, they begin to cry, and shew reluctancy: But a labouring man is glad when night comes, that he may go to rest. So (says he) to the wicked, who have mis-spent the day of their life, death is an unwelcome guest; but the godly are tossed and wearied in this world, and therefore are content to go to the bed of the grave, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary be at rest," Job iii. 17. Sin wearies them, satan wearies them, the wicked weary them, sickness and crosses weary them, and Christ's absence wearies them of the world, and no wonder they desire to be at rest from all these troubles."

When you see yourself stript of your cloaths, think, "Naked came I into the world, and naked shall I return;" I can carry nothing hence of all my earthly enjoyments.—Lord, let me never chuse my portion in these things I must leave eternally behind me. Let worldlings reflect on this: All those things, for which you have toiled and laboured for many years, you must leave in one night, Luke xii. 20. Nothing of all your earthly treasures can you carry alongst with you to another world, unless it be the rust thereof, to witness against you, and eat up your souls as a canker to all eternity, according to James v. 1, 3. Whatever be your enjoyments here, remember death stands as a porter at the gate of eternity, to see, that "as you brought nothing into the world, you carry nothing out of it," 1 Tim. vi. 7. A coffin and a winding-sheet shall be the most of it. You may imagine what a broad look the poor soul will give then to those things you made your treasure here. O (will it say) must I part for ever with all my riches? must I be set naked ashore in eternity, having nothing to relieve me? must I suffer an everlasting famine? Poor soul, the world's treasures do not pass current in another world; they can-

not there purchase you any relief, or buy so much as "one drop of water to cool thy flaming tongue."

Let your lying down in bed, and covering you with clothes, put you in mind of your lying down in the cold grave, and your being covered up with earth. Look on your bed as a tomb or sepulchre; and every night, before you enter into it, seek reconciliation with God, and new discoveries of his love in Christ, as you would do if going to your grave. How sad is it to be dying without Christ, and God reconciled through him? Again, think or say, "O that the grave may be a bed of rest to me, upon the account of Christ's lying therein!" The grave is become a bed of roses to believers, by the Rose of Sharon's lying down in it. Christ hath hereby sweetened and perfumed it for them. Am I a believer, and shall I fear to lie down in my Redeemer's bed? O believer, thou mayest every night say, with the Psalmist, "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, blessed Lord, only makest me to dwell in safety," Psal. iv. 8. When you are laid down, "commune with your own heart upon your bed," and, with the Psalmist, "remember God upon your bed, and meditate on him in the night watches:" And, if you fall asleep with some heavenly meditation in your thoughts, your sleep will be more sweet, your dreams more comfortable, and your awaking more refreshful. And, in a special manner, let us endeavour, on the Sabbath night, that as we begin this day with the delightful remembrance of Christ's resurrection, so to close it with the cheerful expectation of Christ's second coming, and our awaking and rising from the grave to meet him. And when Christ is saying, "Surely I come quickly," O that we may be in case this night to answer, "Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus!"

Concerning our Carriage after the Sabbath is over.

Thus have I finished the second general head in this direction, viz What is requisite in performing the duties of the Sabbath, when it is come? It remains that I should speak a word to the third, viz. What is incumbent on us at the end of the Sabbath, or when it is past?

When the next day cometh, and we are again to fall to our weekly employments, we ought to retain lively impressions of the preceding day's work on our spirits, and not soon forget what we have seen and heard on the Sabbath. In the first place, let us repent for the sins and shortcomings of the Sabbath, and beg forgiveness thereof from God, that we go not about our worldly employments with the guilt of the Sabbath-day's sins upon us, lest they bring a curse upon the "works of our hands." Again, let us pray, and endeavour to bring much of a Sabbath-day's frame into the business of the week, and retain much of it through the week, that so we may be the fitter for the next Sabbath, yea, and in case to long for it: This would be a fair way to obtain a blessing on the labours of the week, and to prosper the "works of our hands." Oh! shall we bring so much of the week with us into the Sabbath, and will we bring nothing of the Sabbath with us into the week? O let us study to be so "in the Spirit on the Lord's day," as to "walk in the Spirit" all the week thereafter, mindful both of the Sabbath past, and of the Sabbath next ensuing; because it is said to us every day, "Remember the Sabbath-day that ye may keep it holy." Had we more of Sabbath-days thoughts on week days, then week-day thoughts would less trouble us on Sabbath-days.

DIRECTION IV.

Concerning the Particular Sins, whereby the Sanctification of the Sabbath is hindered, or the Sabbath profaned.

If we would duly sanctify the Lord's day, we must conscientiously guard against, and abstain from, all those sins which are opposite thereunto; whether they be sins of omission, or commission, sins of the heart, of the tongue, or of the life.

Of Sins of Omission on the Lord's Day.

1. I shall begin with sins of omission, and neglect of the duties of the Sabbath. There are many, alas! that make this altogether an idle day; they consume it away in doing nothing, and keep it no better than do the beasts; they abstain from the works of religion, as much as from the works of their calling, never considering that the Lord's day is profaned by sloth and idleness, as well as by servile labour or immoral actions. There are many who place all their religion in negatives, like the Pharisees, Luke xviii. 11. and foolishly think to be justified by their negative holiness "I never wronged my neighbour, (say some) I did not mock at religion, swear, drink drunk," &c. But remember, a man may abstain from evil, and yet go to hell for not doing good, Mat. iii. 10. A tree is cut down for bringing forth no fruit, as soon as for bringing forth bad fruit It is as dangerous not to do things commanded, as to do things forbidden, Matth. xxiii. 23. There is a woe pronounced against the one, as well as the other. The slothful servant is reckoned a wicked servant, Matth. xxv. 26. and adjudged to utter darkness, as well as the most vicious. Wherefore beware of profaning the Lord's day by idleness, or neglecting of the public, private, or secret duties above-mentioned, which are requisite on this day: And, in a special manner, beware,

First, Of neglecting the hearing of the word this day, or forsaking the assemblies of God's people upon it. What madness is it to slight the means of saving your lives, and delivering your souls from hell? What contempt is it of Christ's bowels of mercy? If a great king should send an ambassador to a condemned malefactor, with offers of remission, would it not highly exasperate him, if he refused so much as to hear him? O what may God say to such foolish sinners in the day of their distress, when they cry to him? May he not send you to the gods you have served, and tell you, "Ye would not come and hear me when I sent most gracious proposals of peace to you, neither will I hear you now?" With what torture and anguish will you eternally reflect on your folly? If you could now but lay

your ear to hell's door, and hear such gospel-slighters crying out against their sin, it would make your hearts tremble. Suppose you heard them say, "O if time could be recalled, what would we give to hear one gospel-sermon from the most despised minister! How many miles would we go! Yea, we would run from sea to sea, to hear one encouraging sentence from Christ's mouth, or his messengers: Nay, we would be content to suffer a thousand year's darkness for one day's gospel light, a thousand years burning for one day of the Son of man, many whereof I have neglected: But oh! there is no hope, the season is lost, the sentence past, and we are irrecoverably undone!" O how will the devils wonder at your folly, and eternally upbraid you with it?

Secondly, Beware of neglecting family-duties on the Sabbath: The fourth command binds masters of families to be careful hereof; yet, alas! how sadly are they neglected? In many places no family prayers or praises, no family instructions, no family reading of God's word is to be found. Instead of "delighting in the law of the Lord," which is the character of the blessed man, Psalm i. 2. it is laid by as a sealed book. The dust, which many suffer their bibles to gather beside them, will be a fearful witness against them one day. But more particularly, I shall speak,

Of the Evil of Neglecting Family Duties.

1. To deter you from the neglect of family worship, consider in what a miserable state prayerless families are.—The Spirit of God ranks them into the same category with the "heathen that know not God," Jer. x. 25. For how should the families of Christians be distinguished from those of Turks and Pagans, but by the badge of family-worship? Without this badge, then, you are ranked in with heathens, or persons excommunicate, that is, such as are cast out of the church into the devil's hands; for of such Christ saith, "Let him be to thee as a heathen." Again, consider what is there threatened against you; a black cloud continually hangs over your families, ready every moment to pour out wrath and fury upon you, not in small drops, but in great showers, to overwhelm you at once, from which your houses cannot defend you, though their foundations were on a rock, their walls of brass, and their doors of iron: For, while you are without family-prayer, you want a roof to keep off the shower of wrath, and lie night and day exposed to this terrible threatening, "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not, and upon the families that call not on thy name." It is not simply anger that is threatened, but fury, wrath in the greatest height and rage. O let prayerless families through the land tremble at this threatening! I fear, if it were presently executed, it would make thin cities and parishes somewhere. But though God be patient and long-suffering, yet, believe it, there are secret and invisible curses which light and lie upon prayerless families, and the works of their hands. Neglect of prayer doth uncover the roof to let God's curses drop through upon your persons, children, tables, and all your enjoyments; for you denude yourselves of all security and protection. Family prayer is an excellent roof to your houses; it is like the roof that is made of Irish oak, which no venemous spider will touch, nor lodge in. Family-worship, duly performed, dislodges sin and vice; nay, it dislodges the devil also: And for these houses that are haunted with evil spirits, whatever other reason may be given for it, no doubt this is one—God's worship hath not been duly performed therein. And though the devil doth not appear in a visible or audible manner, yet he certainly haunts prayerless houses; for he hopes for large draughts out of them. Why? Sin and wickedness are fair to reign there; malice, pride, deceit, and intemperance, will bear sway; swearing, cursing, and lying, will be the language of the house, and the children will learn it betimes. But, when prayer is introduced into a family, these vices are banished, and satan removes: For either prayer will make you give over sinning, or sinning will make you give over praying; they cannot dwell well together. But the house which the unclean spirit finds empty of prayer, is a house swept and garnished for him and a black train of vices to enter and dwell in. If God's worship be not in the house, you may write, "Lord, have mercy upon us," upon the door, as they use to do when a house is shut up with the plague. What can we expect in a prayerless house, but the plagues and curses of God? Abraham expected no good in a prayerless place; therefore says he of Gerar, Gen. xx. 11. "Surely the fear of God is not in this place; they will slay me," &c. What a miserable place or house must that be, where God's fear is not? Surely it must be a sink of sin, a butt of wrath, a cage of unclean birds, and a habitation of devils.

O masters of families, will you pity the souls of your families? Tremble lest their blood be found in your skirts. When a child or servant dies out of your family, it will be sad if conscience have it to tell you, "Here one has died out of your house, with whom you never prayed; you dwelt together, eat together, wrought together many years, but you never prayed together. And what if his soul be gone to hell through your neglect? What if his blood be charged on you? How will you answer for it? Who knows but if he had seen and heard you pray, your words and example might have moved him to go into a secret corner and pray for his own soul, and so he might have been singing with the saints in heaven, instead of howling with the damned in hell?"

But if the case be so melancholy when they die from you, surely it will be far worse when you come to die yourselves. You have all your days kept your families godless and prayerless; well, what accounts will you give of your stewardships, when you may be no longer stewards? and what anguish do you think will seize on you, when, with Dives, you shall feel yourselves in hell, and then begin (not before) to lift up your eyes to heaven, and see the godly praying ones, whom you despised, afar off, and a great gulf fixed betwixt you and them; and also, when you shall see those of your prayerless families, whom you ruined by your example and influence, brought down to the same place of torment, to increase your misery, and add fuel to your flames? O masters of prayerless families, think on these things in time.

Oh! will neither the fear of hell, nor hopes of heaven persuade you to family-prayer? I am sure far less would do it, could I assure you that the daily performance of it would gain you an estate of ten thousand merks a year: You would try it as you can, and be punctual in it too; you would no more pretend multitude of business, want of time, gifts or confidence. And are you so atheistical, as to prefer a little of the world to heaven? Or suppose there were strict laws made, that, for every time you neglected prayer, you should be thrown into a "den of lions," as

Daniel was for praying; or that you should lose a finger of your hand, or but pay a hundred merks of fine: would you not pray as you can, and find time for it also, rather than lose your life, finger, or money? And are not the laws of God more awful and strict than the laws of men? Is not hell's dungeon, or a den of devils, more terrible than a den of lions? Are not hell's torments more fearful than the loss of a finger? Is not the wrath of the great God more dreadful than a fine? Oh, will not the fear of God prevail more with you than the fear of man?" Remember Daniel's zeal of family-prayer, who chose rather to be cast to the lions, before he would forbear it for one day: Oh, what shall we say of these, who will rather venture to be an eternal prey to the roaring lion, than be at this pains for salvation to themselves or their families; but you may hear in their houses twenty oaths for one prayer!

2. Consider the great sin of neglecting family-instructions upon the Sabbath, which, alas! is so common, by reason whereof many children and servants are ignorant, prayerless, and graceless: Their parents and masters do not teach them to read, nor instruct them concerning the principles of religion, they neither pray for them, nor direct them how to pray for themselves. Is the knowledge of Christ a choice and excellent treasure? And will you withhold it from those whom you love, seeing it will not make you the poorer, but the richer, to communicate it to them? It is the commendation of Abraham, that he hath made "his household know God's ways, and commanded them to obey the same," Gen. xviii. 19. and do you ever think to land in Abraham's bosom, that will not tread in Abraham's footsteps? Have you no pity or compassion on them that are "bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh?" Where is the yearning of your bowels towards their precious souls, that are in a starving and perishing condition for lack of knowledge? Will you be like cruel ostriches, Job xxxix. that are "hardened against their young ones, and leave them to be destroyed after they bring them forth? Will you, in like manner, bring forth your young ones, and then carelessly leave them to be a prey to the devil, and eternally to be torn to pieces by him? Are you indifferent about those that came forth of your loins, and whom you profess to love so dearly, whether they live with the blessed Jesus in heaven, or with the cursed devils in hell? Remember, O parents, who neglect the education of your children, God may punish you for it, even in this world, by their unnatural and undutiful carriage to you in old age, whereby they may bring down your gray hairs with sorrow to the grave; and no wonder though they make no conscience of their duty to you, who made no conscience to teach them their duty to God. Remember also, how many children have been brought to a miserable end in this world by the negligence and unfaithfulness of their parents this way; some going to the gibbet have bitterly reflected on their parents as the cause of their ruin, for giving them such a bad example, and not instructing them in the time of their youth. But, above all, consider how your children and servants may rise up and accuse you at the bar of God at the great day, and say, "Lord, there stands my father, there stands my master, he never taught us, prayed with us, or for us; he neglected prayer, he cursed, he lied, he brake the Sabbath, and so did we after his example. It is true, we are justly condemned, but yet we perish through their neglect, our blood is upon their heads." O parents, will it not make you speechless, and sting you to the heart, to hear your poor children crying out against you in that day, saying, "Had you noticed our souls as well as our bodies, had you been as careful to teach us the knowledge of God as of such a trade, it had not been with us as it is this day; we had not now stood trembling in expectation of that dreadful doom, which is just ready to be past upon us! Cursed be the man that begat us, and the paps that gave us suck; it is to you we owe our eternal ruin and misery!"

O negligent parents, what horror and confusion will then seize you in that great and terrible day of the Lord, to hear such a charge from your children! but much more to hear God charge you with their blood, and say, "O unnatural wretches, behold how many precious souls you neglected and ruined, whose happiness you were bound to procure by so many ties of duty and affection: They were ignorant, and you instructed them not; they were prayerless, and you taught them not; they were Christless, and you pitied them not: Yea, you not only neglected to give them good instruction, but you gave them bad example; you swore, played, spoke obscenely, broke the Sabbath, mocked religion, &c. and lo, in these very practices they have followed you to hell, to be an addition to your torments there for ever!"

Would you then prevent this sad reckoning, and be found with your children upon the Judge's right hand? see that you instruct them and pray for them. O fathers, would you wish to have your children well provided? then lay up a stock of prayers for them, both family and secret prayer This is a stock that would not be soon spent, nay, it will be bringing them in something when you are dead and rotten. O mothers, your bodies travailed in pain at their first birth, let your souls travail in pain for their second birth Where is your motherly tenderness toward the fruit of your womb? Would you not be sorry to hear them screeching, or see them frying in hell's flames, without remedy? Then do what lies in your power to prevent it, by instructing them, praying for them, and praying with them.

Thirdly, Beware of neglecting secret duties this day, such as were afore-mentioned, and particularly prayer If thou be one, O sinner, that restrainest prayer before God this day, it is a black mark of a graceless heart; for a spirit of grace and supplication go still together. As difficulty of breathing, and painfulness in speaking, are symptoms of a sick body; so aversion to prayer is a sad sign of a sick soul: For prayer is the soul's breath and speech to God, Lam. iii. 16. Again, consider the danger of living in the neglect of this duty. "If satan might have his wish against thee, in this particular, then he is as sure of thee as a robber is of a traveller, whom he has fast bound, lying in a ditch, and his mouth stopt that he cannot cry for help" O prayerless sinner, consider satan has thee fast bound, and is just ready to murder thee; and wilt thou not cry to God for help? Moreover, think what a brutish thing it is to live prayerless, as alas many do; they rise like the beasts in the morning, they work with the beasts all day, and ly down like beasts at night, and never mind to look up to God, till he lay them on their backs upon a death-bed, and then they begin to cry like the beasts, when the knife is at their throat. Consider, O man, why God hath given thee a countenance erected towards heaven, and hath not made thee to creep on all-four, as other creatures, with their backs to heaven and mouths to earth; but to teach thee, that thou art made to converse with thy Maker,

and have intercourse with heaven, and that the world's husks are not fit food for thy soul. We would pity a poor man that were all bowed together, and forced to go like a beast upon hands and feet, with his eyes always to the earth: And is it not a more pitiful spectacle to see a soul that is a spark of heaven, and created for communion with God, so crippled with ignorance and earthly-mindedness, as still to be poring and grovelling upon the earth, without looking up to God its Maker and happiness!

Of Sins of Commission on the Lord's Day.

II. In the next place, I proceed to warn you against sins of commission, by which the Lord's day is too commonly profaned: And these are either inward or outward.

I. *Of Inward Sins of Commission.*

[illegible] or heart sins, should be carefully guarded [illegible], as being most provoking to God, polluting [illegible] ip, and hurtful to our souls. Sinful thoughts [illegible] ination to God every day, Prov. xv. 26. but more especially this day. Thoughts are as loud in God's ears as words: and he commands evil thoughts to be forsaken, as well as evil ways, if we would have pardon, Isa. lv. 7. Wherefore let us get renewed and sanctified hearts, and overawe them with the thoughts of God's presence and omniscience: Let us imagine this day, that we hear the sound of the last trumpet, and see the throne set, and God calling for an account of hearts; (for in that day he will judge hearts as well as lives) and, when any evil thought breaks in, say, "What if God, who sees this, should presently call me to account?" Let us keep a constant watch over our hearts this day, striving to crush all sinful thoughts in the bud, at their first rising, cry out for God's help. Let us be sensible what a mass of villainy is in the heart, "It is desperately wicked," as Jeremiah saith; yea, "our inward part is very wickedness," Psal. v. 9. Hence it was that Luther profest, that "he feared his heart more than the pope or the cardinal;" And Augustine prayed, "Libera me, Domine, a meipso." The heart is like the Trojan horse, out of whose belly proceeded armed enemies; so out of the heart proceed all evil words and actions, Mat. xv. 19. It is the corrupt fountain, from whence all the impure streams of actual sin do flow: Therefore we should look narrowly to it.

But, besides incident evil thoughts, we have many evil habits and plagues of heart, that we should guard against on the Sabbath, being such as profane the day, and hinder the sanctification of it: Particularly,

1. Atheism, and misbelief of God's truths. If this harbour or prevail in us, we can reap no profit by the word read or preached this day. Why do people delay or refuse to embrace Christ, and leave their sins, but because they want a fixed and firm impression of the truths of the gospel upon their hearts? It is true, you will not say that you misbelieve any of them, but you give no heart assent to the truth of them, which is little better; you give no firm inward credit to the gospel, and to all its assertions, commands, threatenings and promises, that they are come from God, and are most true, certain and infallible. Were you once firmly persuaded of the eternity of eternal life and eternal death, you would not stand so long hovering betwixt heaven and hell. If once you had the firm impressions of eternal death, you would presently, "flee from the wrath to come;" and if you had a due sense of eternal life, you would "run to take hold of the hope set before you," Heb. vi. 18. But, alas! nature is half blind, and cannot see afar off, 2 Pet. i. 9. To carnal hearts and eyes, there seems to be a mist upon eternity; they cannot see into another world, and they cannot believe things not seen. But, O if you would be happy, you must stedfastly believe the "immortality of the soul, and a future life; that the Bible is the true word of God, and that the blessed God sent his eternal Son Jesus Christ into the world to assume man's nature, and die for to redeem him from sin and hell." With abhorrence renounce all doubting or unbelieving thoughts of these great truths; rather doubt of your own being than of these; believe that what now you hear with your ears concerning a future life and judgment-seat, you will shortly see with your eyes: If you do it not, you rub the highest affront on God that a creature is capable of; for you make your Creator a liar, 1 John v. 10. This is a sin that devils are not chargeable with, for "they believe and tremble." O sinner, what further confirmation of the truth wouldest thou have from God, than he hath already given thee? Thou hast his word, yea, his writ, ratified by his oath, confirmed by his miracles, and sealed by his Son's blood, which is far more, and far surer than either a voice from heaven, or a messenger from hell, according to 2 Pet i. 19. Luke xvi. 31.

II. Ignorance of the truths you hear this day, greatly hinders the sanctification of it. You cannot prize Christ, close with him, or follow him, till such time as you know him. How can such hear the gospel, or embrace Christ offered therein, that know not their ruined natural condition, and their remedy through Christ? Many they know not Christ's love and beauty, his ability, sufficiency and fitness, in his natures offices, relations, graces, Spirit and fulness: They know not the design of his coming into the world; the manner of his thorowing our redemption by his obedience and sufferings, and the manner of applying it, and our getting an interest therein, and the necessity and nature of faith in order thereto. For as oft as many have faith in their mouths, they know not what it is; they are ignorant what it is to receive Christ as a Surety and Saviour, as a Priest and King; and therefore many gospel sermons and Sabbaths are entirely lost to them.

O sinners, consider the danger of ignorance, it is a soul-murdering sin, Hos. iv. 6. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." Do not think your ignorance will excuse you at a tribunal, or save you from hell: No, it will rather aggravate your sin and condemnation, to be found ignorant, in a land where the light shines so plentifully about you. Ignorance will be so far from keeping off wrath from you, that God tells you it is a special procuring cause of wrath, and makes you more miserable than others, according to Isaiah xxvii. 11. "This is a people of no understanding, therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour."

Again, as ignorance is a damning sin in itself, so it is the fruitful mother of many other sins and lusts, according to 1 Pet. i. 14. What is the reason why many swear, lye, cheat, break the Sabbath, drink drunk, commit unclean-

ness, slight ordinances, neglect prayer in their families and closets, and go on in their sins, without repenting or fleeing to Christ? It is because of their ignorance: They are ignorant of God, his infinite justice and holy nature, the evil of sin, and what Christ hath suffered for sinners; they know not what regeneration, repentance, and faith are, for all they speak of them; and how then can they practise them, or cry to God for them?

Object. "O (say some ignorant creatures) many have knowledge that make no good use of it; yea, they are more graceless and profane than we."

Ans. All this is too true, and these will have a sad account to make one day for sinning against so much light. But this will be no help to you, for profanity kills them, and ignorance kills you; they die of one disease, and you die of another; and your disease is as sure to kill as theirs. For you to reject knowledge, because some who have it abuse it and perish, is as ridiculous as for you to say, because many die who have both food and physic, and plenty of means for preserving life, I will use no means for preserving my life at all; for, whoever die, you are sure to die: They that have both food and physic may die, but they that have none of them cannot live. So, whoever perish, ignorant persons are sure to perish; for they know not their remedy, they cannot make use of the means of life. O ignorant souls, you are nearer hell than others; your state is darkness, and it borders upon utter darkness; so that you are, as it were, lodging in the next room to hell, having but a weak partition betwixt you and it, which death may break down in a moment, and let you pass into it.—When an ignorant sinner dies, there goes not only dust to dust, but darkness to darkness; the darkness of ignorance to the darkness of hell: And is not this a fearful state for you to continue in? What madness is it for you to do it, when Christ is daily inviting you to come to the light?

O ignorant sinners, why should you continue in your ignorance, more than these of your rank in other places, who can discourse most sensibly of the principles of religion, and the concerns of their souls, and can pray to excellent purpose? Have you not rational souls as well as they? Have you not the same helps and advantages that they have, if you would but make use of them? Are you not as capable as they? You are as sharp and knowing about worldly affairs as others: You know well enough the rent of a piece of ground, the value of corn or cattle; but, alas! know nothing of the worth of your souls, of Christ and pardon to them: You are well versed in the art of plowing, sowing, and reaping, and know the right seasons for them; but, alas! you know not your seasons of mercy: You know your almanack, the fairs, and changes of the moon, you know your story books and ballads; and why might you not know your bibles as well, if you would employ the same parts and abilities to get spiritual knowledge? Have you not great plenty of the means of knowledge, if you would but attend them, and make use of them.

Object. "But I cannot read the bible, how shall I learn knowledge?"

Ans. You are at a very great loss indeed, it is hard to get ignorant persons instructed that cannot read: You ought to lament your loss, and be the more in prayer for the spirit of God to teach you, and make up that loss; and the more desirous to hear others read, and to wait upon the public catechising: And also, lay out yourselves with all care yet to learn to read.

Object. "But I am too old to learn."

Ans. Are you too old to seek after Christ and salvation? Will your age save you from hell and wrath, if you die Christless? will God spare old folk dying in ignorance, more than the young? Many have learned to read, who have been as old as you; were you but willing and desirous, you would soon conquer all difficulties. I have heard of some servants, who have been so fond to learn, that they have offered to masters or mistresses to quit part of their meat and fee, upon condition they would teach them to read: And, are not your souls as dear to you as theirs were to them?

Object. "It was my parents fault that did not teach me when I was young."

Ans. Alas! that parents should be so cruel to their children when young! But, wilt not thou be merciful to thyself, because they are cruel? Their neglect will not excuse thine. As it was their fault that did not learn you in youth, so it is yours now if you remain in ignorance, and will be your eternal ruin if you continue wilfully so: Yea, you will thus not only bring your own blood on your head, but also the blood of your children and servants when you get families; for you will not be capable to instruct them yourselves, nor will you, in all likelihood, be at pains to cause others to do it; and so you will be guilty of the same neglect to your children, that your parents were guilty of to you.

Object. "But I am ashamed to be learning at this age."

Ans. It is indeed a shame for old people to be ignorant, but no shame to learn: Yea, though one foot were in the grave, and the other following, you should still be learning something for your soul. For, what is the world's shame and derision to that woful confusion of face that will befal the ignorant, Christless sinner, at a day of judgment, and especially such as slight knowledge, and will not be at pains to learn? Read that fearful and thundering threatening, Prov. i. 26, 27, 28. "I will laugh at your calamity, when distress and anguish cometh upon you; when ye call upon me, I will not answer; when ye seek me early, ye shall not find me." Oh! these words threaten against the ignorant, who refuse to learn, "punishment without pity, misery without mercy, crying without comfort," and "torment without ease." O what is the cause, say you, of all that sad vengeance? See verse 29. "For that they hated knowledge," &c. As then you love your own souls, and would escape eternal damnation, as you would honour God and his Sabbath, see that you learn to read, seek instruction, and wait carefully upon all the means of knowledge.

III. Earthly-mindedness doth greatly hinder the sanctification of the Lord's day; for, when the vanities of the world are entertained, they so possess the mind, that there is no room left for other thoughts: The thoughts of the world shut out the thoughts of God: The dust and smoke of this world so blind the eyes of many, that they cannot discern the beauty of Christ or holiness, though the brightest discoveries be made thereof this day in the ordinances: Thus, alas! satan defeats the whole design of the gospel as to many; so that, though ministers tell them from God's word of their soul's worth, hazard, and only refuge in Christ, yet they are so hot in pursuing the world, they do not hear or think on what is said. This man hath his farm, the other his merchandise, the other his trade, to look after, Luke xiv. 18. so that there is no time in their

lives, no room in their hearts left for Christ. It is in vain to tell many of securing a mansion or inheritance in heaven; they must have houses and lands on earth. It is needless to tell them of providing for their souls; they have their families to provide for: Or to tell them of heavenly manna to their souls, they must have bread to their mouths. It is to no purpose to tell them of a way to get justice satisfied, or the debt of sin paid; they must have their debts paid to their earthly creditors. It is in vain to press them to seek the favour and friendship of God; all their care is to get the countenance of this or the other man, that can do them kindness. And so, upon these worldly considerations, Christ, the pearl of price, is slighted, the precious soul neglected, and Sabbaths and sermons are quite lost.

Again, it is a gross profanation of this holy day, for people to allow themselves to think upon their trades and worldly commerce, when they are in God's house. As Christ whipped the buyers and sellers out of the temple [illegible] he was on earth, so he will not suffer you to make the [illegible]mblies of his people a place of merchandize, by [illegible]ness about worldly gain and profit. Your business [illegible] God's house this day is with the great God only, [illegible]efore you must attend to nothing but his work and se[illegible]: But, if you indulge worldly thoughts, you will provoke God, and mar all your public performances.

Be not like Martha this day, "careful and troubled about many things," things that will not avail you at the dying hour, or through eternity; but imitate Mary this day, sit at Christ's feet, mind the one thing necessary, and chuse the good part which shall not be taken from you.

Moreover, consider how dangerous this evil is to the salvation of your souls. It may be said of worldliness, compared with other sin, as was said of Saul and David, when any one sin "kills its thousands, this slays its ten thousands:" O what havock makes it in the visible church! What Pharaoh said of the Israelites, Exod. xiv. 3. may well be applied to many professed Christians; they are entangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in. The world, like bird lime, clogs the soul's wings, that it cannot mount up to heaven. Many, like Lot's wife, set out fairly for the Zoar of heaven; but their hearts hanker after the Sodom of this earth, which caused them to look still back, back, till they perish in the way.

Again, consider what a vain and empty thing the world is, though obtained. It suits not the nature, nor satisfies the desires of the immortal soul: It deceives all its lovers, and in midst of sufficiency leaves them in straits; so that we ought rather to pity than envy a worldling, whose portion is so small, happiness so short, mistake so great, and misery eternal.

Think what folly it is to dig for dross with mattocks of gold, to bestow the precious affections of our souls on white and yellow clay! How monstrous is it to see a man with his head and heart where his feet should be! to see the world in the heart and on the throne, and Christ at the footstool! to see the world possessing God's room both week-day and Sabbath-day, and getting the service which is due to him alone! How many are they who, even on the Sabbath-day, worship the trinity of this world, mentioned 1 John ii. 16. more than the Trinity of heaven?

IV. Forgetfulness of God and Christ is a great evil, and greatly hinders Sabbath-sanctification. How can these sanctify the Sabbath, who never mind the Author nor the end of it? And, alas! there are too many who have nothing of God in their thoughts, either Sabbath-day or week-day, Psal. x. 4. Though the heart be still thinking, and hundreds of thoughts pass thro' it every hour of the day, yet God is in none of them. Strange! that every worldly trifle should find room in the heart, and God can find no place in it! What is the reason of this? You may see it, Rom. i. 28. "They did not like to retain God in their knowledge." Surely there is nothing in the world that we have so frequent *mementos* of, as of God: How can we look to the heavens, earth, flowers, or grass, without minding him? A very heathen could say, "Præsentem refert quælibet herba Deum." Or, how can we look to our bodies, but their curious structure should presently mind us of God? Yea, every time we breathe, every motion of our lungs, and beating of our pulse, should be a prick or spur to us to mind our Preserver; and in a special manner, on the Sabbath-day, every ordinance, every duty, every sentence, every word spoken by the minister, should mind us of God: But the matter is, the thoughts of God are burdensome to all that live careless and ungodly lives; they cannot think upon him, but they mind their Judge.

But, O Christian, consider what a sin it is to forget God, especially on his own day. If we ought to spend every day in the fear of God, Prov. xxiii. 17. much more the Sabbath-day. What ingratitude is it to forget him this day that minded us in our low estate, yea, minded us when we could not mind ourselves? The love of God in Christ should swallow up all our thoughts this day. When we seriously consider what Christ hath done for his people, one might think that Christ would never be one whole hour together out of their minds, but that they should carry him up and down in their thoughts and desires, that they should lie down with thoughts of Christ at night, and have him like a "bundle of myrrh lying all night betwixt their breasts," that is, in their hearts; and, when they awake, "they should be still with him:" That their very dreams in the night should be sweet visions of Christ, and all their words should savour of him.

V. Aversion to duty is another heart evil, that hinders the sanctification of the Sabbath. O how backward do we find our hearts to the duties of the Sabbath! how glad to put them by with any frivolous excuse! how unwilling to pay God a visit on his own day! We are slow to begin, and in haste to make an end; we are heavy while the duty is a-doing, and glad when it is done. Many are driven to their closets; as if they were going to the rack, or as if prayer were a penance rather than a privilege; they are constrained to it, to satisfy a natural conscience. It is rather a servile than a son-like performance. If conscience, like a task-master, did not lash them to their duty, they would never perform it. Many, they would rather toil their bodies whole days and weeks at the sorest labour, than spend one hour in secret upon their knees on the Lord's day. How sad and lamentable a thing is this! Is not God's company most desirable? is it not God's admirable condescension, and our highest honour, that such poor worms as we should be admitted into his presence? Are we not naturally desirous of acquaintance with great persons, and why so backward to acquaintance with the King of heaven? Is not the Sabbath a delight to God's people? and shall the work of it be a drudgery to us?

Object. "The duties requisite on this day are so many, they cost much difficulty and pains to perform them."

Ans. It is better to take pains, than suffer pains; better be bound with the cords of duty, than with the chains of darkness. The bonds of duty are not grievous; nay, they are our ornament and greatest freedom, Psal. cxix. 45. whereas satan and the world's service is the greatest drudgery; there is sin in the work, and hell in the wages. Alas, that many will be at no pains for that which will bring eternal glory, but are content to be at great pains for that which will cost eternal pains! The drunkard, thief, and adulterer run many hazards to serve the devil, and win damnation; they suffer bodily pains, want sleep and rest, and weary themselves to commit iniquity. "They draw iniquity with cords, and sins as with cart ropes," Isa. v. 18. They are yoked as it were, in the devil's plough or cart, and he makes them sweat and draw in his service. What bad work, sad wages, and a terrible master have they? Who would be hired by any wages to serve lions and tygers? Is not the devil a roaring lion? and, will you serve him that will devour and tear his servants both soul and body, after they have served him never so faithfully? Oh! shall the devil's servants outstrip Christ's servants in diligence and activity? Is there any master like Christ? Is there any work or wages like his? Was there ever any of his servants a loser at his hands? Will not his experienced servants tell us, that "wisdom's ways are pleasantness," and that Sabbath-days work is the sweetest recreation? Here they have the most pleasant walks, the most lightsome prospects, the choicest company, and the sweetest fellowship, Psal. xxiii. 2, 3. Psal. l. 23. There is heaven in holiness, and gain in godliness; no such gain or delight to be found elsewhere. Godliness is the most enriching trade in the world; God's people sometimes gain more by it on a Sabbath-day in one hour, in one sermon, one promise, one prayer, one communion-table, one spiritual breathing, than all the rich men of the shire are worth, put all their estates together. The world will not believe this; but sure I am, one return of prayer, one smile of Christ's face, one look of faith, one grape of Canaan, one glimpse of the promised land, the head of one Goliath, the death of one lust, the strengthening of one grace, which may be obtained in the duties of the Sabbath; any of these is an abundant recompence for all the pains we can be at in God's service this day; they yield more sweetness and content to the soul, than all the pleasures the world can afford: The smallest gleanings of spiritual joy are better than a whole vintage of carnal delights.

But what is all this to that eternal weight of glory which is treasured up in heaven, for rewarding the laborious servants of Christ? What can we do for so vast a reward? Had the Lord said to us, unless you be content to spend your days in some howling wilderness, quit all worldly riches and pleasures, pine away with poverty and want, give the fruit of your bodies, suffer martyrdom, or take a dip in hell, you shall never see my face in glory; surely there is none that knows what it is to escape eternal misery, and inherit endless happiness above, but would have been willing to accept of these conditions. How much more then, when he only requires us to accept of his Son as our Surety, and love him, part with those sins that would damn us, and follow him in the pleasant ways of holiness; and to do all this in his grace and strength; for he sends none a warfare on their own charges? Say not, [illegible] I have no strength for so many [illegible] the Sabbath. Is there not enough in Christ for this? Look with an eye of faith to the [illegible] promise of God in Christ, and every new duty will bring new strength with it; "they that do these things shall live in them."

VI. Hardness of heart hinders the sanctification of the Sabbath. Why? hard-hearted sinners can have no delight in Sabbath-work; they are not affected by the world; they cannot prize Christ offered in the gospel; they are not capable of receiving the gospel-comforts. Oh how many such do every Sabbath appear before God! who can sit and hear the most terrible threatenings of the word, and curses of the law denounced against sin, and the sins they are guilty of; and yet be no more concerned than the seats they sit on, or the dead that lie under their feet. Mercies or promises do not allure them, judgments or threatenings do not alarm them. This is a sad case, and yet very common, and few sensible of it. Who is complaining of this plague, of heart-hardness, and laying their case before God, saying, "Ah! what shall I do with this stone in my heart?" A stone in the bladder, or kidney, is a woeful pain, but the stone in the heart is much more dangerous and deadly; yet who is pained with that and crying to the Physician of souls to take it away, and give a heart of flesh?

O hard-hearted sinner, consider thy miserable condition while thou remainest in a fallen state under wrath. Many a stroke has been given thee by the hammer of the word to no purpose; many of the Spirit's motions hast thou resisted; many a knock hast thou despised. O tremble, lest God give thee over, and take no more pains on thee. A heathen Felix trembled, the devils tremble for fear of God's wrath; and will thy heart be unmoved? God calls you to flee from it, ministers call, mercies and promises call, judgments and threatenings call, the wounds and blood of Christ call; and will not thy heart be affected? "The voice of the Lord is powerful, full of majesty, breaketh the cedars, shaketh the wilderness," hath melted the hearts of thousands; and yet cannot it break thy hard heart: Thou hast mountains of unpardoned guilt lying on thee, and hast thou no feeling thereof? Remember, if you be not brought to feeling now, you shall be brought to it ere long, to your eternal cost and sorrow; if the word do not waken thy heart, it is like, death will. When you begin to draw by the curtain of flesh, and look into eternity, you will then cry, Lord, what will become of me for ever? If you do not awake, then to be sure the first moment of your entry into eternity will bring you to your senses; the bitings of the worm of conscience will then make you feel; the stream of fire and brimstone will melt the hardest heart; the hammer of justice will then break the heart, which the hammer of the word could not.

O then, beg of God, with the greatest earnestness, that he may give you "the broken heart and a contrite spirit," that so you may have that acceptable sacrifice to offer to him, which he never yet frowned upon, Psal. li. 17. "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Augustine caused write this text over his bed when sick. Let us cry to God for it, who alone can give it. Gravel stones men may remove, but heart-stones none can remove but God: We may as easily remove mountains as do this; yet we must use the means: And therefore, "look to him whom you have pierced," that you may mourn. Think much on the free love of Christ, and the bloody sufferings your sins did put him to. If Christ's love and blood will not soften thy heart, nothing will. Beg the Spirit of God

to come and make application of the blood of Christ, the blessed Scape-goat; and then the adamantine heart will dissolve. Cry, "Come, O Spirit of God, blow the fire of the word with thy own breath, and then it will melt hearts: Take this hammer in thy own hand, and it will break rocks. Lord, wound and heal; do the work thoroughly and effectually; begin it, carry it on and finish it: For if any of it be left for me to do, it will be eternally undone, and I will be lost for ever. Lord, complete this work, loose my bonds, thaw my affections, and draw my heart, and take eternal glory to thee."

VII. Hypocrisy and formality in duty is opposite to Sabbath sanctification; for God requires heart-sincerity in every piece of worship and duty that we perform. Yet, O how many are they who give God no more but the outward man, and the service of the body! They "draw nigh to God with their lips" only; they pray so superficially, as if they were unwilling that God should hear them, and take away that lust which conscience forces them to pray against. They are so careless and irreverent in secret prayer, they would be ashamed if any saw them, or overheard them. A statue on a tomb, with eyes and hands lifted up, offers as good service as many; only it wants a voice: And what signifies the voice without the affections? A parrot may be taught to repeat some few words of prayer, but none will call that a prayer; so neither will God own thy formal words for prayer. It is speaking, and not praying, when the heart is wanting; he looks upon thy worship as no better than a stage-play. Many worship God as carelessly as if they were "praying to an idol," that neither saw nor heard them. Nay, many heathens have worshipped their false gods, Jupiter and Mars, with greater seriousness and devotion than you do the great JEHOVAH, who made you and all the world. Why? the reason of all this is, all that many seek of religion is the name of it; and the outward form of it makes them pass under the name of good Christians among men. Though God sees their hypocrisy, yet man knows it not; and that is enough to them. But, O hypocrite, consider the day is approaching when God will unmask thee before all the world. As Paul said to the high priest, Acts xxiii. 3. so may I say to thee, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall;" so as thy paint shall fall off and thy inward rottenness appear to all. There will be no hiding of thyself among the crowd, no imposing on an all-seeing God. He can easily discern a traiterous Judas under a deceitful kiss, a ravening wolf under a sheep's skin, a murdering Herod under a pretence of worship, a hypocritical Pharisee under a broad phylactory. He can spy a dissembling devil under a Samuel's mantle, or when he would shroud himself among the sons of God; for neither the sophistry of men or devils can blind his eyes.

Again, let the hypocrite think on his folly, in losing both his heaven here and hereafter, in drawing down upon him both the hatred of the world, and the hatred of the God of heaven. The world hates him for his shew of religion, and God hates him for his hypocrisy in it. Is it not lamentable folly in hypocrites to do something for Christ, and go some length in the way to heaven, and yet to lose both Christ and heaven for not going one step further? To be like that scribe, Matt. xii. 34. "not far from the kingdom of God," and yet never come thither? How sad is it to perish with heaven in view, and go to hell by the very gates of glory? The hypocrite's hope brings him to the shady valley, Job xvii. 11. but his candle goes out in that dark trance, and then he stumbles and falls for ever. It is sad to perish in the wilderness, when come to the very brink of Jordan, and in sight of the promised land; to make our voyage with a pleasant gale all the way, and shipwreck at the very mouth of the harbour; to come within a step of the gate, and die with our hands upon the threshold.

Lastly, Remember, as hypocrisy, if continued in, will certainly damn you; so it will provide a hotter hell for you than that of other sinners, Matt. xxiv. 51. therefore be wise in time, and study sincerity and uprightness of heart in all your dealings with God.

VIII. Wandering of heart greatly mars the performance of Sabbath duties, especially hearing, praying, and praising. Jewish rabbies say, "That though on the Sabbath there was much flesh used for sacrifice in the temple, yet not so much as one fly was seen stirring there." So neither should there be a wandering thought or eye allowed, when we are about God's solemn worship this day in his house. What encouragement hath a husbandman to sow upon a high-way, where every man and beast has free passage? No better is the heart of a wandering hearer: We may as well cast seed upon the waves of the sea, as preach unto such; for the good seed of the word is quite lost upon them. Think what an affront it would be to a king, to turn your back to him, or discourse with others, while he is speaking to you. The motions and postures of your souls are as visible to God, as the motions and postures of your bodies are to one another. Or, if a criminal were allowed to petition his prince for his life, would he break off at every sentence, and chase flies through the room; you would say, a remission were ill bestowed upon such a creature. O beware of such a ridiculous behaviour before the King of heaven, when you are addressing him for the life of your condemned souls. Would you have God to hear you, when you do not hear yourself? Can you think he will be mindful of you, when you are not mindful of yourself? Think, if your prayers were written down, and all your vain thoughts interlined, what incoherent nonsense would they be? would you not be ashamed to hear them all read over? would not the world cry, "Shame upon you for mocking your dread Sovereign with such an impertinent address?" O but thoughts are the same as words with God; nay, they speak louder in his ears than words do in ours, Amos iv. 13. "He declares unto man what is his thought." And David says, "He tells my wanderings."

Wherefore, when you enter this day into the sanctuary, or into your closets, shut the door of your heart, so that worldly thoughts may not enter to trouble you. Lay solemn obligations and charges upon your hearts, that they wander not from God; bind the sacrifice with cords to the altars horns; and if the birds of prey come by surprise down upon the sacrifice, then, like Abraham, Gen xv. 11. "drive them presently away," and summon every thought to attend your main business. Retract every vain thought with a sigh, and chide with your hearts for vain excursions; check them as Christ did his drowsy disciples, What! cannot you watch with Christ for one hour? How then will you like to be engaged in heaven's work to all eternity, where there is no interruption?

Again, consider the uncertainty of your time for prayer. Had a criminal but a quarter of an hour allotted him to beg his life before an earthly judge, would he spend it in gaz-

ing upon the court and their fine clothes, or in asking some ridiculous questions? No, he would intreat and beg his life with all the arguments and fervency he were capable of. O sinner, when thou kneelest down to beg thy soul's life at the hands of the Judge of the quick and dead, thou knowest not if thou shalt have so long as a quarter of an hour for it; and wilt thou trifle it away? What if death surprise thee, and find thy heart wandering from God?

For remedying of this evil, besides what is said, study to overawe your hearts this day with a sense of God's presence and omniscient eye. A servant will not sport himself in his master's presence, but carry gravely. Did you believe that God's eye is still upon you, and notices all your thoughts, words, looks, and gestures; would you not be more circumspect than you are? May not angels, when they see what gravity and decency you observe in presence of a prince, and your carelessness and irreverence in presence of a glorious God, conclude you no better than infidels in midst of God's house? Consider then how solemnly you set yourselves in God's presence, when you attend public ordinances. It was the sense of this that made Bernard say, when he came to the church-door, "Stay here, all my earthly thoughts." But if they do thrust in after you and come upon you, to divert you this day, pretending necessary business, as Nehemiah's enemies did to him when about the temple work, then give them such a repulse as he did, Neh. vi. 3. "I am doing a great work, I cannot come down; why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?" and, like him, repeat this over and over, as they repeat their solicitations.

Again, get love to God and his ordinances; for what we love, that we fix our minds upon, be it gain, honours or pleasures. David found love to the word a good remedy against wandering thoughts in time of reading or hearing it, Psal. cxix. 113. "I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love." Also, study to accustom yourselves to holy thoughts at other times; for a vain heart out of duty will be little better in duty. If your hearts be much set on the world at other times, your thoughts will be driving thither in time of duty, whether praying or hearing: But if they be habitually set upon Christ, then will your prayers ascend to him like a pillar of incense.

Moreover, be putting up frequent ejaculations unto God, to fix your hearts, and gather your straying thoughts. Pray with the Psalmist, Psal. lxxxvi. 11. "Unite my heart to fear thy name." Look to him that can stay "the raging waves of the sea," to stay the wandering thoughts of your heart.

Lastly, Consider how Jews and Heathens may put Christians to the blush in this matter. We read of surprising instances of their fixed devotion in their acts of worship. It is a strange constancy and fixedness that is spoken of the Jewish priests at Jerusalem, that when the Romans broke into the city, and rushed into the temple ready to kill them: yet they went on with the rites of the temple, as if there had been no such thing. Also, strange was the fixedness of that Spartan youth, that held the censer to Alexander while he offered sacrifice, who suffered a coal, that fell on his arm, to burn his flesh, rather than by crying, or letting fall the censer, he should disturb that worship. May not these instances shame us, that have more light, for our unfixedness and inconstancy in the service of the great Jehovah?

IX. Wearying of the duties of the Sabbath is another evil we must guard against this day. O how many are there like those, Amos viii. 5. who say in their hearts, "When will the Sabbath be gone?" and with those, Mal. i. 13. "What a weariness is it?" Many weary as much of sermons, as if they were in the stocks all the while they attend them. O what would come of you, if Christ were as soon weary of calling, as you are of hearing! How many Sabbaths have you kept Christ standing and knocking at your doors, and he is not yet weary, for all your long deafness to his knocks, and refusing to open to him, but continues still to knock? O let this shame us out of our wearying to knock at God's door. Alas! a quarter of an hour in prayer wearies many of us. Is this the requital we give to Christ for all his love and patience? May not he say, "O believer, I did not soon weary of my bloody sweat in the garden for thee; nay, I was longer on the painful cross, than ever thou wast on thy knees in prayer, or meditating on my love and sufferings." O should a believer ever weary of that subject? Those idolaters, Acts xix. 34. could "cry out with a loud voice for the space of two hours," and not weary in commending their idol Diana; and shall we weary of hearing a sermon in commendation of Christ, for the space of one hour? O where are these animal spirits that men have in worldly business? where is that vigour and activity that many shew in their bodily recreations, nay, in serving of their lusts? Many weary not to spend whole days and nights in drinking and gaming; but they grudge to give God one day for his worship, or so much as one hour of his own day. You weary not to provide for your bodies and present things, but soon weary to provide for your souls and eternity: You weary not to bestow time and pains to purchase a small estate; but you can spare no time nor pains to seek the kingdom of heaven. Many are quick enough about worldly things, but, like Dagon, they have no head to think, nor hands to act, when the ark is present. The Sabbath is a long and wearisome day to them. Some think both forenoon and afternoon of this day too much to be given to God; one of them may serve: Or they linger in coming to the church in the morning, as being glad to have a part of God's day and worship driven by ere they come; and not a few steal away before worship be ended; they'd rather spend the day any way than in God's service. O sinner, who is the loser by this, but thy own soul! Dost thou think a Sabbath long, a sermon long, a prayer long? How long then will it be to be banished from God's presence, and lie on beds of fire through a whole eternity? You will weary eternally there, but it will not mend you: The doors are not open there, as the church doors now are, to let you go in and out at your pleasure (as some graceless persons do in time of divine worship) no, you will find hell's gates shut with invincible bolts, and mountains of brass rolled to them; and there you must dwell and lie roaring, as prisoners of wrath for ever. Poor carnal wearying soul, canst thou ever think of going to heaven, to worship and adore God for ever without intermission, when so short a time of this work wearies thee now? To be sure, heaven would be a hell to thee in thy present unconverted state; thou wouldst give never so much to be out of it again, wert thou in it.

But, O believer, how ill doth it become thee to weary of Sabbath-work here below, that professest to be preparing for that everlasting Sabbath above, the work of which hath no end? Wilt thou weary to spend one whole Sabbath here in serving Christ, who wearies not to spend many whole Sabbaths and years in serving thee? Consider how busy Christ is this day in heaven in thy behalf: Though the Sab-

bath be a day of rest to us from our ordinary work, yet it is none to Christ; he is busy through the whole of it pleading and making intercession for thee, without fainting in this work; and wilt thou so soon tire to act for him? Doth he mind thee so constantly, and wilt thou so soon weary to think on him?

X. Sleeping or drowsiness, in time of divine service, is a profanation of the Lord's day, and hinders our profiting by the ordinances. Therefore guard against it. Many are watchful enough about the devil's service; they can spend whole nights in drinking, gaming, &c. without sleep; but cannot hold up their eyes half an hour in hearing a sermon. Consider what an evil custom this is, you who are chargeable with it, and reform it. How ridiculous were it for a man that came to the market to buy provision for himself and his family, to fall asleep in the market-place, and so miss his errand? Do you not come on the Sabbath, which is heaven's market-day, to the ordinances to get provision for your souls; and will you fall asleep in the mean time of the market, and so go home empty? What do you know but, while you slept, that truth was delivered that might have saved your souls? Will a man fall asleep at his food? and yet you sleep while the bread of life is breaking to you, and the waters of life are running by you. How sad is it, that the soul's mouth should at this time be clothed with drowsiness and asleep, that it cannot receive one crumb or drop? O how would a damned soul prize the opportunity that you sleep away! Remember it will not always last with you, the Sabbath and sermon will quickly come that will be your last; and who knows but this or the next may be it? If you thought you were going straight from the church to God's tribunal, would you not be more watchful in hearing? There is none can assure you but it may be so: However that be, I can assure you, you must shortly answer for every sermon you are present at. God will ask, Where are the fruits of so many sermons? It will be a fearful *item* in your accounts. *So many sermons slept away.* How will you answer for it?

Again, consider how provoking this practice is to God. Would not a prince be displeased with a subject, if he should fall asleep while he is speaking to him? Would not a judge be angry with a criminal, if he should sleep when he were about to pronounce his sentence? And have you not to do with the "Kings of kings," and "Judge of the world," while you are hearing the word? Is not your life at the stake when you are hearing it? according to that word in Deut. xxxii. 46, 47. "Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day; for it is not a vain thing for you: because it is your life." Remember what befel Eutychus when he slept in time of sermon, Acts xx. it almost cost him his life: God made him a monument of displeasure, for a warning to all sleepers: He got a sad fall, but you may get a worse—he fell to the ground, but you may fall to the lowest hell, and there you will not get a Paul to take you up, as he got. Your sin is more aggravated than his: it was mid-night when he slept, but you sleep at mid-day; Paul had preached several hours, but half an hour and less puts you asleep. You have cause to fear, lest God make you a monument of his wrath, or that he say, Sleep on, till the flames of hell awake you. It is truly a wonder how any can sleep at the worship of God, either in the church or family, and not dream of hell-fire in their sleep; for their danger is greater than they are aware of; satan is very busy at such a time: While you sleep, he successfully sows his tares, Matt. xiii. 25. your sleeping time is a seed time for the devil, and a spring time for lusts.

If you would remedy this evil, strive and wrestle against it, and pray for help to do it; go timeously to bed on Saturday's night, and see that you be temperate through the week; for they that wake much in the ale-house, will be fair to sleep in the church.

XI. Prejudice at preachers, and quarrelling with them for their plainness and freedom in reproving sin, mars the sanctification of the Sabbath, and your getting good by the ordinances. Some hear ministers, as the Pharisees heard Christ, with ill will to them, and a design to catch advantage against them; they "would make a man an offender for a word." Others are so fast asleep in sin, that they cannot endure ministers to thunder in their ears, or lighten in their eyes by plain and piercing sermons, because they disturb their rest. Asa was "wroth with the seer" upon this account, and "put him in prison;" so dealt Herod with John, and Ahab with Micaiah. Many, like Ahab, think the minister has a pique at them, when he reproves sin freely: "He never speaks good of me," saith Ahab. O sinner, this is the wrong way: for when God wounds thy sin, and darts conviction into thy soul, thou shouldst thank the spirit of God for his merciful visiting of thee, and lay open your lusts, and say, "Smite, Lord, with a deadly blow those enemies that would not have thee to rule over them; kill my lusts, and save my soul. Blest Physician, wound and heal; cause these convictions end in my conversion here, and salvation hereafter." An honest heart loves that sermon best that wounds his lusts deepest. He says to the word, or the minister, that stops his career in sin, as David to Abigail, 1 Sam. xxv. 32, 33. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me; and blessed be thy advice," &c. If your eyes were opened, you would look on plain rouzing preachers as your best friends in the world. If you were in hazard of burning or drowning by falling into the fire or water, would you be angry with one that will pull you out, and save your life, though he should wound you, or break an arm of you in the doing of it? Nay, you would think him your friend, and thank him for his kindness. And will you be angry with a minister for plucking you as a brand out of the burning, by denouncing wrath against sin, and telling your hazard in plain language?

XII. Slighting the offers of the gospel, and Christ tendered to us therein, is a great profanation of the Lord's day, and directly opposite to the design of it: Yet, alas! it is a most prevailing evil among us. Christ calls, but we will not hear; he offers himself and his purchase, but we will not accept; he allures us with his mercy, but we will not turn to him; he oft waters us with the dew and rain of gospel ordinances, but little fruit follows: We are like the barren field, on which much cost is bestowed, but the crop is nothing answerable. How many Sabbaths are spent, and sermons preached, and no good done? At one sermon of Peter's, there were three thousand souls converted: But, alas! we fear there are three thousand sermons preached now, and not one soul brought in. Many times is the gospel net let down in vain: O that Christ would come and direct it to be let down on the right side of the ship! I shall endeavour briefly to lay before you the great sin and misery of rejecting Christ and the gospel offers.

1. It is against reason to refuse a remedy when in our offer; as for a wounded man to slight a physician, or a condemned man a pardon, none in his right wits would be guilty of this: Nay, it is even self-murder; for he is as guilty of his own death that rejects a medicine, or tears a plaister from off his wounds, as he that cut his own throat Now, you know what a heinous sin self murder is; yea, this is not only so, but it is soul-murder, which has a louder cry than any other murder, by so much as the soul is more precious than the body. You are afraid to shed the blood of others, O do not embrue your hands in the blood of your own souls

2. It is the greatest affront and indignity that can be offered to the majesty of God and our Lord Jesus Christ. It is even called a "treading under foot the Son of God, and his precious blood," Heb x 28, 29. which is there reckoned a greater sin than the breach of all the ten commands, it is a sin which neither heathens nor devils are guilty of To "tread upon the Son of God," O monstrous guilt! who would be guilty of this? May you say, "Am I a dog (as Hazael said to the prophet) that I should do this thing?" Yea, every soul that slights Christ and his gospel offers, doth it How provoking must it be, to trample on God's most precious Jewel, wherein he is highly delighted and well pleased, Matt iii 18. to lothe that which is most sweet unto God? What horrid ingratitude is it, to slight the remedy that the infinitely wise God hath been at so much pains and expences in preparing for us, and which hath cost him more than the creating of ten thousand worlds would have done? a work upon which his heart is so set, and wherein he hath so displayed his glorious attributes and perfections, yea, a work which he prefers to all his other works. How criminal must it be to undervalue that? Again, what a slight must it be to the divine Majesty, to prefer the devil and lusts before him? When satan and lusts knock, they presently find access, yea, the least whisper they make is hearkened to But though Christ cry aloud, and lift up his voice like a trumpet in the gospel offers, yea, though he call, intreat, beseech and complain, is disregarded, and finds shut doors. "What iniquity (may Christ say) do you find in me," that the devil and lusts should be preferred before me? Can they do for you what I can do? "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish and unwise?"

3. Refusing Christ as offered in the gospel, is the great condemning sin of the world, see John iii 19, 36 Heb iii. 19 The ruin of sinners under the gospel, is laid at the door of this sin, as if there were none other charged upon them And justly it is so, for if a malefactor were offered his life upon his kneeling and accepting the king's remission, if he refused to do this, it may well be said, that his refusal hangs him. O sinner, no other sin in the world, however great it be, would condemn you, if you were not guilty of this sin of slighting Christ: But this is the sin which binds the guilt of all your other sins hard and fast upon you; yea, it is the sin that binds up the hands of Omnipotency, that it cannot save you. Christ's merits, though infinite, cannot justify you, if you reject them; for the best medicine that ever was compounded cannot heal, unless it be applied.

4. Unbelief and slighting of Christ, tends to defeat the whole design of the gospel, and to render Christ's whole undertaking useless. For, what is it but a saying on the matter, You have no need of him; and His death was to no purpose? May not Christ look with a grieved heart upon unbelieving sinners, and say, "I have gone a long journey. shed my precious blood, and suffered the pains of hell, to save sinners: But these say on the matter, I might have staid in heaven; I might have kept my blood in my veins; or, I died as a fool dieth. They give me no thanks for all my pains" O! sinners, consider what you are doing, would you go about to frustrate Christ's glorious expedition, or give him cause to repent of his death and bloody agony?

5 This sin brings on inevitable wrath and misery, Heb. ii. 3. As Christ hath cords of love, so he hath a rod of iron; if you break his cords, he will take his rod: If mercy manage it, it will but wound you; but, if justice take it, it will grind you to powder. O provoke not the Mediator to take his iron rod; for his vengeance is heavy. Though he be the meek "Lamb of God," and be clad with priestly garments, yet he hath "feet like brass, as if they burned in a furnace," both heavy and hot to trample on his enemies, Lev. i. 15, 15 If you refuse Christ, your misery is as inevitable as that of the devils: For they perish, because they have no Mediator, and you perish, because you will not have a Mediator. O why will you put yourselves in the same case with devils? Nay, your case in some respects, will be worse than theirs; for they never rejected a remedy The most scorching corners in the fiery oven of God's wrath seems to be reserved for unbelievers, Luke xii 26 The breath of his mouth, that before invited them, will eternally blow their fire, Isa xxx 35. Mercy itself will be incensed, and plead against them at the great day. You will be more inexcusable than the heathens. They will have something to say for themselves, "We never had an offer of Christ, we never once heard of him," but what can you say for yourselves, who have had so many thousand offers, and so many knocks and calls every Sabbath to accept of Christ? You must surely stand speechless: there remains nothing for you but a "fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." Yea, "it will be more tolerable for Sodom in that day of judgment, than it will be for you, Matt xi 22, 23. The sins of Sodom were so monstrous, that they made a hell upon earth. O what punishment must they have now, when the beginnings of it in this world were so terrible! If the punishment of the least sin will be intolerable in that lake, O what will the punishment of the Sodomites horrid and unnatural sins be! Yet their case will be easy, in respect of them that have slighted the gospel: These will even gnash their teeth for envy of the happiness of a damned Sodomite. Nay, O gospel slighter, you will then wish a thousand times you had rather been living in Sodom, when fire and brimstone was rained from heaven on it, than have lived in Scotland, where manna was rained, and the light shined so abundantly! So much for inward sins.

Of Outward Sins of Commission on the Lord's Day.

II. I come, in the next place, to caution you against outward sins, whereby the Lord's day is too commonly profaned.

1. Beware of the sins of the tongue: It is a most essential part of true religion, to govern the tongue aright: For,

" if any man seem to be religious (saith James) and bridleth not his tongue, that man's religion is vain." The tongue is a most unruly thing; and therefore the psalmist treats it, as he would do an unreasonable beast, Psal. xxxix. 1. " He keeps it in as with a bridle." God hath set a double hedge about this unruly member, both of the teeth and lips (to shew with what care we should keep it) and yet how oft doth it break loose, notwithstanding of both? God hath also placed it betwixt the brain and the heart, that it might take counsel of both; and yet how oft doth it act, without advising with either the one or the other? God hath given us two ears, and but one tongue; to teach us to hear much, and speak little. " Be swift to hear, and slow to speak." James i. 19. for " he that refraineth his lips is wise," Prov. x. 19. often have we cause to repent our speaking, but seldom our silence.

As we ought to watch our tongues every day, so especially on the Lord's day; for on this day we are forbid to " speak our own words, Isa. lviii. 13. Not only must we this day abstain from lying, swearing, reproaching, backbiting, &c. but also from all idle words, yea, from all such discourse as is unsuitable to the work of this day, though it might be lawful on other days. The hearts of men may be very much known by their Sabbath-day's discourse; for " out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" We guess by people's language what country they belong to Is thy speech vain and worldly upon the Lord's day? It is a shrewd sign of a carnal unrenewed heart; " Thou art a Galilean, thy speech bewrayeth thee." This is God's holy day, and he will have it sanctified by our whole man, and by our words as well as our actions: " Set a watch then this day before your mouth, and keep the door of your lips," and strive to " season your speech with grace;" for you may profane the Sabbath by your words as well as by your works, and by vain words as well as by vile words. O then, what cause have we to lament the profanation of the Sabbath by vain and idle discourses, which is so common among us? If Christ should join himself to many this day, in their coming to and going from the church, as he did the two disciples going to Emmaus on this day, Luke xxiv. 15, 17. and ask, " What manner of communications are these which you have one with another?" might not this question strike us speechless, and make as blush? Who can tell what day this is by many people's discourses? Jests, stories and idle talk, are as common with them this day as any other. It was Plato's proposal, " That mens speeches at their meetings and tables should be written." If this were practised on the Sabbath, would it not put many to shame, to read over their words before them? But though men do not register them, yet, remember, God doth it, especially on his own day, which he hath so much honoured He has a book of remembrance to write down all that men say, as well as what they do, Mal. iii. 16. See what he saith, Matt. xi. 36. that scripture may cause us all tremble, and take heed to our words, while we have a day to live; " I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof at the day of judgment." O what long counts will many have to clear for idle words on the Sabbath, besides on other days! And if they must account for idle words, how much more for ill and sinful words, for base lies, and bloody oaths? O the tongue is a world of iniquity! How shall we answer for it at God's bar, without timeous repentance, and fleeing to Christ for mercy? If you would have your tongues renewed, and to become as choice silver, to speak the language of Canaan on the Lord's day; then see to get sanctified hearts: Cleanse the fountain, that the streams may run clear; " wash your heart from wickedness, and let not vain thoughts lodge within you," Jer. iv. 14. Shut out vain thoughts, as well as vile thoughts: And, if they break in upon you this day, do as the ravished virgin under the law, cry out to God for help, and you shall not be held guilty.

Secondly, There are sins in action, whereby the Sabbath is frequently profaned by many.

1. Many incroach upon the Lord's holy day, and profane it by worldly diversions and recreations, and by seeking their pleasures in the fields, which I have handled already at some length: Others profane this holy day by making it a day of idleness, or a visiting-day among their friends and neighbours: Others by making it a reckoning day with workmen and servants: And many profane it by doing unnecessary servile work in and about their houses, which might either be done on the Saturday before, or delayed till Monday thereafter; such as the gathering pease, shearing of grass, cutting and shearing of kail, fetching in water, sweeping the house, drying of clothes, brewing of ale, and the like. These things not being works of necessity or mercy, but our own works, done for our worldly profit, or to indulge our carnal ease or pleasure, are certainly unlawful on the Sabbath, according to Isa. lviii. 13. Yet, alas! how is the Lord's day profaned by these practices in some places of the land? Let ministers do and say what they will, still many will be stealing a part of God's day for their servile work; and it cannot but be hemous and provoking in the sight of God, being done against so much light and manifold reproofs.

Object. " Why do you exclaim so against us on this account? we do no harm to any; we thank God we are not thieves, extortioners, drunkards," &c.

Ans. Nay, you are thieves, for you rob God, and steal from him that which is his proper right, for " the seventh day is the Lord's." You would be ashamed to be found stealing any of your neighbour's goods, and think you no shame to be found robbing God of his holy day? Is not sacrilege the worst kind of theft, stealing from God worse than stealing from man, the sins against the first table greater than the sins against the second table? Besides, they that begin thus to steal from God, may, ere all be done, come and steal from men too; for false to God, true to no man. Many a thief at the gibbet hath confessed, that he began his loose life and stealing with breaking of the Sabbath-day; that this was his leading sin, and the occasion of all the rest.

Object. " We are not singular, we do but what neighbours and others about us do."

Ans. You ought to be singular, and do more for God and your souls than others, if you would " enter in at the strait gate." God forbids you to follow a multitude to do evil," Exod. xxiii. 2. The commonness of a sin doth not extenuate but aggravate it in the sight of God; for, the more common it be, it hath the louder cry in his ears for vengeance. God hath common plagues for common sins in this world, and a common hell for common sinners in the world to come. Think not, that your association with others will anywise alleviate your torments in that lake below; nay, it will rather heighten them: For the more faggots are thrown into a fire, it will burn the more vehemently.

Object. " These things which we do are but little trifles,

soon done, and do not hinder God's service on the Sabbath."

Ans. 1. Was not gathering a few sticks on the Sabbath as little? yet we see how highly God resented it. Think no sin small which is committed against an eternal God, and his holy law. There is more evil in the least sin, than all the angels in heaven, or ten thousand worlds, can expiate; and, if its guilt or punishment due to it were laid upon thee, it would make thee gnash thy teeth eternally, and curse the day that ever thou wast born: Nothing less than the death of the eternal Son of God can make atonement for the least sin Believe it then, that lesser sins, if known and reserved, will carry thee to hell as surely as greater sins; for, the less the sin be, the less tentation hast thou to commit it, and the less excuse for it. A small leak in a ship, kept open, will sink her, as well as a greater; a stab with a pen-knife will kill a man as well as a sword. If thou allowest satan but the smallest grip of thy soul, he will pull thee to hell by it, even as a butcher can drag a beast to the shambles by one foot, as well as when bound by all four: And, if satan get thee to hell, he doth not much care by what sins thou goest thither, whether small or great.

2. God hath framed all his commands in infinite wisdom, and he best knows what is consistent with his own worship, and what is most for his own glory. It is presumptuous in any man to say, that this or that piece of our work on the Sabbath will be no hinderance to the service of God, seeing he himself hath said, "In it thou shalt do no manner of work." The Israelites must not gather manna this day, Exod. xvi. O might some have said, "Why? it will not hinder God's service; we gather it early in the morning, and so we will be at God's worship in time enough, and have all the rest of the day to serve him: Again, we need not travel for it; it lies round about the camp, and near our very doors; it will be no great labour: And besides we may have good thoughts in time of doing it." No, you must not be wiser than God; he hath set apart this day for his own use, and you must not cut and carve upon it.

In like manner, some excuse their walking or travelling upon the Lord's day: "O, (say they) we can employ our thoughts profitably by the way." But, though you could do it, pray, can you undertake that your example shall have no ill effect upon others who are looking on you? What think you of that awful word, Matt. v. 19. "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so (that is shall make others break it by what he doth or saith) he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven?"

3. Vanity and gaudiness of apparel is opposite to the sanctification of the Sabbath. Some dress up themselves this day in such vain attire, and undecent fashions, as tend to draw the eyes of others to gaze upon them, and so their hearts to wander from God and his worship. Think what guilt you hereby draw upon yourselves, of the sins of others as well as your own. The practices of some heathens may put many professed Christians among us to the blush. Valerius Maximus tells of a heathen young man, named Spurina, who was exceeding beautiful; but observing that many fixed their eyes on him, and fearing the consequences of it, he disfigured his face, lest his beauty should prove a snare to others. May not this heathen condemn such, who are so far from disfiguring themselves lest they should prove a tentation to others, that they disfigure their faces by painting and patching, to seem more beautiful than God has made them, without fearing whatever the consequences of it may prove. Is not this a shewing a dislike of God's workmanship, and a desire to mend it? Jezebel was infamous for this art, and no sober woman should desire to follow her fashion. A Christian should be so far from being proud or vain of his apparel, that the sight of his garments should humble him, and keep him in mind how he came to need them: Was it not sin that stript man of his glory, covered him with shame, and put him to seek clothes for to hide it? Would it not be distraction in a malefactor to pride himself in a stigma which he had got for a foul crime? Consider also the garments you are proud of, what they are! The beasts have the same naturally to cover them, and will you be proud of a beast's covering? It was the saying of a heathen to a vain gallant, "Why art thou proud of that which a sheep wore before thee?" Or, what though they be finer than wool? yet their original is no better, but rather worse: What are velvets, silks and sattins, but the excrements of a vile worm? and is that a matter to be vain of? Remember, that ere long God will cause thee to wear another suit thou wilt have small reason to be proud of; he will even clothe thee with worms and putrefaction. May not the thoughts hereof keep you humble, and teach you to come to the church gravely and decently apparelled? especially since you come into the presence of that God who resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

4. The institution of holy days is an incroachment upon the fourth command, and opposite to the sanctification of the Sabbath, which is the only day now appointed to be kept holy to God. What is it, but an usurping of Christ's legislative power, and a vilifying of the Lord's day, to set saints days, or days of human institution, on a level with it, by obliging people to abstain from labour thereupon. The church hath no power to consecrate such days: nay, the apostles did it not: There is no word of their consecrating a day to Stephen the proto-martyr, nor to James whom Herod killed with the sword. Yea, it may be reckoned an idolatrous practice to consecrate days to saints and angels, and keep them to their honour for publishing their praise, and commemorating their acts, since this is a piece of worship that belongs only to God.

Lastly, Not a few in some parts of the country do profane this holy day, by their set cabals and drinking-meetings upon it, by reading profane books, and telling profane stories, by scoffing at religion and religious persons, and by many other acts of wickedness. Alas! what hellish madness is this, that some are given up to! It is even a riding post to hell, a dedicating God's holy day to the honour and service of the devil, a hanging out a flag of defiance against heaven, and declaring war against your Maker. It is the saying of one, "To keep the Sabbath in an idle manner, is to keep the Sabbath of oxen or asses; to keep the Sabbath in diversions and pleasures, is to keep the Sabbath of the golden calf. But to keep the Sabbath in drunkenness and lewdness, is the Sabbath of satan, or the devil's holy day." O profane sinners, what a dreadful mark of wickedness is it, to dedicate God's day to the devil! You cannot possibly offer a greater affront and indignity to the God of heaven, than to serve the devil in the works of darkness, upon that very day which is solemnly consecrated to the honour and service of the great God. And, can you think that a jealous God will pass such an indignity, and take no notice of it? "Do ye thus provoke the Lord to jealousy? are ye stronger than he?" Will you fight against him that made heaven

and earth with a word, and by a word can unhinge them again; yea, by the breath of his mouth can crumble you to dust? What are you in his sight, but as a handful of silly worms? and do you think to be able to wage war against the Almighty: No, no; be the combination never so strong, the rebels never so stout, the enemies never so numerous, he is fully able to master them, and will certainly do it, Prov. xi. 21. "Though hand join in hand, yet the wicked shall not be unpunished. O what cause have we to pity and pray for such heaven-daring sinners, and weep in secret places for their souls, who wilfully destroy themselves, and pour contempt on their Maker; who live as if either there were no hell, or were afraid it should be full ere they got thither; and who seem to long to be companions of devils, and damned spirits! The God of infinite mercy open the eyes and stop the career of such, before they be beyond the reach of mercy!

And, before I close, let me ask the breakers of the Sabbath, What they will answer to the Author of the Sabbath, for despising and abusing such a rare privilege as the Sabbath is? When the Lord calls you, poor sinful creatures, who deserve to be banished eternally from his presence, to come and enter into his rest, and refresh your souls with the views of his redeeming love, and enrich them with the treasures of his grace set open before you: O what a sin must it be for you to turn your back upon them, and go about to weary the Lord by your sins, when he offers sweet rest to you! O believe it, sirs, Sabbath-breaking is not such a light sin as many imagine; surely the day is very near when you shall be brought to think on these days you now misspend and make light of. O how will you then mourn for the loss of these precious Sabbaths which God gave you to find peace and rest to your souls in, when you shall have no rest night nor day, but the smoke of your burning and torment shall ascend for ever and ever! How will you mourn then to see Abraham's bosom afar off, and thousands at rest in it whom you hated, and where you might have been at rest as well as they, if you had not despised the rest of the Sabbath here below! It is said, Lam. i 7. "Jerusalem remembered, in the days of her miseries, all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old; then the adversaries saw her, and did mock at her Sabbaths." So the days of your miseries approach, O Sabbath-breakers, when with sad hearts ye shall remember the pleasant ordinances and seasons of grace you had of old; and then the devils and heathens will mock at you for the loss of your Sabbaths! Why then should you go to add to the sins and miseries of your eternal state, the heinous guilt of abusing such a great number of precious Sabbaths, as God in his mercy now affords you for the saving of your souls!

AN

EXHORTATION

TO

SANCTIFY THE LORD's DAY.

I Shall conclude this subject with a serious exhortation to all ranks, strictly to observe the Lord's day. Read and consider what hath been already said, and you will find many arguments for pressing this exhortation: Nay, this is the scope of all that hath been said. But, that you may the more effectually be convinced of the excellency and necessity of this duty, I shall further subjoin these few motives.

I. The strict observation of the Sabbath is the most effectual mean for preventing atheism and profaneness, in regard that, by the frequent recurring thereof, the remembrance of Christ and heaven is still kept up, and sin and vice are kept under constant rebukes and disgrace. If it were not for the observation of the Sabbath, atheism and irreligion would quickly overspread the world: And there is nothing tends more to harden the heart, fear the conscience, and give loose reins to scandalous sins and outbreakings, than the profanation of the Sabbath This (as hath been said) many malefactors at gibbets have confessed to have been the first beginning of their loose lives, and that which paved the way to their other wicked courses, and provoked God to leave them to fall into these heinous crimes which brought them to such fatal ends.

II. God's great goodness and gracious design in allowing you the Sabbath, lays you under strong obligations to keep it conscientiously: He gives it not for a penance, but a privilege. It is not that he may get advantage from you, but that he may give blessings to you He hath not commanded the business of the world to cease every seventh day, because he is tired with governing the same, or to take any ease to himself; but it is that he may give rest to your bodies, and heavenly refreshment to your souls. Would you have Christ and the riches of his grace? Would you have your souls nourished, and weak graces repaired? Then keep the Sabbath, for it is God's weekly market-day; and a free market it is, wherein we may "buy, without money and without price," the richest commodities that heaven and earth can afford, even the bread and water of life for the lives of our souls, the wine of Christ's blood to chear us, the gold of his grace to enrich us, and his precious eye-salve to enlighten us, and his white raiment to clothe and adorn us. Is this day so profitable to us, and will we not regard it? It is the soul's festival, a day of reaping and ingathering, and of laying up in store for the time to come. It is God's stated alms-day, or public deal day, wherein he scatters blessings and crumbs of the bread of life among needy souls. It is the queen of days, the dawning of glory, and day-break of heaven. It is the day for ascending mount Tabor, to see Christ transfigured before our eyes. and for getting to the top of Pisgah, to get a sight of the promised land O then! what horrid ingratitude must it be to a good God to profane this blessed day, and slight God's unspeakable kindness, in allowing it to us for our souls advantage?

III. The strict observation of the Sabbath, is an excellent mean to sweeten both the thoughts of death and heaven to us. 1. As for death, a retiring from the world once a week, will prepare us to welcome our final removal from it the more cheerfully. But they who think it hard to leave their worldly concerns for a day to worship God, when they expect to return to them on the morrow; what a hard pull must it be for them to part with them altogether at death, never more to come back to them? And this we must all shortly do, whether we will or no. But to a conscientious keeper of the Sabbath, the parting with the world will not be such a hard task. 2. It will also sweeten the thoughts of heaven to us; for the work and comforts of the Sabbath

below, are the foretastes of the employments and enjoyments of the everlasting Sabbath above: And they who delight in the Sabbaths on earth (which are the days of heaven, and typical resemblances of it) cannot but rejoice in the forethoughts of celebrating the eternal Sabbath above, in the immediate fruition of God's presence, and beholding him as he is for evermore. But the thoughts of heaven can be nowise pleasant to a Sabbath-breaker; yea, it would be an uneasy prison to him: For, if it be a penance to him to be a few days in God's worship now, what a punishment would it be to him to be engaged in this work for ever?

IV. Consider who it is that requires you to sanctify the Sabbath, even that good and gracious God who giveth you all things richly to enjoy; that God who giveth you your being, your breath, your health, your food, and all earthly comforts. O how bountiful is he to the sons of men! he gives you the sun in the heavens to shine upon your bodies, and the Son of his love to die for your souls. He allows you six days for your profit and pleasure, he reserves one for his glory and service; and will you not frankly give him his one day, when he is so liberal to you? Say then to your vain companions, when they would tempt you to profane the Lord's day, as Joseph to Potiphar's wife, when she tempted him to sin, Gen. xxxix. 9. "My master hath not kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife; how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" So say you, God, the Sovereign Lord and Master of the world, hath kept back no time from me, but one day, because it was his; how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

V. A conscientious keeping of the Sabbath, disposeth the soul the more for the service of God all the week over. If your soul be in a good frame on the Sabbath, it will prosper the better all the week for it: Your conscience will be the more tender, your thoughts the more spiritual, and your affections the more lively. If you be in the mount with God on the Sabbath, the face of your conversation will be fair to shine in holiness through the week.

VI. Our regard to the Sabbath is a trying test of the state and frame of our souls, whether we be spiritual or carnal, love God or the world most. It tries also the conditions of our graces, whether they be waxing or waning, in a prospering or decaying state. Hence God frequently calls the Sabbath a "sign betwixt him and his people," Exod. xxxi. 17. Ezek xx. 12, 20. And indeed our conscientious keeping and sanctifying of the Sabbath is a sign to us several ways.

1. It is a sign of God's sanctifying our hearts, and an evidence of a good work wrought in us by the Holy Spirit.

2. It is a clear sign to distinguish us from the unsanctified and profane people of the world.

3. It is a sign of our having a conscientious regard to all the other commands of God; and all observing persons will find this sign to hold in their daily experience. If you keep not this command of sanctifying the Sabbath, it is a sign you will little regard all the rest. If you serve not God on his own day, you will make little conscience of serving him on the following days of the week; but, on the contrary, if you worship God sincerely on the Sabbath, and regard this holy day, it is a token you will regard all other duties of religion. Let us observe these very noticeable words of God, Jer. xvii. 24, 26. "If ye hallow the Sabbath-day, to do no work therein: Then shall they come from the cities of Judah, and all other places, bringing burnt-offerings, meat-offerings, incense, and sacrifices of praise, unto the house of the Lord;" that is, the Church of God and true religion shall flourish, and the name of the Most High be exalted in the world. And, indeed, for my part, I despair ever of seeing Christianity and Reformation considerably advanced in the world, till once the Lord's day come to be highly esteemed, and strictly observed: for still it is to be seen, wherever religion flourisheth in the power of it, there it is that most conscience is made in the observation of the Sabbath.

4. The conscientious keeping of the Sabbath is a sign betwixt God and his people, in respect it is a token of a good understanding and correspondence betwixt him and them, that controversies are removed, and peace and friendship maintained. To whom is it that God manifests most of his gracious presence, and the emanations of his special love? Surely it is to those who have the Lord's day highest in esteem, and who are the most strict and careful observers of it. Upon all which accounts, *lastly*, The Spirit of God makes this duty a sign and character of the blessed man: For, Isa. lvi. 2. (speaking with a special eye to the New Testament times) he saith, "Blessed is the man that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it."

O Christians, would you be blessed indeed? Then sanctify the Lord's day, by sincere worshipping your Creator, who this day made light first to shine; and honouring your Redeemer, who this day rose from the grave, and completed the work of your redemption. As the angel said to the woman that came to the sepulchre, Matt. xxviii. 6. "He is not here, he is risen, as he said; come, see the place where the Lord lay:" So say I to every true lover of Christ, "He is not here, he is risen; come, observe the time when the Lord rose." Observe it to his honour and praise, and he will surely bless you, and make you glad with the light of his countenance. There was never any who truly observed this command, but will say, that rare and blessed are the fruits which are to be reaped from this blessed duty.

Would ye then share of these fruits, and please God in keeping his Sabbath? Then take the following advices: (1.) Remember to honour and glorify God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, upon this holy day, by ascribing to each Person of the blessed Trinity, the glory of his proper work. As, 1. Ascribe to the Father, the glory of his power, wisdom, and goodness, in creating the world for our accommodation, and contriving our recovery when we had lost ourselves, and, for an example to us, resting on the Sabbath after he had reviewed his work with delight. 2. We ought to glorify the Son this day, by ascribing to him the honour of undertaking and carrying on the work of our redemption, by his incarnation and death, and by his rising from the dead on the third day, now set apart for the Lord's Sabbath. 3. We are to glorify the Holy Ghost, by ascribing to him the honour of applying the purchased redemption to believers, in his work of regeneration and sanctification, which he began in a glorious manner, by that wonderful effusion on the church in the day of Pentecost, being also the Lord's day. In this manner we ought to glorify God, giving honour to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, upon this holy day, if we would keep the Sabbath acceptably to the Lord.

(2.) Let us mind the direction of the Holy Ghost, in Isa. lviii. 13. with respect to the keeping of this day, to wit, to "call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and honour him, not doing our own ways, nor finding

our own pleasure, nor speaking our own words." Which direction teacheth us, that the best way to prevent Sabbath-breaking, and to honour God on his own day, is to "call the Sabbath a delight." O that we knew what this meaneth!

Quest. "When may we be said to call the Sabbath our delight?"

Ans. 1. We call it our delight, when we rejoice at the approach of the Sabbath, and make due preparation for it; and when we solace our souls, in the joyful expectation of communion with God on his own day, saying with David, Psal. xliii. 4. "Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy." 2. When we give the Sabbath an early welcome, and stir up ourselves to seek God betimes upon it; like David, Psal. lxii. 1. "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee." 3. When we are dissatisfied with these things that would hinder us from the right keeping of the Sabbath, and are grieved that we can keep Sabbaths no better. 4. When we esteem every minute of Sabbath-time to be most precious, and are careful that none of it be wasted away; but order matters so wisely, that one duty of the Sabbath may not justle out another; that is, to be so early in our closet-devotion, that the closet may not hinder family-duties: and so to perform these, that they may not encroach upon God's public worship. 5. When we are concerned to have all belonging to us to keep the Sabbath as well as ourselves, and glad to see this holy day regarded and honoured by all about us. Then it may be said, we "call the Sabbath a delight."

Now, after all I have said, let me come in the end, in the name of that great Lord who instituted the Sabbath for his own glory, and the good of men, earnestly to exhort, beseech, and obtest, all ranks and degrees of persons, whether they be parents or children, masters or servants, magistrates or people, young or old, to put all honour and respect upon this holy day, to sanctify it as God requires, and abstain from all worldly employments and recreations upon it. Do not grudge your Maker his one day of seven, but be willing to dedicate it wholly to his worship and service. O how do *you* think to spend a whole eternity in God's holy presence, and in holy spiritual exercises, if you cannot bring yourselves to spend one day in a week in holy work? Again, see that you be impartial in his service; be as willing to hear what God saith to you from his word, as you would have God to hear what you say to him in prayer. Some are all for prayers, as if they were only to tell God what they would have from him, but care not for sermons, or for hearing what God requires and expects from them: But, if you would have God to hear your prayers when you speak to him, you must diligently hearken to his word when he speaks to you. It is by hearing the word upon the Lord's day, that God hath converted many thousands to himself. The Sabbath is a merciful institution to lost sinners for their salvation, and many have been, and will for ever be thankful for it: For hereby they have been led to make proper stands in life, and to review their bypast actions, so as to order their course more wisely for the time to come; which they had never done, if they had not been led to a religious retirement on the Lord's day.

Seeing this holy day is such a blessing and privilege to the world, let me intreat parents, masters, magistrates, and all who have power, to exert it for promoting the keeping of it. You are not only to sanctify the Sabbath yourselves, but also you must do your utmost that those under you do it likewise. This you are bound to by the Lord's express charge in the fourth command, where it is said, "Thou, thy son, thy daughter, thy servants, the stranger within thy gates," importing, that you are to use your power and influence over all within your gates, to cause them observe the Sabbath, and keep them from profaning it, lest God impute their sins to you, as to Eli in the like case, for not using his power to restrain them. It is not indeed in the power of persons in authority to make all those religious who are under their jurisdiction; but it would put them in a likely way of being so, to keep them from such things as would hinder the religion of that day, and cause them attend the means of instruction, and also to tell them of the private of the rest and happiness of the world to come, purchased by Christ, which the right keeping of the Sabbath leads unto. This ought to be the great care of parents with respect to their children in younger years. It is one of the first things that children are capable of, namely, to distinguish this day from others. And then they should be taught to lay aside their other days diversions, even before they are capable of godly exercises; and thus they are gradually to be inured to Sabbath-keeping, as the beginning of wisdom. This method took God to introduce religion into the world. It was his first appointment and institution, to rest on the seventh day, and to sanctify it, Gen. ii. 3. as if he designed this to be the foundation and beginning of all religion. Let the heads of families follow this great example.

Likewise we see God requires masters to take care that their servants, and all within their gates, keep the Sabbath. And, indeed, it is highly their interest and wisdom to do so; for, if you be careful that your servants do their duty to God, God will take care that your servants do their duty to you. In like manner, the civil magistrates, who are the fathers of cities and states, should use their power over all within their gates or jurisdiction, to cause them observe God's holy day. We see Nehemiah threatened bodily punishment on the men of Tyre, for breaking the Sabbath, Neh. xiii. 21. And Jeremiah, by God's appointment, calls upon the princes to see that the Sabbath be not profaned, and that upon their highest peril, Jer. xvii. 19. 25, 27. and hence it is that our kings and parliaments have made so many excellent laws against the profanation of the Sabbath. May God put it into the hearts of those, who ought to be preservers and executors of laws, to put them in execution! This would tend much to the glory of God, and the welfare of nations, cities, and families. But *lastly*, Let me exhort all in inferior stations, both young and old, to observe the fourth command, as they regard the salvation of their precious and immortal soul in the eternal world, and the peace of their consciences when they come to lie on a death-bed, which they should be looking out for every day. Let me address both young and old upon this head.

1. As for you that are young, I entreat you to "remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy." Improve this day with all care and earnestness: for it is the day wherein poor sinners usually begin their acquaintance with God, and conversion to him: And the proper season for this work is the time of youth; for now the heart is most tender and pliable, and sooner melted for sin, than afterwards, when you come to greater age. For, the longer you go on in sin, the heart will turn the harder, and the conscience more

seared. The longer you forget God, the more estranged you will grow, and unwilling to return to him. The branches of a tree, while young, may be bowed and trained up any way, but when they are old they will not ply.

Again, consider, that the sooner you begin to sanctify the Sabbath, and be serious about your souls, God will love you the better. See how he remembers the kindness of youth, Jer. ii. 2. "Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness," &c. He loves those who come in at the first sound of the gospel, far more than rebels, who stand out till the last, that they can do no more. The fewer calls and invitations you resist, the more kindly will you be accepted of God: He loved a young Abijah, a young Josiah, a young Timothy; and John is called the "disciple whom Jesus loved," John xiii. 23. because he was youngest and earliest converted. See how affectionately Paul salutes Epenetus, by the title of his "well-beloved," because of his being "Christ's first fruits in Achaia," Rom. xvi. 5. And if Paul loved him so much, to be sure Christ loved him far more.

Moreover, do not think that justice will spare you, if it find you in sin, and out of Christ, because you are young. Presume not upon mercy upon this account; remember that threatening, Psal. lxviii. 21. "God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of him that goeth on still in his trespasses." You have no ground to think that he will spare you till you be old and bald-headed. No, he may even take you by the hairy scalp while you are in your youthful vigour and freshness, and punish you, as he hath done many others before you.

O young folk, if you would mind your souls, and sanctify the Sabbath in the days of youth, take these few directions:

1. Look always on death as near, and within a few steps of you. Alas! many young folk think it as improper for them to be thinking on their graves, as to think of going to bed at noon: their sun is high, and it is a long time to night; they look on death at forty or fifty years distance. O what folly is this! Do you not see graves of your length, and skulls of your size, in the church-yard? Yea, do you not see twenty die young, to one that lives to old age? Let death and eternity be then the frequent subjects of your meditation on the Lord's day.

2. Think much this day upon your vileness and misery by nature; that you are "children of wrath, heirs of hell, enemies to God, and strangers to Christ and the covenant of grace; yea, servants to sin, and bond slaves to the devil:" For the prodigal never thought of turning to his father, till he saw himself in a lost and undone condition.

3. Think much on Christ's fitness, fulness, and suitableness for all your wants and maladies. In him you may find a remedy for whatever troubles you. Is it guilt? here is pardon. Is it great sins? here's a Redeemer's blood that cleanseth from all sin. Are you condemned? here sufficient righteousness to justify you. Is pollution and filthiness your fear? here a deep and open Fountain that runs continually. Are you chained prisoners? here liberty. Are you drowned in debt? here a Ransom and Surety. Are you diseased? here Balm. Are you poor? here fine gold. Are you dead? here the Resurrection and the Life. Are you starving? here the manna and the fatted calf. Are you weak and unable for duty? here all-sufficient grace and strength. Yea, he "is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him:" And particularly, he says of little children, "Suffer them to come unto me; and, him that cometh (saith he) I will in nowise cast out."

4. Let children and young folk carefully attend ordinances this day in the church; lie close by the pool side, till it please the Angel of the covenant to come and put you in. Study to remember what you hear, and give an account thereof to your parents when you come home.

5. Early acquaint your souls with the scriptures; read much of them this day, and meditate on them, Psalm cxix. 9. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereunto, according to thy word." How came Timothy to be so well acquaint with Christ and his way? but because "from a child he knew the scriptures," 2 Tim. iii. 15.

6. Be much this day in prayer; for the prayers of young folk are very pleasant music in God's ears. It would be both very pleasant and profitable, if children of the same family would take some time this day to meet, and read, and pray together; for so the examples, and hearing of one another, would be mutually helpful, and stir them up to a concern about their duty. It is the fault of parents, that do not put them on to this practice. If children did thus begin early to the service of God, it would become habitual and delightful to them afterwards. But, alas! instead of this, many parents let their children run and play through the streets, and in the church and church-yard, on the Sabbath, without restraint. But, let such parents remember, that though children die in their iniquities, yet their blood God will require at their hand one day.

II. I shall close with a word to aged people. You that are old men and women, give ear to what I am to say. Consider how many Sabbaths you have mis-spent, and mourn for it. In threescore years time you have above three thousand Sabbaths to reckon for, and if God "lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plumet," you will not be able to answer for one of them. O humble yourselves deeply before God, and employ Christ to clear your counts for you. Put on resolutions in his strength, to improve time better for the future, and particularly the Sabbaths which God may yet allow you, for securing an interest in Christ, and making provision for long lasting eternity. Have you not great need for it? Alas! there are many old persons who have all yet to do. Their glass is near run, and their sun is at the setting; and yet they have their work to begin, and their journey to set out for; though they have lived threescore years in God's world, yet they never spent three hours of all that time in sincere serving of God, or providing for endless eternity. They never communed with their hearts, thought on their ways, shed a tear for sin, or fell on their knees to cry, "Lord, what shall I do to be saved?" What hope shall I have in a dying hour? Where will I take up my lodging through eternity? How many old persons are grossly ignorant of the first principles of religion? Yea, many children of five or six years old will far outstrip them. O what is the reason of all this, but the neglect and mis-spending of the Sabbath day, and the contempt of the means of grace and knowledge which you might have enjoyed thereupon? Well then, what resolve you to do for the time to come? Have you not forgotten God and Christ, and neglected your souls and heaven long enough? Or, will you do it to your dying hour? Are you content to go to the grave without Christ, and without hope? O what a sad sight

is it, to see grey hairs and gracelessness meeting together! to see men put to look through their spectacles, but never minding to look to their Saviour! to see them leaning on their staves, but never thinking of relying on Christ for salvation! to see age forcing them to bow and bend their bodies to the earth, but yet never bowing a knee in secret to beg repentance! O what a shame is it to live fifty or sixty years in the world, without a fervent prayer, or penitent tear for sin! to live without God, without Christ, and without faith! O what will you answer for the fearful abuse of God's long suffering patience! Old sinner, better thou hadst died when a child, or when first born, than to have lived so long, and go to hell at last. If thou diest old in age, and old in sin, what a hot and fiery hell may'st thou look for at last! O how many Sabbaths and sermons! how many calls, counsels, and exhortations, have you to answer for! Remember, you will be called to an account for every year, month, day, and hour, you have lived. And, what account can you give of fifty years spent in sin, sixty years lived in a Christless and prayerless state, or three thousand Sabbaths trifled away? Will you be persuaded then to flee to Christ, as thy Surety and Cautioner, to clear thy count, and pay thy debts before the door be shut, and improve the time and Sabbaths which remain, for God's glory and your precious soul's advantage. And to him, who can effectually persuade and enable you so to do, be praise for ever. Amen.

APPENDIX.

MEDITATIONS

FOR THE

SABBATH-DAY.

MEDITATION I.

On the Burial of CHRIST, from John xix. 40, &c.

ON our Friday Christ was crucified and laid in the grave; on our Saturday, which was the Jewish Sabbath, Christ lay dead and buried all that day in the grave; on the Sunday, or first day of the week, Christ rose from the grave.

Observe, 1. How low Christ did humble himself for us; he was content not only to become a man, but a poor man of sorrows for us, yea a deserted man, a condemned man, a dead man, and lie as a dead corps in the earth for us. This is the lowest step he could descend, Psal. xxii 15. 'Thou hast brought me into the dust of death.'

2. Observe how he humbled himself in his burial: 1. He was not buried by friends, but strangers. 2. Not with heralds escutcheons hearse and other solemnities, as became the Prince of the kings of the earth, but in a very private hasty manner. 3. Not in the sepulchre of the kings and of his father David, not the burying-place of his ancestors, but in the sepulchre of a stranger. Behold! how poor was the Heir of all things! While he lived, he had not a house of his own where to lay his head, and when he was dead, he had not where to lay his body. O deep humiliation! Was he who lay in the Father's bosom from all eternity, now laid in the bosom of the earth? O wonder at it, that he was willing to stoop so low, to ransom our souls that were sunk as low as hell by sin! O! men and angels can never enough admire this love of Jesus! that he who wore the keys of hell and death at his girdle, should be content to be locked up in the prison of the grave, and to be arrested there this whole day, for our debt, by divine justice.

3. Observe how long Christ the Lord of life continued death's prisoner, the grave's captive, how long death had power and dominion over him, even to the third day. O how did devils triumph this day! We have not only bruised his heel, but his heart also, and behold he lieth in dust. How did wicked men rejoice! how did death domineer over him! Men have brought him into my territories, and there I hold him bound with my fetters. Now would his enemies say, Is this the light of the world, that lies so low in the land of darkness? Is this the teacher of the way to heaven, that cannot now move his tongue, or speak a word? Is this he that raised others from the dead, that lies himself among the dead? Well, but the triumph of these wicked ones was but short. Christ rose and put them all to silence.

4. Observe Christ's love, that was content to let devils insult and triumph over him for a while, that they might not triumph over you, O believer, for ever. He was humbled to lie in the grave for a while, that you might not lodge in hell for ever.

5. Observe, Christ lay buried this day, that he might bury all the elect's sins for ever out of God's sight, that they might never rise against them in judgment. O what comfort is this, O believer, thy sins are buried, and shall never appear against thee to thy condemnation.

6. Observe, Christ lay buried this day, that he might bury the Jewish seventh-day Sabbath, with all the rest of their Levitical types and ceremonies. Christ has taken off that yoke from our necks, glory to his name.

7. Observe how Christ lay buried this day, that he might sweeten the grave, warm and perfume that cold unpleasant bed for believers to lie in. The grave was once a part of the curse denounced against fallen mankind, and it is so still to sinners out of Christ, Gen. ii. "Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return." The grave had the nature and use of a prison, to keep the bodies of sinners against the great assizes, and then to deliver them up to the hands of a great and terrible judge: But Christ, by lying in it all this day, has turned it from a prison to a bed of rest, Isa lvii. 2. "He shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his righteousness." Why? as Christ there did rest in hope, so shall believers be partakers of his hope. See Psalm xvi. 10. "My flesh shall rest in hope." So Proverbs xiv. 32. "The righteous hath hope in his death."

Exhortation. As ye would partake of the virtue of Christ's lying in the grave, see that ye get union with Christ now by a true faith; death nor the grave will not loose this union, it is indissolvable. O believer, the grave shall be a sweet privileged place to you; sin nor guilt

shall not lie down there with you. Sin is a bad bed-fellow, but a worse grave-fellow. That is a terrible word, Job xx. 11. "His bones are full of the sins of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust." It shall not be so with you. No, Christ has freed you of guilt, and has made your bed to sleep in; it is like a soft bed in a quiet room, where the weary shall be at rest. Christ himself keeps the keys of the room, and watches by you while you lie sleeping there, and will be ready to open the door to let you out again. "I have the keys of death," Rev. i. 18. None can take them out of his hand.

MEDITATION II.

On the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST, from Thess. i. 10. "Whom God hath raised from the dead."

THE resurrection of Christ from the dead is a fundamental article of our religion, and serves to support all the rest. For,

1. If Christ rose from the dead, then he was a person sent from God, to do that work in the world which he gave out, because the majesty of heaven would never have given an impostor such glorious credentials as a resurrection from the dead; a work which nothing but omnipotency could accomplish.

2. If Christ rose from the dead, all the promises of the gospel relating to the enjoyments and blessings of a future life, will certainly be fulfilled to them; and whatever Christ has said, may be depended on, and trusted to, as certainly to come to pass.

3. 'Tis true indeed, the Christian religion is so framed, as in all respects to be admirably serviceable to the ends and purposes of a temporal felicity; for the devout and awful regard to God, and a future life, and those principles of generous love and charity, which it tends to inspire mankind with, contribute highly to the good order and peace of the world. If pride and envy, if covetousness and ambition, if malice and revenge, if falsehood and deceit; if such passions as these are the true causes of all those calamities and misfortunes which men groan under, then the gospel, which strikes so directly at all these ever in men's tempers and hearts, as well as in their outward conversation, doth lay the surest foundations possible for a quiet and comfortable life in the present world.

Yea, the gospel of Christ strengthens the obligations of the law of nature: it furnishes men with far nobler motives to perform all the duties of that law, and threatens severer punishments for the breach of it; and thus it highly conduceth to the welfare of society and government.

4. The true foundation and origin of atheism or deism is a man's coming under a stated resolution to endure no curb or restraint in the prosecution of his design of being happy in this world, by the enjoyment of its pleasures; and therefore the scripture or the gospel, which pretend to abridge men of this liberty, and would oblige them to a strictly abstemious and self-denying life, and a ready submission to all sufferings, which the power and malice of the world may at any time inflict, for the profession of it, must, of course, be rejected as any divine revelation, and made the mere invention of a set of crafty designing men, who were fond to be the heads of a new religion, and of bringing the world to submit to their impositions.

5. As for the religion of Mahomet, he was a man of a vicious profligate life; and he framed it to serve a carnal worldly interest; it was planted in the world by force and violence, and never offered any other arguments to persuade men of the truth of it, but the sword and heavy taxes and exactions. But, with respect to the Christian religion, nothing of this kind can be pretended.

6. The law of nature is a divine impression on the reasonable nature of man, by which he is informed what is good and evil, and directed how to behave himself, as a rational creature ought to do. Now, the gospel adopts and enforces this law with the strongest arguments and considerations.

7. Many who are baptized into the name of Jesus Christ, do treat him in such a manner, as Mahometans, who are his professed enemies, would abhor to do. The Mahometans do honour him with the venerable titles of *the Word* and *Power of God*. And though they will not allow him to be so great a prophet as Mahomet, yet their prophet has taught them so much respect, and so high an esteem for our Lord, that, should they be witnesses to the affronts some offer him here, they would be ready to revenge them upon them.

8. Some matters of fact may be so convincingly made out by the testimony of others, as to bring men to a perfect assurance of the truth of them, so as there can be no room left to suspect any fraud or deceit therein. For if we must not thus believe the testimony of others, there could be no administration of justice in the world; for legislators and governors cannot be in every place to observe what is done by every person, but must depend on the testimony of others in dispensing rewards and punishments to good and bad, according to their several merits. Again, all our civil interests and privileges depend on this kind of testimony; for how can we justify our claim to houses, lands, goods, or effects, which we come to possess by virtue of birth or parentage, will or testament, disposition or sale, but by the testimony of others? Again, the refusal of this testimony would cut off all kind of history, geography, or chronology, as useless, or as mere fable and romance. We should not believe there was ever any such thing as the Roman empire, or Roman emperors; we should not believe there is any kingdom or city in the world, but such as we have seen with our eye.

9. All sects and parties of men since Christ's days have granted, that there was such a person as Jesus Christ, who was born at Bethlehem in Judea in the reign of Augustus Cesar, and crucified at Jerusalem in the reign of Tiberius, Pontius Pilate being then the Roman governor in Judea. The Mahometans acknowledge all this frankly, except the last part, out of an excess of respect to Jesus Christ; they will by no means allow of his infamous crucifixion and death: but affirm, that he was taken up into heaven, and some image of him only left upon the cross in his room, by which the Jews, as well as his own followers, who pretended to be witnesses of the fact, were imposed on, and made to believe that he suffered, when in reality he did not.—But this is a groundless fiction, contrary to all sense and reason, like many others in their Alcoran. But, however, they all own that there was such an excellent person, who lived such a life, taught such doctrine, and wrought such miracles as Christians give out.

10. The Jews freely own there was such a person who died such a death at Jerusalem: And hence they bestow the reproachful name on him, of *Talui*, or a person that was hanged, and call the Christians the servants of *Talui.* Though they disown him to be the Messiah, yet they never refuse there being such a person. Their learned countryman, Josephus, (no christian) his testimony concerning him is well known to all the learned world, *Antiq. Jud. lib.* xviii. *cap.* 4. *p.* 261. *Edit. Genev.* 1935. where he plainly testifies of the life, miracles, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and of the fulfilling of the prophecies in him, and of the wonderful conversion both of Jews and Gentiles to the faith of his gospel. Some indeed question the genuineness of this passage of Josephus, but without just ground; for we find this testimony taken notice of as his by very ancient writers, as Eusebius in Hist. Eccles. lib. 1. *cap.* ii. *p.* 30. *Edit. Paris*, 1659. *in vita Tiberii;* also by *Nicephorus Calistus*, by *Sozomen*, by *Jerom*, by *Isodorus Pelusiola*, &c.

Object. This passage is not taken notice of by the ancient defenders of Christianity, as Justin Martyr, Origen, Tertullian, &c.

Ans. The reason of this might be, the copies of Josephus they chanced to make use of might want this testimony, which, in all likelihood, was razed out of as many copies as the malicious Jews could come at: For this testimony of such a famous man as Josephus, one of their own country and religion, against the Jews, for treating such an excellent person so barbarously, could not but expose them as an execrable generation through all the world. So that it is not to be doubted but they would use all possible artifices to take out this testimony of Josephus, wherever they had the management of the copies, either by themselves, or others, their emissaries for that purpose. But it was not possible for them to compass the razing it out of all the copies dispersed up and down the world. Besides, this famous testimony hath the manifest stamp of Josephus his style and diction. Again, we have certain evidence of other testimonies being razed out of Josephus: For Eusebius (we find) quotes Josephus as recording how just and righteous a man James was, called the brother of Christ, and saying, that the sober and more considerate men among the Jews believed the destruction of Jerusalem to be a punishment inflicted on them for murdering of him. Likewise we have Origen, and Jerom, and Suidas, quoting Josephus for the same passage. And yet in our days there is no such passage to be found in Josephus. Now, would so many authors have agreed in appealing to Josephus for such a passage, if they had not really found it in him? Would it not have exposed their cause to the contempt of all the world, to have asserted a thing which every body could have refuted as false?

11. Ancient Pagan writers have owned the same thing concerning Christ, as Suetonius, Tacitus, Pliny, &c. Yea, Lucian expressly owns the crucifixion of Christ, though he jeers both him, and the Christians his worshippers, on that account: So doth Julian the apostate; he owns the truth of facts concerning Christ, though he endeavours what he can to lessen the reputation of his life and miracles, and alledges, that all he did, was no great matter, but only to open the eyes of the blind, restore limbs to the lame, and deliver persons possessed from the power and enchantments of devils, which he seemed to make little account of. It is true, he doth not notice his raising the dead, but passes that by in silence, being what he could not pretend to answer. The Jews also owned the miracles; but alledged that he did all his wonderful works by virtue of the sacred tetragrammaton. Also Celsus, that enemy of Christianity, confesses the truth of Christ's nativity, his journey into Egypt, his passing from place to place with his disciples, the fact of his miracles, his being betrayed, and, lastly, his death and passion. I grant they make all these concessions, in order to their scoff and ridicule: However, it shews the things were so evident, they could not be denied; but Origen sufficiently chastises and exposes him for railing.

12. It is certain, that the writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, concerning the life and actions of Christ and his apostles, were their genuine compositions, and not the writings of any other. To confirm this, consider that there is no reason to doubt, that the first teachers of the Christian faith would use the most effectual means for propagating a doctrine they so zealously espoused themselves, and they would not on that score neglect so direct and necessary a method for obtaining their end, as that of committing their doctrines to writing. This is what may be rationally expected from the policy and care of the first founders of any sect, as being a step so necessary, in order to the preservation and progress thereof. All the sects who have made any figure in the world, have taken this course, and so have the founders of Christianity too. While the *autographa*, or original manuscripts of these penmen, were preserved in the church, there was no access to impose doctrines or facts on the world in their names, contrary to what they had written. And Tertullian, who flourished at the latter end of the second century, or the very beginning of the third, intimates, that these venerable writings were preserved till his time. Again, no particular sect of Christians could ever get the writings of the New Testament so forged or adulterate, but all the other sects of Christians would have proclaimed the imposture to the world. The enmity and quarrels among different parties, were a strong guard on these sacred books, that no designing party could ever foist into these books their own notions, seeing the copies were dispersed among all the sects.

MEDITATION III.

Of the certainty of CHRIST'S *Resurrection*

WE have many undeniable evidences of it: 1. The testimony of many eye-witnesses; for, besides the apostles who were witnesses of it in an eminent manner, there were many others: For Paul tells us, that in his time there were still remaining the greater part of more than 500, who did all at one time see Jesus after his rising again. Now, an imposture may lie concealed for a while in a few hands, but it is next to impossible that it should lie long undiscovered in the hands of a great many. It shocks a man to think, that so many persons should agree in all the punctilios of a notorious lie, and that they should agree to stand by it in so peremptory a manner as these persons did, and never clash together in any instance whatsoever. It is commonly observed, that plots never thrive so well as

when there are few let into the secret; and large cabals of knaves and liars seldom fail to tell tales of one another.

2. These witnesses had personal knowledge of what they testified: Yea, they not only declared that they saw Christ, but many of them, that they saw him frequently and familiarly, and that for a considerable tract of time. They conversed with him for forty days; they eat and drank with him; they saw him do several wondrous works; they received orders and instructions from him about the government of his church; he bid them, "Go, teach and baptize all nations;" he promised them his peace and blessing in so doing, to the end of the world; he commanded them to tarry in Jerusalem, till they were endued with power from on high; and a great many other things are recorded, that he said to them; and after all, they saw him taken up from them, and ascend into heaven, angels standing by. Now, it never could be a dream or imagination in so many men—men, for so many weeks, to fancy all these things alike, without the least variation.

3. Consider the manner of the testimony, and how they delivered it. They invoked God's tremendous name, and begged his assistance and blessing. They appealed to him as the omniscient judge of the world, concerning the sincerity and integrity of their hearts. They declared they did not this of themselves, but by God's order and appointment; and that he gave them power of working signs and wonders for the confirmation of all they said, and accordingly wrought them before all men.

4. They did not testify of a matter that was transacted at a distance from the place where they gave their testimony, nor a long time after the thing was done. No, there is no ground of objection on any of these accounts: For those men appeared upon the very spot that was the scene of the action, at Jerusalem, where Christ was crucified, and where they affirmed he also rose. They neither sent people a great way to enquire, nor did they defer the publication of it till Jesus Christ was forgotten, and the story of his resurrection worn out of mind. No, instead of that, they did it while it was fresh in the minds and mouths of all men, and while those persons who could have confuted them were alive, and ready to be produced, if they had any thing to have advanced against it.

5. They did not make a secret of this matter, but declared it in the most public and open manner that possibly could be. It was not a story whispered among those of their own party, but proclaimed in the ears of all people, and at a time when Jerusalem was crowded with foreigners of all nations, and where was no want of persons able and curious enough to enquire into the truth of all the strange reports they made. They went into the temple and into the synagogues, and preached the resurrection of Christ; yea, in the most august councils of the Jews, they testified it to the rulers and high-priests who had condemned Christ. Peter's bold speech is most remarkable, Acts iv. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. And we see how how confounded the whole council was with their testimony; and not one of them had the confidence to tell them that they were publishing a notorious lie.

6. These persons were men of such probity and virtue, that none of their adversaries could ever call in question, nor shew to the world that they were ill men.

7. They were persons not bred up in courts, nor instructed in the arts and intrigues of the world, able to persuade people by elegant discourses, &c. No, they were generally mean, though plain and honest men, and their discourses plain and homely: And though Paul was a man of polite learning, yet he would make no use of human learning in the propagation of Christianity.

8. They could not possibly have any secular view, by preaching such a doctrine to the world: Nay, in preaching it, they acted against all the rules of worldly interest and policy, and could have no prospect from the world, but what was frightful and discouraging; their doctrine being to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness. They could not propose to themselves either to gain reputation and esteem, or to advance their fortunes in the world; nay, suffering the greatest hardships was all they had in view.

9. Consider how severe the laws were which they published against lying, forgery, and a false testimony: And if they themselves were guilty of it, they were condemned to everlasting punishments for doing what they did, by the very doctrine which they preached. Yet in this doctrine they persisted to the last, and if it were a lie, they went out of the world with a horrible lie in their mouths, which is horrid to think, for so they could have no hope of finding mercy and forgiveness at God's hands; and thus you would make them the most depraved wretches in the world.

10. Now, had they been men who had no religious awe or sense of God themselves, how is it credible that they would have been so very zealous and industrious to impress it upon the minds of others, and to press them to love and fear him, as the scope of all their writings and sermons do shew? How oft do they tell us of a judgment-day, and of God his being the searcher of the thoughts and counsels of the heart.

11. It is plain to a demonstration, that these persons heartily believed the doctrines they preached to the world; otherwise, how would they have exposed themselves to such dangers and sufferings upon that score?

12. The Jews who lived at that time were infallibly convinced of the resurrection of Jesus Christ: Which appears from this, that the writers of the gospel-history did in express terms publish to the world, that the Jews bribed the soldiers to report that the body of Jesus Christ was stolen out of the grave by his disciples. Now, this was a horrid charge on the Jews, and shews them to be the most degenerate wretches, that they would stick at nothing to carry on their designs, even the most abominable piece of forgery and bribery. Nay, their priests and rulers would be guilty of this villany, to tamper with soldiers in this manner.— Well, if these chief-priests and fathers of Israel had been unjustly calumniated in this manner, it might have been expected that they would have exerted themselves in some extraordinary manner to clear themselves of this aspersion, and that the whole nation would have been in a tumult about it. For they would see that their religion, as well as their credit, was at the stake, this account of their proceedings was like to be published through the world, and transmitted to the latest posterity. Now, surely one would think the Christians would have been solemnly called to account for this provoking piece of history, and challenged to make it good, and that with the greatest zeal and concern. Well, but there is nothing like this; the Jews content themselves with private whispers, to set the story about, which the bribed soldiers had reported, and make no resentment of the charge. From all which, we

may warrantably conclude, that they were conscious to themselves of the truth of the charge, and knew that they had bribed the soldiers to make the report, and consequently that they knew Christ was risen, otherwise they had not bribed the soldiers.

13. Although the disciples of Christ had been so wicked as to have contrived the stealing away the body of Jesus, it was impossible for them to have accomplished it. The Jews were extraordinary intent and watchful about this event, for they came to Pilate, and told him, that Jesus had foretold, while alive that he would rise again the third day; and it was proper that a guard should be set upon the sepulchre till that day was over, lest his disciples should come and steal him away, and say, that he was risen, and so the latter error would be worse than the first. They were sufficiently aware of the consequences of this event, that it would overturn their religion, and establish Christianity, and therefore they take all necessary precautions; and this was ordered by God's wise providence for ascertaining the truth of the event.

14. The coined story of carrying off the body of Jesus, while the guard slept, is so very gross, that it will scarce bear a telling. For if the disciples did this while the soldiers slept, how could the trick be known? Did the disciples tell it themselves, or were the guard conscious of what passed in their sleep? Were not their senses locked up during their sleep?

15. If the disciples had been concerned in so vile a piece of imposture, with what courage or confidence could they have entered on their ministry, and preached salvation in Christ's name? Could they have ever hoped for any countenance from heaven, or for assistance from the Spirit to work miracles, while they were propagating a notorious cheat. They might have expected that both heaven and earth would be engaged against them in every step of their undertaking, and so would have dropped their design of propagating the Christian faith. But being perfectly assured of the truth of Christ's resurrection, and of all they preached, they undertook and went through their work with that indefatigable zeal and industry, with that life and spirit far transcending all that ever was known in human nature before, that no storms nor difficulties, dangers nor deaths could in the least shake them; yea, were animated the more by the greatest of trials and persecutions.

For confirming the truth of the witnesses testimony concerning our Lord's resurrection, consider the horrid and intolerable absurdities that would follow on questioning or denying the truth of it.

1. A deist, who denies it must believe that a despicable company of wilful impostors and deceivers, men of a hated nation and religion, without power or force, without learning or experience without wit or policy, should be able to run down all the wit, learning, power, and policy of the world; and by preaching a most despised, incredible, and seemingly ridiculous doctrine directly contrary to all the worldly interests and humours of men and to their religions and customs, yea, and to their reason and philosophy too, should propagate the belief of it far and wide through the earth, so that there was scarce a nation in the whole compass of the globe, but what in whole or in part received this fiction, as the most sacred truth of God, and accordingly laid the whole stress of their salvation upon it! Or, if deists will suppose that the apostles and their companions were a company of brain-sick enthusiasts, or of lunatics and madmen: then they must own that such pitiful weak persons did argue with so much art and force, as to overpower all the learning and wisdom of the world: That all the sages, philosophers, and statesmen, who embraced Christianity in great numbers, as well as the poor and illiterate, were convinced and persuaded by mere enthusiasm; that they mistook downright raving for the strongest reason, and a chain of incoherent falsities for bright and evident demonstrations of truth!

2. The deists must believe that twelve poor fishermen were not only able to compass that vast design of making the world stoop to the laws they imposed; but also that they laid their plots so deep, that the effects of it should be permanent and lasting, and no succeeding age or generation ever be able to fathom it, and shew where the cheat lay. Strange! that a company of illiterate men outdid the profoundest wisdom and sagacity of mankind, and concerted matters so artfully, that none of all the penetrating wits of the world should, for so many centuries, after the strictest examination, find it possible to discover the least failure or flaw in the contrivance.

3. They must believe that these persons absolutely divested themselves of all regard to their own preservation or happiness; that they despised all the comforts and enjoyments of life, and ventured upon poverty and misery, upon torments, upon death, yea, upon damnation itself in the next world, and all for nothing, but the propagating of a cheat, which is most absurd to suppose.

4. They must believe that these very persons, who but a few hours before had so little spirit and courage left them, that they forsook their master in his extremity, and durst not own themselves his disciples, nor shew themselves openly for fear of the Jews, should all of a sudden grow so resolute, as to venture on that bold and hazardous undertaking, of forcing the sepulchre, and carrying off his body, and that they effectuated the design without being challenged by one of the guard.

5. They must believe that these timorous men would, in an enterprise that required so much expedition and dispatch, spend so much of their time in divesting a dead body of its burial-clothes, and wrap them up by themselves; and not rather chuse to carry off all together in haste, lest the next minute the guard might awake, and come upon them.

6. They must believe that a set of the greatest cheats that ever the world saw, did, notwithstanding, furnish mankind with the most exact system of morality that ever was, and lay the best foundations and scheme for the peace and happiness of the world, that could be laid! That the vilest hypocrites would spend all their time and lives too in indefatigable labours to make other men upright and sincere, and denounce damnation against lying, dissimulation, &c. That the system they compiled of religion was a standing comment of their own shame, and that all their sermons and writings were but so many satires and lampoons upon themselves.

Object. Christ's resurrection is attested only by his own friends and disciples. Why did he not converse as publicly with men as he did before? Why did he not appear to the chief-priests and elders of the Jews, to have convinced them of the truth of this fact?

Ans. 1. We are not to prescribe rules to the Divine Majesty; all his works are done in infinite wisdom, and he is not obliged to account to us for his actings; he himself

knows best what makes most for his own glory and the happiness of his creatures.

2. It was not to a few that Christ appeared, but to the twelve apostles, to the seventy disciples; yea, to five hundred brethren at once, to whom he gave the most convincing proofs of his resurrection.

3. It was a sufficient demonstration to the Jews of Christ's resurrection, Pilate's securing the sepulchre with a guard of soldiers, and Christ's body not being found therein. They might have been assured that a handful of timorous men would never adventure on stealing it: and they had a sufficient confirmation from the soldiers, who came into the city, and shewed to the chief priests all the things that were done, viz. The earthquake, angel's descent, &c. Mat. xxviii. 11.

4. Christ had given sufficient proof of his divine mission to the Jews before, by the miracles he wrought, which they blasphemously opposed, and maliciously prosecute him to death as a traitor; and therefore, because of their malice and obstinacy, they were unworthy of such a privilege as his conversing with them.

5 Though he had appeared to them, these malicous men would not have acknowledged him to be the person that was crucified, but would have alledged he was an impostor, set up by the Christians to personate the true Jesus, and been more enraged against his followers than ever.

6. Though Christ had risen and appeared in such a manner, yet Deists would have quarrelled the testimony of witnesses the same way they do now, saying, "How should we believe the report of others, and credit what we see not with our own eyes," &c. Christ's miracles were as publicly transacted as could have been desired; all men, and the greatest enemies, were allowed to witness the same; yet Deists now treat them as mere forgeries, and so would they have done Christ's apppearing even to the whole Jewish sanhedrim.

Improvement. From the resurrection of Christ, we may infer, that death is fairly overcome, and swallowed up in victory. Christ went into the very den of this dragon, and foiled it. Now, though it retains its dart, yet it hath left its sting in Christ's side, so that the believer may triumph, as 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56, 57. "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." The true believer need not have any slavish fear of death, though it frighten, yet it cannot hurt him. 2. Let believers dispose and employ their bodies, as those who know what is prepared for them at the resurrection. 3. Let us all secure to ourselves an interest in Christ and his blessed resurrection. 'Tis this hope that supports under all the troubles of this life.

MEDITATION IV.

From EPH. vi. 16. *Redeem the Time.*

1. TIME is one of the most precious blessings which man enjoys in this world, a jewel of inestimable worth: It is a golden stream continually running down by us, yea, carrying us alongst with it: It is a stream running from one ocean to another, from an eternity behind us, to an eternity before us.

2. That which makes time so precious mainly, is, that the salvation of our precious and immortal souls, through all eternity, depends thereupon. Upon the improvement of this short moment of time, depends a long-lasting, and never-ending eternity.

3. The expence which God the author of time is at, to create and beget it for us, shews the preciousness of it. Why? God, by his almighty power, doth continually wheel about these great luminaries of sun, moon, and stars, in their annual and diurnal revolutions, to beget and furnish time to us; and these do never halt nor stop, nor come short of their appointed times of rising and setting, and all for the service of man, that he may have time for the service of his Maker, and the saving of his soul.

4. The haste that time doth make, and the consideration of its shortness, that it will quickly be gone, and that a minute of it can never be recalled, shews forth its preciousness.

5. Also the important business we have for every moment of our time; although each of us had a thousand years to live, the service of God, and saving of our souls, is such a vast work, as would require every minute of it.

6. We are ready to pass into another world, an eternal state, where every minute of our time must be accounted for, and then it must fare with us eternally, as we have spent and improven this short time here.

7. For as precious as time is, it is undervalued and lavished away more than any thing is. It is seldom taken notice of, until it is quite past away from us; we never consider its worth and usefulness, till it is just ending.—Hence Solomon saith, Eccl. ix. 12. "Man knoweth not his time."

8, 'Tis most just, that he who hath the ordering and disposing of all things else concerning us, should be also the supreme Lord and disposer of our time, and therefore hath right to determine what time is to be allotted for our work, and what for his: And most just it is, that he, from whom we have all our time, should have his choice of it.

9. Of all time Sabbath time is the most precious and valuable; it being the time God has allotted and set apart for himself, and upon the improvement whereof, the glory of God and salvation of our souls, depend in a most peculiar manner, it being the day of special access to God, and of free commerce and correspondence between heaven and earth. It is heaven's weekly market day, or God's deal-day to the poor and needy; the day of access to God's presence-chamber. Time by some is compared to a gold ring, and the Sabbath to the sparkling diamond, which gives it its lustre, and heightens its value. Wherefore, if we be wise, we will shew a peculiar esteem for the Sabbath above all the days of the week; we'll reckon every moment of Sabbath time most precious, and desire that none of it may be mis spent. What Christ said to his disciples concerning the loaves and the fishes, the like he seems to speak to us concerning his holy day, "Gather up the fragments," gather up all the parcels, the spare hours and minutes of it; account them as precious as the goldsmith doth the smallest filings of his gold, and let nothing of Sabbath time be lost.

Exhortation. Above all time, redeem carefully Sabbath-time, and improve it diligently. Consider what a blessing the Sabbath is to you, if rightly improven: 1. An inn for refreshing the weary traveller, that hath been toiled and

tossed with storms through the week. 2. It is Christ's weekly market-day, wherein Christ sets forth the richest wares and commodities for us to buy "without money and without price," Rev. iii. 18. 3. It is the King of heaven's public deal-day, wherein he deals his bread to the hungry, and gives alms to the poor and needy. 4. It is the day of conversion, of inbringing and gathering the elect. Multitudes have been brought in to Christ this day. 5. It is a day of access to God, and correspondence with heaven; a day when Christ is to be seen and conversed with. You may not only have correspondence with Christ at a distance, but immediate access. You may be taken into the palace, the presence chamber, and see the King in his beauty, hear his voice, get the kisses of his mouth, the embraces of his arms; and should not this time be redeemed? 6. It is the day of heaven's festival, wherein Christ useth to feast his saints with the fatness of his house. 7. It is a day of reaping and gathering, and for laying up in store for the time to come. 8. A day for ascending the mount of transfiguration, to see Christ transfigured, a day of ascending to mount Pisgah, to see the land that is afar off.

2. Redeem Sabbath-time, for it is flying fast away; you may have but a few more Sabbaths to enjoy. The Sabbath is fast approaching that will be your last Sabbath, after which you shall see no more in this world.

3. Redeem Sabbath-time, for much depends on it, the glory of God, and salvation of your immortal souls through eternity. So important is the business that depends on the improvement of your Sabbath-time, that it would call for the improvement of every moment: Yea, tho' each of you had ten thousand Sabbaths to spend, the service of God, and saving of your souls, is such a vast work, as would require every minute of them.

4. Redeem Sabbath-time, for we cannot recall one Sabbath that is past; no, though we had a world to give for one Sabbath, we could not recall it O many will be put one day to wish and cry in vain, O to recover one of these lost Sabbaths, wherein I had the free rich offer of a crucified Christ.

5. Redeem Sabbath-time, for you are just ready to pass into another world, where you must give a strict account of every Sabbath you have enjoyed, and answer for every minute of precious Sabbath-time. How will you answer for all the Sabbaths you have misimproven, for the Sabbaths of threescore years, which are above three thousand: O that will be a terrible *item* in the accounts of old graceless sinners.

Directions in redeeming Sabbath-time. 1. Carefully avoid whatever hinders it; as, 1. Atheism, or misbelief of the truth, and of the great end and design of the Sabbath. 2. Ignorance. Many are so ignorant, that they think if they pass away the Sabbath without any gross breach of it, they do well enough. 3. Sloth and laziness. Up and be doing.

2. If you would redeem Sabbath-time, repent of former misimprovements, and humble yourselves for lost Sabbaths, and cry for mercy through Christ's atoning blood.

3. Study to recompence former mismanagements by your future diligence; as a traveller who finds himself like to be benighted by his former laziness, mends his pace, and goes as many miles now in one hour, as formerly he did in two.

4. Spend every Sabbath now as it were your last; and this approaching Sabbath be as diligent on it, as if it were your last: prepare for it in the evening; get up early next morning, pray, read, meditate, examine yourself, and wrestle for God's presence with you in the ordinances.

5. Hearken presently to Christ's calls in the word; believe and embrace Christ's doctrine, and his righteousness, and close with him as your only help and remedy.

MEDITATION V.

Upon JOHN xx. 20. *And when he so said, he shewed them his hands and his feet. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.*

THIS was the first Christian Sabbath, and upon it the disciples met for the work and duties of the day, prayer and godly conference. Well, did the disciples meet for this work? Christ will not let them part without his peace and blessing. He comes in the midst of them, when the doors were shut, no doors nor bands can shut out Christ's presence from his disciples; and what is his salutation to them? "Peace be unto you." A most comprehensive blessing! This was the legacy he had left them a few days before, and now he makes prompt and ready payment of it to them, he will not be long owing it.

Quest. What sort of peace is it?

Ans. Peace with God, peace of conscience, and peace with one another. This was a blessing most suitable to them, who were so full of fears and disorders.

After this salutation, he gives them a most comfortable discovery of his pierced hands and side, to convince them of the truth of his resurrection, which they were still in doubt of, by the marks and scars of the wounds which had been made a few days before by the nails and spear: he shews them that the body they now saw alive, was the same individual body they and many others had seen dead on the cross a few days before. From this,

Observe 1. That Christ retained the scars of his wounds after his resurrection. He was not ashamed of them, but gloried in them, as conquerors glory in the marks of their wounds after bloody battles. Moreover, Christ had use for them: 1. They were to speak on earth, and demonstrate the truth of his resurrection to the world, particularly to convince unbelieving Thomas. 2. They were to speak in heaven, by the intercession that he makes for his people there, in doing whereof he shews his wounds, and therefore he ascended with them, and now appears in midst of the throne as a lamb slain, with his wounds, as it were, bleeding afresh, Rev. v. 6. 3. Nay, he retains them, that he may come back with them, for it seems they will be then visible, that enemies may look on him whom they pierced, Rev. i. 7. "Behold he cometh with clouds: And every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him."

2. Observe the condescension and pains of a crucified Jesus to satisfy his disciples: he shewed them his hands, he is at pains first to open his hands, to let them see the marks of the wounds he got by the nails driven therein. Next he opens his breast, to let them see the wound he got in his side by the spear that was thrust into it. O the condescension of our Lord, to confirm the faith of his poor staggering and doubting disciples!

3. Observe the effect and impression of this sight upon the disciples, "they were glad when they saw the Lord." It revived their drooping spirits, it convinced their doubting

hearts, and strengthened their faith, and faith produces joy, Rom. xv. 13. 1 Pet. i. 8. Now Christ fulfilled what he said, John xvi. 22. "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice."

Doctrine. A believing and appropriating view of the wounds of a crucified and risen Jesus, is a most joyful sight.

Quest. What grounds of joy have we in this sight?

Ans. 1. This sight shews that Christ hath loved us, and given himself for us, who are objects of wrath.

2 This tells us, our debt is paid, justice is satisfied, our Surety is risen, and let out of prison.

3. We have ground of joy, that we see a shelter against all the challenges of the law and justice of God; for Christ has wrought a law-bidding and justice-satisfying righteousness. Here's our city of refuge against the avenger of blood. How glad was the manslayer at this sight!

4. Thou art sure of access and acceptance with God—Why? Here is a powerful ground of intercession, the wounds and blood of the Son of God, "which speaketh better things than that of Abel." The wounds are like a mouth still open for thee; the blood like a tongue still speaking for thee.

5. The fifth ground of joy is, that the covenant is confirmed, whereby thou art safe from the deluge, the rainbow appearing, even the scarlet-coloured wounds and blood of Christ, which is a sure token of God's covenant

Inference Then we have reason to bless God for the approach of the Sabbath, and more especially for the news of a communion Sabbath approaching, wherein we may see, in a remarkable manner, the wounds of a crucified Jesus discovered to us. O that is the most joyful sight the world ever saw! Let us welcome the Sabbath, and especially a communion Sabbath, which brings us such a sight. Every Lord's day is lovely and desirable; but a communion Sabbath is in a special manner a day of the Son of man, a solemn and high day, a day to be remarked and remembered by all the disciples of Jesus. As the Sabbath is the most excellent of all the days of the week, so a communion Sabbath is the most desirable of all the Sabbaths of the year: For, upon such a day, a crucified Jesus is most evidently set forth before our eyes, then he appears in his dyed garments, glorious and red in his apparel, a most lovely sight to the eye of faith. These are days in God's court indeed, far better than a thousand elsewhere.

MEDITATION VI.

On the Sabbath its being called a delight, from Isa. lviii. 22. "Call the Sabbath a delight."

GREAT stress was always laid upon the due observation of the Sabbath-day; and it was particularly required from the Jews, when they were captives at Babylon, that by keeping this day they might distinguish themselves from the worshippers of the gods, which have not made the heavens and the earth, Isa lvi. 1, 2. We must put all honour and respect upon it, and call it a delight, not a task or burden. We must not only count it a delight, but call it so, by openly professing the complacency we take in the day and duties of it. We must call it a delight, 1. To God, in a way of thanksgiving to God for it, and earnest desire of his grace to enable us to do the work of the day, because we delight in it. 2. We must call it so to others, to invite them to come and share with us in the pleasure of it. 3. We must call it so to ourselves, that we may not entertain the least thought of wishing the Sabbath gone, that we may sell corn or wine.

Quest. 1. What is imported in calling the Sabbath a delight?

Ans. 1. A belief that God is the author and institutor of it. 2 A knowledge of the ends and designs of it, that it is in honour of God the Creator, and of Christ the Redeemer, and for our good. 3. A thankful sense of God's goodness in instituting the Sabbath, it being a day of communion with God 4. A high esteem of the Sabbath, as the best day of the week. 5. A chearful compliance with the work and duties of the Sabbath. 6 A thinking on the Sabbath, looking, longing, and preparing for it, before it come. 7. A conscientious and willing performance of all the Sabbath-duties 8. A hating and avoiding all those evils and practices that are contrary to Sabbath-sanctification.

Quest. When may it may be said that the Sabbath is our delight?

Ans 1. It is our delight, when we esteem it a privilege and favour from God to have the Sabbath; when we say, O what a favour from God is this to me, that when I have been wearying myself six days for the world, God hath appointed this day, that we may refresh ourselves from such labours, mind our souls, and seek after heaven! If we value God above the world, and the joys of heaven above the pleasures on earth, so we will certainly value this day above all other days.

2. It is our delight, when we make it a day of visiting God, and keeping communion with him in his ordinances. The people of the world find delight in visiting their friends, and conversing and holding society with them; but much more may we have in visiting God, and seeing him in the sanctuary, and holding sweet fellowship with him there.

3. When we are not satisfied this day with a bare approach to God; but when we go to God this day as our exceeding joy, Psal xliii. 4. and place our happiness in the serving of God, and enjoying of him; and when we go with joy to draw water out of the wells of salvation.

4. When we draw forth our graces into holy actings and vigorous exercise the more we are employed this day in the actings of faith and love, and hope of heaven, it will be the more delight to us.

5. When the work and duties of the Sabbath are our element and recreation; when we are in David's frame, Psal. cxxii. 1. "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go up into the house of the Lord." This is prophesied of believers under the gospel, that they flock to ordinances on the wings of delight, "as doves to their windows," Isa. lx. 8. How great was David's delight in them, when he "desires it as one thing, that he might dwell all his days in God's house, to behold the beauty of the Lord," Psal. xxvii. 4. that is, that he might always have free access to God's house, and enjoy communion with God there. Hence he counts "a day in God's courts better than a thousand elsewhere." David had many earthly things to delight in, such as, 1. Great victories over enemies, which generals and warriors do greatly delight in. 2. He had palaces and gardens, which great men do delight in. 3. He had instruments of music of all sorts, which great musicians (such as David the sweet singer of Israel was) do delight much in

Yea, he invented to himself all sorts of musical instruments, Amos vi 5. Well, but though David knew as much of these earthly delights as most men, yet he delighted most of all in the Sabbath, "a day in God's courts."

6 It is a delight, when we find increase and growth of grace in and by the ordinances We see men delight in a market day on which they gain much of the world; and much more will they delight in the Lord's day, who find their love to God on it more inflamed, their desires after him more enlarged, and their hope of heaven more confirmed.

7. It is a delight when we come thereon, to discover our interest in the Lord Jesus, and are made to see that it was he who died and rose from the dead this day for us. O how delightful to think, this is the day my Redeemer lived again! Do others delight in the day of their birth, and shall not I delight in the day on which my Lord did live again?

8 It is a delight when we come on the Sabbath to get assurance, that we shall keep an everlasting Sabbath with God above And if a transient enjoyment of God in a Sabbath here be so pleasant, how much more to have the full enjoyment of God on that Sabbath above to all eternity!

Quest 3. Do not the special delights of the Sabbath excel all other delights, and wherein do they excel?

Ans 1. They transcend them in their foundation, they are well founded not on mistakes and delusions, as carnal delights and pleasures are, but on the sure word of God, that is unalterable, his well ordered covenant Carnal men rejoice in fancies and delusions, but know not how matters are with them. If they knew how near hell and damnation they are, if they knew the shortness of their pleasures, and the length of their sorrows, they would have little heart to sport or laugh; nay, it would soon turn their laughter into mourning and lamentation

2 Spiritual delights surpass them in reality, the pleasures of the wicked are but seeming and outward, but believers delights are real, hearty, and inward In the midst of the laughter of the wicked, their hearts are sad; though their senses be someway tickled and affected, yet the heart is not But with believers it is otherwise, Psal iv 17 "Thou hast put more gladness in my heart," &c Spiritual delight goes to the heart.

3. They are suitable delights, seeing they are intellectual. Carnal delights in drinking, sporting, &c make men more like beasts than men. The beasts have pain and pleasure by their senses, but not sorrow nor delight, because these are intellectual. So the joy of carnal men is rather pleasure than delight; but the more intellectual and chaste our delights are, the more pure and suitable are they to the human nature Yea, the more our delights are in loving, praising, and worshipping God on the Sabbath, they make us more like angels than men

4. They surpass them in innocency. Carnal delights, the more we use them, the more we are ensnared by them; they pervert the heart, disorder the mind, and indispose for duty. But spiritual delights have no such effect, they are so far from perverting or disordering, that they corroborate and strengthen the graces; they compose and purify the mind; they make sin the more odious, and fortify us the more against the baits of sense.

5 They excel them in security. Spiritual delights are pure like crystal streams, whereas carnal delights are imbittered with fear, stings of conscience, and sense of guilt

6 They excel them in strength and sweetness. There is delight in thinking on our temporal interests, but much more in thinking on Christ, and our interest in him, and the well ordered covenant Yea, there is more delight in the hardest part of Sabbath work, viz. in mortifying one sin or lust, than carnal men have in satisfying a thousand.

7 They are more profitable delights. There is more profit in one day, yea, one hour's communion with God, than in the worldly gains of a thousand market-days. Oh! do men toil hard in labouring six days of the week for gains of the world, and will we not labour one day for that which endureth to everlasting life?

8 They are more satisfying than all worldly delights. Surely there is more satisfaction in the spiritual recreations of this day, than in all carnal sports and pastimes whatsoever O what satisfaction is there in thinking on the work of redemption, and of all that Christ did and suffered for the accomplishment of it! What a pleasant recreation is it to find and feel the actings of love and desire to God, and to have a sense of God's love unto the soul, to meditate on the eternal Sabbath of rest from sin, sickness, temptation, and all evil whatsoever, and of joining in the perfect love and praises of that blessed company above to all eternity!

9 They surpass them in this, that they end well, whereas carnal delights do not Carnal delights are like the crackling of thorns under a pot; they make a great blaze and noise for a little, but then they go out in darkness, or, like the light of a candle, that doth shine for a little, but then goes out in a stinking snuff So with carnal delights, they make way for sorrow, "for the end of that mirth is heaviness," according to Prov xv. 13 Carnal delight and recreations, especially on the Sabbath, leave a sting behind them, whenever conscience is awakened, and these are the forerunners of hell

Quest. 4 What are those things in the Sabbath we ought to delight in?

Ans 1 In the restraints which the Sabbath lays on us, in hindering us from our worldly employments and recreations, and from all the pleasures of sin, this we should delight in

2 In the duties and services which the Sabbath obligeth us unto

Quest 5. What are those duties and services of the Sabbath which we ought to delight in?

Ans 1 There are public services and duties which we should delight in, as in the hearing of the word, prayer, praises, and receiving of the sacraments

2. Private duties, as reading of the word, prayer, meditation, Christian conference, mourning for sin, &c.

A FAIR

A
FAIR AND IMPARTIAL
TESTIMONY,

ESSAYED IN NAME OF A NUMBER OF

MINISTERS, ELDERS, AND CHRISTIAN PEOPLE

OF THE

Church of Scotland,

UNTO THE

LAUDABLE PRINCIPLES, WRESTLINGS, AND ATTAINMENTS OF THAT CHURCH;

AND AGAINST THE

BACKSLIDINGS, CORRUPTIONS, DIVISIONS, AND PREVAILING EVILS,

BOTH OF FORMER AND PRESENT TIMES.

AND NAMELY,

THE DEFECTIONS OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH;

OF THE

NOBILITY, GENTRY, COMMONS, SECEDERS, EPISCOPALIANS, &c.

CONTAINING

A BRIEF HISTORICAL DEDUCTION

Of the Chief Occurrences in this Church, from her Beginning, to the Year 1744, *with Remarks:*

AND

HUMBLE PLEADINGS WITH OUR MOTHER CHURCH, TO EXERT HERSELF TO STOP DEFECTION, AND PROMOTE REFORMATION.

ATTESTED AND ADHERED UNTO BY SUNDRY MINISTERS

PSAL. ci. 3. *I hate the work of them that turn aside, it shall not cleave to me.*
ISA. xliii. 10. *Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord.*
EZEK. xliii. 11. *Shew them the form of the house, and write it in their sight.*
ISA. lviii. 1. *Shew the house of Jacob their sins.*

BY

THE REVEREND JOHN WILLISON, LATE MINISTER

OF DUNDEE.

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1817.

A

FAIR AND IMPARTIAL TESTIMONY.

PREFACE.

THOUGH I be far less fit for framing a TESTIMONY to the principles, wrestlings, and attainments of this church, and against the corruptions, defections, and evils of the times than many of my brethren, yet, being encouraged by some whom I highly value to undertake it, and finding none else inclined to it, I have essayed it through Divine strength, hoping to see a *Witnessing Body* appear within this church, as well as without it, at least some who would desire to testify against the evils of the day with just zeal, impartiality, and meekness

No sooner set I my face to it, but I saw it to be a matter of great difficulty to steer a straight course, without swerving to the right or left hand, in these reeling and shaking times, when such different opinions are vented, provocations are given, calumnies are spread, and mens passions are stirred on each side, so that even the meekest and wisest are ready to stagger I found also the difficulty increase, from the divided sentiment of godly ministers with respect to some particular occurrences, and the strong inclination of many to live at ease, enjoy quiet, and even to sit down, Issachar-like, and couch under the burden, when hopes of relief do not appear. These things greatly discouraged me to proceed in the design.

But when I duly weighed and considered the growing dangers of the church, the backsliding disposition that still prevailed, and the unsuccessfulness of all other methods to recover her from it, such as *Dissents, Protests, Instructions, Representations, Petitions Separations, Secessions,* &c. and that the only mean now left to be tried, for giving check to corruption, and exciting reformation, seemed to be that of an honest Testimony of some within the church · I determined at length to go on through all difficulties and discouragements, to prepare and publish the following Essay, with a sincere intention to preserve the Mother-church, and promote her interests, looking to Heaven for a blessing on it, that it may be of use to excite judicatories to put a stop to some evils, and reform some things amiss: And though it should have little effect on the present backsliding age, yet hoping it may be useful to the rising generation, when God shall send a general revival of true Christianity in the land; at such a time the subscribers of this testimony will continue, when dead, thus to speak, to the glory of the ever-living Redeemer.

I considered also within myself that our old suffering ministers were all gone off the stage, and many other worthy brethren were going off from time to time, and that I myself got frequent warnings to prepare for going: and at the same time, that numbers of eminent good men drop into the silent grave, without leaving any testimony behind them, so that in a short time it may be called in question what their mind was concerning the principles and attainments of our fathers, and the corruptions of present and former times, and, if I continued to linger a little longer, this would be my own fate also Wherefore I resolved to expose this Essay, and myself likewise, to the censure of the world, and though I should be charged with mean and selfish views in it, as affecting singularity, a name, applause from some, &c. if the Lord call me to bear reproach in carrying on a good design, why should I not submit to it? Surely it may be thought that one of my age should be dead to these vanities, and that it is high time for me to be seeking the approbation of my great Judge, more than that of all the world. May I ever mind this!

Quest It is like it may be asked, What warrant have ye for emitting such a Testimony?

Ans The reasons and grounds of it seem so plain both from scripture and sound reason, that we may adventure to submit them to all thinking persons to judge of them

I The servants of God, and especially ministers of the gospel, are frequently in Scripture called his WITNESSES, in regard they are called to give testimony to his truths and ways, and to bear witness against what is prejudicial or contrary thereunto, Rev. xi. 3, 7 Luke xxiv 48 John v. 33. and xv. 27 Acts i 8 and xxii 15, 18 and xxvi. 19. It is by such witness-bearing that we must hold fast the truths of God when ready to be plucked from us and to contend for the faith which he hath delivered to his saints, Revelations iii. 11. Jude verse 3. And in this way we are to wrestle with, and overcome truth's adversaries, Revelations xii. 11. 'They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony.' The character which God gives his servants three times in the compass of a few verses, should make very deep impression upon us, Isa xliii 10, 12. and xliv 8. 'Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord,' And it is in that capacity he calls and requires us to 'confess Christ before men,' to 'bear witness to Christ and to his truths,' to 'stand fast in the faith,' to 'quit ourselves like men, to 'be strong,' to 'be stedfast, to 'be zealous and valiant for the truth,' to 'be faithful unto death,' to 'contend earnestly for the faith, and set ourselves for the defence of the gospel,' to 'plead with our mother,' to 'keep the charge of the Lord, and the charge of his sanctuary,' to 'keep that which is committed to our trust,' to 'be clean who bear the vessels of the Lord, and not to touch the un-

clean thing,' to 'save ourselves from an untoward generation,' to 'keep our garments clean and unspotted from the world,' to 'hate the work of them that turn aside, that it may not cleave to us,' to 'keep ourselves pure, and not to be partakers of other mens sins,' to 'flee from sin, and deliver every man his own soul,' to 'abhor what is evil,' to 'cleave unto the Lord, and to that which is good,' to 'keep ourselves from the accursed thing,' to 'be watchmen to the house of Israel, and give them warning from God,' to 'cry aloud and not spare,' 'to shew the house of Jacob their sins,' to 'reprove the works of darkness; not to suffer sin upon our brother,' to 'be pure from the blood of all men, and not to shun to declare all the counsel of God.' Now these multiplied Scripture texts and Divine precepts afford us clear and plain warrant to make an open appearance and declaration for our Lord Jesus Christ, and for his truths and ways when injured; and against the evils and corruptions of the times, especially when they are avowed and infectious, and like to infect more and more.

II. Writing and leaving a testimony behind us to true religion, and against error and corruption, is necessary and useful for the instruction, conviction, and confirmation, both of the present and future generations, and a very proper mean for handing down God's truths and institutions pure from age to age; which is a debt that one generation owes to another, as God declares in his word, Psal. lxxviii. 5, 6, 7. 'He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.' Psal. cxlv. 4. 'One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.' And, according to Psal. cii. 18. God's works of grace and mercy are to be 'written for the generations to come, that the people which are to be created may praise the Lord.' And we are injoined, Psal. xlviii. 13. to 'walk about Zion, to tell her towers, mark her bulwarks and palaces,' viz. the institutions and ornaments of the gospel-church, 'that we may shew them to the generation following.' And we are appointed, Ezek. xliii. 11. to 'shew to the house of Israel the form and fashion of the house of God, with the ordinances and laws thereof, and to write it in their sight, that they may keep them and do them.' All these do plainly demonstrate our Scripture-warrant for leaving such written testimonies behind us.

III. Writing and emitting faithful testimonies for God and his ways, is necessary and seasonable, especially in times of corruption and backsliding, even when true religion is in danger. In such times, Christ doth kindly accept and reward our open 'confessing of him' and his truths before men, Rev. ii. 2. Matt. x. 32. And, on the other hand, he severely threatens our conniving at error and impiety, and not bearing testimony against them when they abound, Rev. ii. 14, 15, 16. Now, is not the backsliding day in which we live a proper season for such open confessions and faithful testimonies, when errors of all kinds are tolerate, approven truths are run down, and manifold corruptions prevail, to the dishonour of God and our holy religion; and when applications to judicatories for redress are unsuccessful? Surely it must be in such a time as this, that God calls his servants and witnesses to 'rise up for him (by faithful testimonies) against the evil-doers, and stand up for him against the workers of iniquity,' Psal. xciv. 16.

Object. Some perhaps will say, The corruptions and grievances of the times are not so great as some are ready to make them.

Ans. No doubt some do aggravate them beyond what is true and just. But, if what these say be fact, who use to speak within bounds, viz. 1. That a spirit of infidelity and error greatly prevails in the land, and open attacks are made upon the holy Scriptures and the Christian religion. 2. That a free toleration is given to all kinds of error, Arminian, Socinian, Arian, Popish, Deistical, &c. which are spreading more and more. 3. That sundry of the clergy are suspected of, and changed more than formerly, not only with looseness and immoralities in their lives, but also with laxness and unsoundness in their principles; and some of these are allowed to possess eminent posts in colleges, and even to teach divinity, and train up young men for the holy ministry. 4. That many of these have no regard to act 7th, Assembly 1736, with respect to evangelical preaching, but take up with legal doctrine, and a sort of heathenish morality, instead of preaching Christ to sinners, which ought to be the main business of every gospel minister. 5. That many of them give great encouragement to patronage, that woeful usurpation over the church of God, when they are under no necessity from the law to do it. 6. That gross intrusions are continued upon Christian congregations, who are thereby spoiled of their right to call their own pastors, contrary to the word of God and our known principles. 7. That there are now most unreasonable divisions, ill grounded and unscriptural separations, among sound and godly Presbyterians; contrary to Christ's royal law of love, and precepts of 'keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.' 8. That there are strange liberties taken by many (of whom better things might have been expected) in reproaching the work of God's holy Spirit, in awakening, convincing, and bringing lost sinners home to himself. 9. That the Episcopal clergy are forsaking the Protestant cause, licking up old Popish errors and superstitions which their fathers cast out, and sliding gradually back again to Rome. Now, if these things be true (as many alledge with too much ground), Christ's witnesses have a plain call from him to stand up against these defections by faithful testimonies, and to give free warning of the evil and danger of them before it be too late.

IV. A written subscribed testimony seems necessary in obedience to the Ninth Commandment, for preserving and clearing the names and characters of honest ministers and elders, in times of defection, and for vindicating them from the common charge of the corruptions and wrong steps of the societies whereof they are members. As they are often loaded unjustly with these evils, so their giving a subscribed testimony against them is a proper way to wipe off aspersions from their names while they live, to prevent blackning of their memories when dead, and also to yield them much inward peace when dying. Wherefore, in my humble opinion, the call seems to be pretty clear to them who desire to *keep their garments unspotted, and to hate the work of them that turn aside, that it may not cleave to them*, and who would embalm their names to posterity as witnesses for God in an evil time, to declare their minds, by joining in such a testimony as this, and thereby exoner their consciences with respect to the backsliding and defections under which they have been long groaning. And whatsoever their hand

finds to do in this matter, it is fit they do it without loss of time, seeing their standing is so slippery every day upon the brink of the grave.

V. Emitting testimonies in time of defection hath been the approven practice of God's worthies in former times. They judged their giving written testimonies against growing errors and corruptions, to be the lifting up a banner for truth, and the proper means to stop the current of defection, and to excite and plead with their Mother to use her best endeavours for that effect. We have still extant such faithful testimonies given by sundry ministers in the years 1658 and 1659, when a toleration was granted by law to the sectaries and errors which then prevailed: and namely, that famous testimony drawn up against these errors, and to the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this church, subscribed by Mr Samuel Rutherford, Mr James Wedderburn, Mr James Guthrie, Mr Alexander Moncrieff, Mr Thomas Lundie, and many others. Likewise a testimony against toleration by the presbytery of Edinburgh, 5th October 1659. One by the ministers of Lancashire, 3d March 1648. One by Mr George Gillespie, two days before his death. One by the ministers of London, 14th December 1647. One by Mr Rutherford on his death-bed, February 1661. One by Dr Horneck against stage-plays, &c. And, *lastly*, What are all the dying speeches which our martyrs have left written behind them, but so many testimonies to the truths and ways of God, and against the errors and corruptions of their times? And these testimonies, however much despised by the world, God hath blessed as means for continuing truth and gospel purity among us to this day. And who knows but the Testimony now essayed, in imitation of the foresaid worthies, may likewise be of use for preserving truth, and exciting reformation, when many of the present backsliding generation are laid in the dust? A new turn of affairs, and general revival, may yet come: (The Lord himself hasten it!) Now it will be highly useful at such a time, for the generation to know something of the sentiments and practices of ancient wrestlers against corruption. Were there no testimonies of this kind, both the knowledge of truth, and the sense of duty and of sin, in sundry cases, would be lost to the rising ages, towards whom we of the present age are indispensibly bound to act a kind and faithful part, *viz.* to give them just information.

Object. It may be alleged, "That the dissents and contendings of honest ministers, recorded in the books of synods and presbyteries, and other judicatories, are sufficient to inform after ages."

Ans. These testimonies commonly ly dormant in church-records, and are little known in the world: and frequently these registers are quite lost, by their going from hand to hand, or by the death of their keepers; which indeed is a very great loss to after ages. Were all the testimonies of ministers and judicatories, relating to patronages and accepting of presentations, published, they might be of very great use; and particularly the acts of synods thereanent, mentioned p. 54. of the Testimony. The synods of Aberdeen, Ross, Angus, Perth, Fife, &c. they made acts of that kind, severals of which I have seen, which well deserve to be published. The substance of them being comprehended in the act of the synod of Fife, I shall insert it here.

"At Coupar, April 2d, 1735. The synod of Fife taking into their serious consideration, that patronages, with power of presenting men to take the oversight of souls, is a manifest encroachment upon the rights and liberties of the church of Christ, which the judicatories and faithful members of this church from its reformation have always complained of, and struggled against, as what deprives Christian congregations of that interest they ought to have in calling their own pastors, and which is claimed and asserted by the assemblies of this church: And further considering, that some do accept of presentations before any call from the vacant congregations, and without the advice and consent of the presbytery of the bounds, and sometimes even before the parishioners have occasion to hear them, or shew their inclinations to them; and adhere to their presentations, notwithstanding the aversion of the congregations, and thereby give great offence, in shewing so little regard to the weighty ends of a gospel ministry, the glory of the great and chief Shepherd, and the edification of his flock, and in affording too much occasion to people to look on them as seeking more a living to themselves than to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore the synod of Fife do hereby give warning to all ministers and preachers of the gospel within their bounds, of the evil and danger of such undue acceptance of presentations; earnestly exhorting and admonishing to beware thereof, as they would not mar the edification of Christ's flock, and continue this heavy grievance upon this church, and expose themselves to the just censure of its judicatories. And, to the intent this admonition may be the more regarded, the synod appoints a copy thereof to be recorded in all the presbytery books within that bounds; and that the presbyteries, at their first meeting after the minutes of the synod come to their hands, cause read the same judicially, and also give copies thereof to all the ministers and preachers within their bounds, and likewise such students of divinity as may be presently under their trials, or hereafter may be taken on trials by them; and that hereafter, before they enter any upon trials, either for preaching the gospel, or for the holy ministry, they endeavour to understand their sentiments anent presentations being a grievance to this church, and their resolution to observe the recommendation of this act." But it must be told, with deep regret, that these acts of synods, not being supported by superior judicatories, came soon to be disregarded, and so the door of patronage is still kept open, whereby a corrupt ministry enters into the church: May the Lord in mercy shut that door! Alas, how sad and mournful a thing is it, that ministers and preachers have no pity upon this once famous church, which is already defaced, and corrupted, and likely to be corrupted more and more, by patronage and presentations; when it is plainly in their power to deliver their Mother-church from this woful corruption and bondage! Oh what hard and cruel hearts must many ministers and preachers now have!

There is one thing to be lamented, which tends to bring in a set of clergy, who have no scruple to encourage patronage, intrusions, error and looseness: namely, the planting of our universities with masters, who are either suspected as to their principles or morals, or who have little zeal for orthodoxy or piety. When such men are appointed to be heads of colleges, professors of sciences, languages, or divinity, for training up of young men for the ministry; what is to be expected from the students under their care, but that many of them will be leavened with bad principles and inclinations? And how can better mas-

ers in colleges or professors of divinity be looked for, while these are chosen by statesmen, magistrates, or regents, severals of whom have no real concern for Christianity, but may even be tinctured with error or infidelity? Alas! whilst matters stand thus with us, if private measures be not taken by friends of the church to get sound and pious men to teach divinity, besides those in colleges, this church may soon be overrun with corruption, looseness and error of all sorts; which I pray the Lord in mercy to prevent.

Some may object, 'Why do ye insist so much against patronage, seeing this was in the church in former times of presbytery, and now accepting of presentations is become common and fashionable, and the judicatories connive at it?'

Ans. 1. Our circumstances now differ vastly from theirs in former times. Why? In former times the law laid them under a necessity of entering to churches by the patron's leave, there being no other way of entry; but now we are under no such necessity, there being a gospel-door still left open to us. In former times they were never delivered from patronage, nor sensible of the happiness of freedom from it: but we have been set at liberty, and known the happiness of it. They did not voluntarily submit to patronage after they were freed from it; but this, alas, is what we are doing: we have chosen this bondage, and subjected ourselves to it, without any necessity from the law; so that our compliers with patronage are far more inexcusable than those in former times: our misery now is undeniably from ourselves, we are plainly self-destroyers. O that our help may come from God in Christ, who even pities them who destroy themselves!

2. However common the accepting of presentations be at this time, the acceptor's sin is not lessened thereby, nor is he the safer from the wrath of God. A just God hath common punishments for common sinners: witness the flood that he brought upon a world of sinners at once. The acceptor makes himself directly a partner with the patron in his sinful usurpation over the church of God, and becomes in some respects more guilty than he; as is evident from the Testimony, p. 51 and 52. Now, if this practice be sinful (as certainly it is) the commonness of it will not at all loose us from obedience to God's command, that injoins us to "hate and abhor that which is evil," and as God's witnesses to bear our testimony against it. Surely the commonness of this evil is one ground of the Lord's controversy with this church and land, for which we ought to fast and mourn.

3. As to the church's conniving at these acceptances, I heartily bewail it: Alas! the fear of men hath brought them into this snare, as is observed in the Testimony, p. 51. But, whatever be the temptation, the word of God holds it as a sin in any church to bear with those who are evil, or do evil, without duly testifying against the evil, yea, and censuring those who are impenitent and obstinate in an evil course. Wherefore I am afraid that our keeping silence so much at this sinful connivance, may come to involve us into the guilt of it. O what need have we to be humbled under a sense of this and other short-comings, and to cry with the Psalmist, 'Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults.' May the Lord bring the whole church, and every member of it, to a sense of what is sin, and what is duty, in this matter! As for my part, I must declare my opinion, That all those who are erroneous, immoral, intruders, supporters of patronage, and spoilers of Christian congregations of the rights which Christ hath purchased for them, ought to be testified against, and dealt with to bring them to repentance; and, if they remain impenitent and obstinate, they ought to be purged out of the church. And, if they still be connived at in the church, notwithstanding of impenitence, I cannot but look upon the society as dangerous, infectious and hurtful. Likewise I must own, that the word of God makes it the duty of those who would keep their garments clean, to mark them, avoid them, and turn away from them, at least as to intimate fellowship and familiarity; for, if we should continue familiar with them, we will be ready to lose that abhorrence of their evil courses which God commands, and also to encourage and harden them in them. Wherefore it seems needful for those who would keep conscience pure while attending judicatories where such members are, that they protest or declare that their presence with them ought not to be constructed as giving any sort of countenance or encouragement to their evil courses, but rather as designed to testify against them, stop and prevent them, and to excite and promote reformation as much as in their power.

I make no question but sundry will be offended with this plain dealing, and especially those who would fain be 'at ease in Zion,' though in a time of grievous provocations and backslidings, and of the Lord's judgments both inflicted and impending; but, if I know my own heart, it is truly conscience, not humour,—love to the church, not hatred, that prompt me to this plainness. I see no way to put an end to the Lord's controversy with us, but by a sincere turning to God in Christ, in the way of faith, repentance and reformation. Now, if we would behave as true penitents, and make peace with an offended God, we must fall in with the revealed will of God in every thing: we must be so far from pleading for sin, bearing with, or conniving at it; that we must forsake sin, yea, hate and abhor what is evil, reprove the works of darkness, and have no fellowship with them. This being the express will of God to us, how can we think he will be at peace with us, until we sincerely fall in with it! I acknowledge it is not easy to keep up the impressions of sin's evil, and a due abhorrence of it, when sin turns common and fashionable, it is not easy to keep clean garments, when the examples of sin are always before our eyes, and especially when we see those who are reputed pious drawn into it: but these things should weigh but little with us, when we see it is the express will of God, that they 'who bear the vessels of the Lord must be clean, must keep themselves pure,' and not so much as 'touch the unclean thing,' and those who would take the kingdom, must do violence to their carnal ease and interest, when they interfere with the will and glory of God. These considerations have moved me to use this plainness, and to join in the following Testimony against sin; and that not only to keep myself pure, but also to preserve others, if possible, from the prevailing sins and evils of the day, which are more infectious and dangerous than any plague whatsoever: and this I think is the greatest act of charity that can be done to the precious souls of men.

The common *Objection* against emitting this or the like Testimony is, 'That it may have bad consequences, make new divisions and distinctions in the church, give advantage to her adversaries,' &c.

Ans. 1. The subscribers of this Testimony testify against the illgrounded divisions and unscriptural separations among Presbyterians which now prevail; and they design

not to alter their respects or conduct towards other godly ministers, who may not be clear about every thing contained in this Testimony, seeing they never intended it as the badge of a party, or a term of communion either ministerial or Christian, but only to be an exoneration to conscience, a witness against corruption, and a prompter to reformation.

2. This argument, taken from the fear of division, strikes equally against all testimonies whatsoever, against those emitted by our ancient worthies in times of defection, against the representation of the 42 ministers in the year 1732, and against all dissents and protestations in judicatories: for it may be pretended, that these testimonies or public appearances tend also to make divisions in the church: nay, the same argument may be made use of against our giving a testimony against Prelacy, or the English service, or any gross error, were they coming into the church.

3. We must not neglect present duty for fear of bad consequences which possibly may never happen; especially when we evidently see that the neglect will have far worse consequences. In my view, by our omitting to give a testimony against error and corruption, when it is called for, and all to prevent the evil of division which is uncertain; we bring on evils far greater and more certain, viz. 'the loss of truth and purity, and the sinful neglect of duty,' both to God, and the generations present and to come.—We see that great man, Luther, reckoned the loss of any of God's truths to be the greatest of evils; *Ruat cœlum* (said he) *potius quam una mica veritatis pereat.* And holy David says, Psal. cxix. 72. 'The law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver.'

4. We ought to observe the order laid down in that divine precept, Zech. viii. 19. 'Love the truth and peace;' where the Spirit of God gives truth to the precedence of peace. Peace indeed is a thing very lovely in itself, but truth is far more amiable and precious, and must never be sacrificed to preserve peace. 'Union or peace is no real blessing to a church, if she be in a state of lukewarmness, or sliding back into corruption or error. Peace, in such a state, is rather a judgment than a mercy.

5. A most lamentable division and schism broke in amongst us a few years ago, when no testimony was in the field. Nay, in all probability, if a free and faithful testimony had been essayed by a great body of ministers sometime before it happened, instead of making a schism, it had prevented one, and might also have stopt judicatories from going such lengths as they have done.

6. As to adversaries getting advantage by this Testimony; the subscribers, as they had no such view, so they expect no such event, but rather the contrary, viz. that they will lose by it. But, whatever happen, if truth and holiness get any advantage by it, as is honestly designed, that gain will countervail any other damage.

But it is in vain to multiply answers to some, who will by no arguments be reconciled to a fair and honest testimony to truth, when the stream of opposition is strong against it. I now see, by the discouragements I have met within this attempt, that those who will be faithful to the truth, must be valiant for it also, and not daunted by the fear or faces, power or numbers of those who oppose it, or who shift appearing for it. It is one of the characters of God's servants, which he takes pleasure in, to be valiant for the truth upon the earth, especially when it is run down, Jer. ix. 3. And indeed it is sometimes run down with such violence, that there is no lifting up a testimony for it, without something of this Christian valour. It is truly afflicting to me, to find that there are so many of my brethren whom I love and esteem, who privately own they are of the same mind with the following Testimony, concerning the defections and corruptions of the times, and yet have not the resolution to declare this under their hand to the world. I would be very loth to say they are of those whom the Scriptures calls the FEARFUL, because of the Society I see them classed with, Rev. xxi. 8. But I have freedom to say, that the present dangerous state of this church, of the truths of God, and true Christianity, in this day of backsliding, is such, as requires more courage and resolution for preserving true religion, and reviving a work of reformation, than what the most part of good men appear at this time to be possessed of. May the Lord himself spirit and qualify men for his own work!

As I join with the *Testimony* in other things, so especially in the humble *Pleadings with our Mother,* with which it concludes; intreating that she would call all ranks to lay to heart the sins abounding, and the judgments impending, and to set about extraordinary fasting, humiliation, prayer, repentance, and reformation. The present dangerous situation these nations are in, from the combination of cruel Popish adversaries, who have destroyed other Protestant churches, and multitudes of their fellow-creatures, doth loudly call upon us to these duties. Very lately we were like to have been surprised with a formidable invasion from France, when unprovided for it; but the Lord of hosts, in his astonishing mercy, pitied our naked, defenceless condition, stept in himself, and fought for us; he caused his winds and stormy seas to oppose the enemy, and dash many of them in pieces, and so brake the attempt for that time; Surely our deliverance about the end of February last 1744, by God's own immediate hand, together with others of the same kind, should not be forgot by us. But, tho' he hath hereby allowed us a further breathing time, and space to repent, our danger is not over: for now France, as well as Spain, have declared war against us. Now the 'kings of the earth do set themselves, and the princes take counsel together, against the Lord,' and these Protestant nations. Now there is a more formidable conjunction of Popish powers against us than ever we saw before. Now France, Spain, Rome, Naples, Sicily, &c. these cruel and bloody nations, seem all to be combined against our Protestant king, and his royal family (whom God long preserve) seeking and plotting how to destroy them, together with our religion, laws, and liberties; and, instead thereof, to set up among us a Popish Pretender, an arbitrary government, and a blasphemous, idolatrous, and bloody religion. And may not the numerous hosts of these nations, and the cruelty of a Popish party, wherever they get the upper hand of Protestants, as manifested in the dreadful burnings in queen Mary's reign, the inquisition in Spain and Italy, the massacres in Ireland, in Paris, and other towns of France; I say, may not these alarm us, and sufficiently convince us of our danger, if the Lord permit them, for our sins, to plot and effectuate a new invasion upon us? These days wherein we live, are surely perilous times upon sundry accounts, and call us not only to join in fervent prayer to God for mercy and help for Christ's sake, and to be deeply humbled for, and to mourn over the procuring causes of God's wrath; but also to bear free

and open testimony against these evils which are the Achans in our camp, and Jonahs under deck, that raise such terrible storms against this poor church and land. It cannot but make deep impression, when sometimes we call to mind the fore-thoughts and predictions of several of God's worthies in this land, from scaffolds, and also from the pulpit and press, that 'God would at length proceed to terrible judgments, in resentment of his controversy with covenant-breaking Scotland, before the return of his wonted glory and presence in the sanctuary; yea, that our land should be made to swim with blood for the blood of God's saints that hath been shed therein.' Now, the oftener that God delivers us from Popish enemies, and the longer we unthankfully abuse and misimprove God's mercies and deliverances, our guilt and danger still become the greater.—As the cup of our iniquity fills up, so doth the cup of God's wrath proportionably.

Ought not then these awful dispensations to move and quicken us to act a faithful part, both for God's glory and our own safety, even to pray, dissent, declare, and testify against these evils which we cannot stop? Were we helped to do this sincerely, we might hope, through our Redeemer's mediation, that they would not be charged upon us in the day of count and reckoning, and that we should even be hid in the day of the Lord's anger. For we find the angel of the covenant doth hold the winds, until the servants of the living God be sealed for preservation in a time of danger: nay, an upright witnessing remnant might, through Divine mercy, be the happy means of preserving the whole land from the invasion of cruel and bloody enemies, and of getting the poor decayed church of Scotland interested in that promise, Jer. xxx. 11. 'I am with thee, to save thee: and though I make a full end of all nations about thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee; but I will correct thee in measure, and not leave thee altogether unpunished.' May the Lord himself direct ministers and others to proper measures for turning away the fierceness of God's anger from us; and open the eyes of men to discern the true grounds and causes of God's controversy with the land! And if it should please the Lord to bless the following testimony for promoting these ends in any measure, yea, though it were but to convince one minister or preacher of the evil of intrusions, of supporting patronage, and of the neglect of preaching Christ, it would contribute to support me under all the discouragements I have met with in making the Essay to lift up a testimony against these evils. That the mighty Lord, who can accomplish great things by small means, may succeed this honest design, is the prayer of

JOHN WILLISON.

A-FAIR

A

FAIR AND IMPARTIAL

TESTIMONY,

ESSAYED IN NAME OF

A NUMBER OF MINISTERS, ELDERS, AND CHRISTIAN PEOPLE OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, &c.

ACCORDING to ancient historians, our gracious God was pleased to visit Scotland very early with his glorious gospel, by means of some preachers and other Christians, who were forced to flee to Scotland to be out of the reach of Roman cruelty, under the second persecution raised by the emperor Domitian about the year of our Lord 95, which was before the death of the apostle John; where they propagated the knowledge of Jesus Christ, which at length conquered Pagan darkness and idolatry so far, that, in the beginning of the third century, about the year 203, king Donald I. did publicly profess the faith of Jesus Christ; and he himself, his queen, his family, and divers of the nobles, were solemnly baptized. After which, the king used his best endeavours to root out idolatry and heathenish superstition from his dominions, and to settle a gospel-ministry in every corner thereof.

But, this religious king being much hindered in his good designs by his continual wars with the Romans, under the emperor Severus, this blessed work was afterwards greatly neglected by following princes until the reign of king Crathilinth, who, about the year 277, set about the glorious work of advancing Christianity, after the example of king Donald the first Christian king, but was greatly hindered by the heathenish priests named Druids, called so (as some think) because of their sacrificing in groves under oaks.—These idolatrous priests had got their interest and credit among the people, by reason of their sense-pleasing worship, and of their having drawn into their hands the determining of civil affairs; wherefore the people reckoned them so necessary, that they knew not how to live without them. But the Lord in mercy seconded the intentions of the good king, by several worthy men, both ministers and private Christians, from the South parts of Britain, and other parts of the Roman empire, who were obliged to flee in the time of the ninth persecution, under Aurelius, and of the tenth, under Dioclesian, from the terrible slaughter then made among the Christians. And these retiring to Scotland for refuge, as others had done long before them, were very helpful in turning the people from idolatry.

King Crathilinth finding among these refugees many men of eminent piety and learning, did kindly entertain them, and employ them in opposing the Druids, and further settling of Christianity through his kingdom. These holy men being settled in several places of the land, and choosing retirement from all civil and worldly affairs, and giving up themselves wholly to the service of God in the ministerial work, were called *Culdees*, or *Cultores Dei.*—

These Culdees, through the divine blessing, got the better of the Druids, and were great instruments of advancing true piety and Christianity in Scotland; so that "from these uttermost parts of the earth were songs heard, even glory to Jesus Christ the righteous:" and thus were accomplished in part the ancient promises made to our Redeemer, that "the heathen should be given to him as his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession; that the isles should wait for his law, and their kings bring presents to him: that he should be the confidence of the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar upon the sea."

These blessed instruments, the Culdees, were strict in their lives, and in governing the church of Christ. They allowed no higher order among them than presbyters or parochial bishops, and so continued for many years, until Palladius was sent thither by Pope Celestine, about the year 425, who, by his subtile insinuations, did gain so far upon the simple people, as to bring them to consent to a change of the government of the church into prelacy, and he himself became the chief prelate among them. Both the historians of our own and other nations, such as Fordun, Boethius, John Major, Buchanan, Sir Thomas Craig, Prosper, Baronius, Beda, Baleus, &c. do all agree that the Scots for several hundred years after Christ were taught and governed by priests and monks without bishops, and that Palladius was the first bishop or prelate that ever Scotland saw. John of Fordun, in his Scots Chronicle, *lib* 3. *cap.* 8 saith, "Before the incoming of Palladius, the Scots had for teachers of the faith, and ministers of the sacraments, presbyters only, and monks, following the rites and customs of the primitive church." And who questioned but the Scots were as sincere Christians, their ministers as real ministers, and their sacraments as true sacraments, all these 400 years, as they were in after ages? Yea, Baleus, in his history of the Britains, *cent.* 14. *cap.* 5. saith more, *Ante Palladium Scoti*, &c. "Before Palladius came, the Scots had their bishops and ministers, according to the ministry of the word of God, chosen by the suffrage of the people, after the custom of those of Asia; but these things did not please the Romans, who hated the Asiatics." So that we see the ancient Scots maintained presbytery, without either prelacy or patronage, till the Romans or church of Rome introduced both. And surely the Scots have still good reason to be zealous for their ancient church government and privileges, which they long enjoyed, in opposition to the Roman corruptions.

But Palladius having got our government changed, and our acquaintance made with Rome, then the mistress of the world, the church fell into a decaying condition, and popish corruptions increased more and more, till at length gross darkness overspread this whole land, as well as other nations; under which she lay for many ages (for what we read) until the year 1494, in the reign of king James IV. when the Lollards of Kyle, to the number of thirty persons, were summoned before the king and his council, for holding many of the protestant articles of faith, tho' they were dismissed at that time. So that God had his witnesses in Scotland, who bore testimony to his truths, against the errors and idolatries of Rome, even in the darkest times.

Not many years after, that eminent man, Mr Patrick Hamilton, abbot of Fern, went abroad to the university of Wittemberg, where he became acquainted with Luther and Melanchton, and made great progress in learning and in knowledge of Christ; and, being filled with zeal to propagate the same in his native country, he returned, and openly inveighed against the Romish errors and corruptions, upon which account he was burnt at St Andrews, in the year 1527. This, by the wisdom of God, tended much to the spreading of the truth: for many enquiring into the cause of this burning, came afterwards to the knowledge and profession of the truth; so that it spread more and more through the land, in spite of all that enemies could do against it. Likewise Paul Craw was condemned to be burnt at St Andrews, in the year 1431, for maintaining the doctrine of John Wickliff and John Huss.

It is most remarkable, that, after the burning of Mr Hamilton, the favourers of the truth increased to many thousands; and God was pleased to raise up other famous instruments for spreading the light, and carrying on his work; such as Messrs George Wishart, John Rough, John Knox, John Willock, Mr Craig, John Erskine of Dun, and many others. These polished shafts God was pleased so to endow and furnish with gifts, graces, and zeal for God and his truths, and some of them with a prophetical spirit, that their adversaries were not able to resist the wisdom and spirit by which they spake; and multitudes of all ranks were by them converted to the Lord: so that, in spite of all the power and policy of the popish clergy, assisted by our rulers, and all the fiery persecutions which they raised against the professors of the gospel, the Lord was pleased with a high hand to ransom this land from popish tyranny, idolatry, and superstition; so that the pope's authority was abolished in Scotland by the parliament, the reformation established, and a sound Confession of Faith approven in the year 1560. "This was the doing of the Lord, and most wondrous in our eyes!"

The great rule and pattern of reformation, which our reformers observed, was the word of God, and the practice of the apostolic churches therein recorded, into which they made very narrow and impartial enquiry, their searches being attended with earnest prayers to God for the light and teaching of his Spirit, and communication of counsels with divines of other nations. After all which travel, they came to agree upon a platform of church government and discipline, in a due subordination of kirk sessions, presbyteries, and synods unto general assemblies; as appears from our books of discipline, which were very early received and approven by the general assemblies of this church.

Though the civil powers, after the year 1560, were favourable to the reformation; yet our reformers had great and long struggling with many who were addicted to prelacy, and several popish errors and superstitions: but it pleased the Lord so far to countenance and help them, that a National Covenant was framed and entered into for the support of the reformation. This covenant was at first subscribed by the king and his household, in the year 1580, and afterwards by persons of all ranks, in the year 1581, and again by all sorts of persons, in the year 1590; and afterwards presbyterian government, and all the pieces of reformation then attained unto, were solemnly ratified by king and parliament, in the year 1592. Only the grievance of patronage, under which the church was groaning, was not yet removed.

Here we must take occasion to adore the distinguishing goodness of God to this poor nation of Scotland, in bowing and inclining the hearts of the whole nation, as the heart of one man, to enter into a solemn national covenant with

God: even the hearts of our king, our nobles, barons, gentlemen, citizens, ministers, and professors of all ranks, to make a national surrender of themselves and their posterity to the Lord; and to bind both themselves, and them, to cleave to his truths and ordinances, and to promote religion and reformation in their stations. Our histories inform us how this national covenant was afterwards renewed in this early period by our general assemblies, synods, presbyteries, and particular parishes, and remarkably attended with much of the Lord's presence and countenance, and great outpourings of his Spirit; at which occasions there were to be seen floods of tears flowing from melting hearts and weeping eyes. Calderwood, in his history, tells us of a wonderful day of this sort at the renewing of the covenant by the general Assembly at Edinburgh, in the little kirk, upon the 30th March 1596, Mr John Davidson, minister of Salt Prestoun, presiding as the chief actor; likewise of another such day at the renewing of the covenant by the Synod of Fife, at Dunfermline, that same year, where Mr James Melvil, minister at Kilrenny, was moderator and chief actor. Also synods and presbyteries elsewhere had precious melting seasons, when about this work, which proved a special time of reviving to the work of God through the whole land. In this period the church of Scotland enjoyed very glorious days of the Son of man, and was honoured with large testimonies from divines of other churches: For the great pitch of reformation she had attained unto, she was called Philadelphia, and the morning star of the reformation.

But these bright times did not long continue, clouds did soon arise: For king James VI. having the view of succeeding to the crown of England, and desirous to gratify the prelatists there, did, contrary to his solemn declarations and engagements, begin to make encroachments upon the church and her liberties, about the years 1597 and 1598; and, continuing so to do, there followed a long course of defection in this church, for about the space of forty years; during which time, prelacy, that bitter weed, was introduced into the government, superstition and popish ceremonies into the worship, and Arminian and popish errors crept into the doctrine. The king, for accomplishing his designs, got several packt assemblies convened, as these at Linlithgow, in the years 1606 and 1608; that at Glasgow, 1610; that at Aberdeen, 1616; that at St Andrews, 1617, and that at Perth, 1618; wherein, one way or other, he got several corruptions approven, and particularly the Five Articles of Perth: prelates were set up, unlawful oaths exacted of intrants into the ministry; several popish ceremonies, with a service book, and book of canons, were imposed upon the church, and many sinfully complied therewith; whereby the church's beauty was miserably sullied, and the land greatly polluted.

Yet, during this time of grievous backsliding from a covenanted reformation, it pleased the Lord to raise up several worthies, ministers and professors of religion, to bear testimony to the doctrine, worship, government, and discipline of this church, and to Christ's right of headship over her and her judicatories, and to his power to institute her laws and ordinances, in opposition to the encroachments then made upon the same: upon which account divers pastors were arraigned before the council, the high commission, and diocesan synods; some were deprived of their churches and benefices, some were banished, some confined, and others imprisoned, and some were sentenced to death: likewise, several gentlemen and magistrates were sorely persecuted by the domineering prelates, for not conforming to the courses of defection. As for these faithful witnesses, who were suffered to live in their own land, severals of them went up and down in much poverty and affliction, teaching and confirming the people of God, waiting for God's returning in mercy to his oppressed church and people. Nevertheless, in this dark hour, the Lord gave testimony to his word in the mouths of his persecuted servants, through several corners of the land, by accompanying it with more than ordinary power and success; particularly in the year 1625, and afterwards, at Stewarton, Irvine, and many other places of the west of Scotland. A famous instance of that power was given at the solemn communion celebrated at the kirk of Shots, the 20th June, 1630, which proved a most remarkable sowing of seed through Clydesdale, to the glory of free grace.

Afterwards, when the night seemed to be darkest, and the prelates in the height of their power and pride, competing with the nobles for all kinds of civil offices and honours, and when corruptions in doctrine, worship, and government, were like to advance more and more; the Lord was pleased to look through the cloud with pity to this distressed church, in the year 1637, and to appear for her relief, first by animating severals of the common people of Edinburgh to oppose the reading of the new service-book there; and also at the same time exciting several honest ministers and professors in other parts of the nation to present supplications to the council, in September, 1637, against pressing the Liturgy and canons upon them. But these, after several expresses to and from court, being at last refused, and new orders given for the use of the foresaid books; a great number of all ranks, nobility, gentry, ministers, &c. convened at Edinburgh, in February, 1638, where, after serious deliberation and prayer to God, they resolved upon reviving and renewing of the national covenant,* which had almost been buried for forty years before. This they drew up and subscribed, with some additions and explications suitable to their present circumstances, and sent copies thereof through the land, which, being read in churches, was heartily embraced, sworn, and subscribed by all ranks, with many tears and great joy: so that the whole land, great and small, (a very few excepted) without any compulsion from church or state, did in a few months voluntarily and chearfully return to their ancient principles, and subject themselves to the oath of God for reformation; and this they did when both the court and prelates were enraged against them for it. But the Lord from heaven did remarkably countenance them with the extraordinary manifestations of his presence, and downpouring of his Spirit, both upon Judicatories and the worshipping Assemblies of his people, which proved as life from the dead to a poor, withered, backslidden church.

Nay, (which is wonderful) things ripened so fast for reformation, that, in November, 1638, a free and lawful general assembly, indicted by the king, convened at Glasgow, the very place where prelacy was restored in the year 1610. There the general assembly (notwithstanding of the former backslidings of the Ministry) came to agree, with wonderful harmony, to condemn and annul six pretended corrupt assemblies, who had changed the government and corrupted the worship of this church, together with the high commission court, the service book, and book of canons, and the book of ordination, as also the unlawful

oaths imposed upon entrants into the ministry: they likewise deposed and excommunicated the Prelates (except two) for oppression and gross scandals. They approved the national covenant, and declared Prelacy, with the Five Articles of Perth, to be adjured by it; and made sundry other worthy acts for purging the church, and promoting reformation; and appointed the time of their next meeting, for carrying on what was so happily begun. And though the Prelates with their abettors made great opposition to their godly intentions, yea, run to court, and stirred up the king to make war against Scotland; yet the Lord was pleased so to countenance his servants and people, that the begun reformation was carried on, and at last ratified both by king and parliament in July, 1641. Thereby Prelacy was abolished, and Presbytery established by law; and the king being personally present, he for himself and his successors promised *in verbo principis* never to come on the contrary of that settlement; which occasioned great joy through all the land, and was followed with much of Lord's power and presence in his ordinance: So that the land, that formerly was like a wilderness, was now, by the divine blessing, turned into a fruitful field.

The Lord having thus prospered the nation of Scotland in her reforming work, her neighbours in England professed a desire to join with them for carrying on the like work of reformation through the whole three kingdoms; and the English parliament sent their commissioners to Scotland for that effect. And accordingly here was a solemn league and covenant agreed upon, and sworn in the year 1643, for maintaining, advancing, and carrying on a work of reformation in the three kingdoms of Scotland, England, and Ireland. In this covenant, all ranks engaging, bound themselves to personal reformation, and in their several stations to endeavour national reformation; to preserve the Protestant religion, abolish Popery, Prelacy, superstition, schism, profaneness, and whatsoever shall be found contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness, and to endeavour to bring the three kingdoms to the nearest conjunction and uniformity in religion, as to doctrine, worship, and government, according to the word of God, and the example of the best reformed churches, that so they and their posterity after them might, as brethren, live in faith and love, that the Lord might be one, and his name one, through the three kingdoms. This indeed was a glorious design, had the English parliament and people been truly and heartily sincere in it, as the Scots nation, both Parliament and General Assembly were, who with one voice approved and swore this covenant themselves, and did recommend it to all others through the land, who generally received it with great enlargements of heart, and expressions of gladness, as they had done the national covenant in the year 1638. It is true, the Parliament of England took the covenant, as did the city of London, the Westminster Assembly, and many others in England, tho' there were but few of them who seemed to mind it much afterwards. Some good things, indeed, were thereupon done; for, in consequence of this covenant, and the uniformity in religion engaged unto therein, the English hierarchy and liturgy were laid aside for a time, our present confession of faith was agreed upon by the assemby of divines at Westminster, with commissioners from this church, together with the larger and shorter catechisms, the directory for worship, with a directory for church government, church censures, and ordination of ministers.—As all these were agreed upon by the Westminster Assembly, as a part of the covenanted uniformity in religion which was to be settled through the three kingdoms, so they were received after examination, and approven by our General Assemblies and Parliaments in Scotland. It is true, there were several acts and ordinances of the English Parliament for establishing these in England: but they took little effect, because of the opposition which was made to the form of Presbyterian government, by the Independents and Sectaries there.

Notwithstanding of this defection in England, the nation and church of Scotland pursued reformation according to their covenant engagements, and got several laws enacted both by church and state, for carrying on the same; and particularly, they got an excellent Act past by the Parliament, for abolishing the patronages of kirks, which is worthy to be written in letters of gold, a part whereof we shall here transcribe. "At Edinburgh, March 9th, 1649. The Estates of Parliament being sensible of the great obligation that lyes upon them by the national covenant, and by the solemn league and covenant, and by many deliverances and mercies from God, and by the late solemn engagement unto duties, to preserve the doctrine, and maintain and vindicate the liberties of the kirk of Scotland, and to advance the work of reformation therein to the utmost of their power: and considering that patronages and presentations of kirks, is an evil and bondage under which the Lord's people and ministers of this land have long groaned, and that it hath no warrant in God's word, but is founded only on the common law, and is a custom Popish, and brought into the kirk in time of ignorance and superstition; and that the same is contrary to the second book of discipline, in which, upon solid and good ground, it is reckoned among abuses that are desired to be reformed, and unto the free calling and entry of ministers unto their charge: and the said estates, being willing and desirous to promote and advance the reformation foresaid, that every thing in the house of God may be ordered according to his word and commandment; do therefore, from the sense of the former obligations, and upon the former grounds and reasons, discharge for ever hereafter all patronages and presentations of kirks, whether belonging to the king, or to any lack patron, Presbyteries, or others within this kingdom, as being unlawful and unwarrantable by God's word, and contrary to the doctrine and liberties of this kirk." Afterwards they say, "And it is further declared and ordained, That if any presentation shall hereafter be given, procured or received, that the same is null and of none effect; and that it is lawful for Presbyteries to reject the same, and to refuse to admit any to trials thereupon; and, notwithstanding thereof, to proceed to the planting of the kirk, upon the suit and calling, or with the consent of the congregation, on whom none is to be obtruded against their will," &c. By which excellent act it is evident, that our reforming nobility and gentry, many whereof were patrons themselves, looked upon themselves as under strong obligations, both from the word of God and their covenant engagements, to abolish patronages, and restore the liberty of congregations in calling of their ministers.

Thus our reforming ancestors were helped to many excellent things from 1638 to 1650, for promoting reformation in the land, though at the same time (it must be owned)

they were not free of mistakes and wrong steps in their management. There is no period here, the church can be said to be without spot or wrinkle.

After this a mournful scene opened, by the breaking division that entered into the church, which tended to stop the progress of reformation-work, and make way at length for restoring of Prelacy. This was occasioned by some ensnaring questions put to the commission in December 1650, by the king and parliament, (which they had better declined to answer) concerning the admission of persons into places of public trust, civil and military, who formerly had been opposers of the covenanted reformation, upon their making public profession of their repentance; those who were for admitting them, being called public resolutioners, and those against it being called protestors. There were many eminently good and great men upon both sides, and some as eminent who joined neither side. The point seemed narrow for the church to carry the difference to such a height, as to suspend and depose one another upon it as they did, according as parties had the upper hand in Synods and Presbyteries: for Cromwell the usurper, would not then allow them to meet in General assemblies, by which the division possibly might have been healed. But this fatal division looked like a judicial stroke from heaven upon the church for their sins: the Lord's "judgments are a great deep." Possibly there might be too great compliances in this matter with court-measures, and the humours of great men, as there were afterwards in the matter of indulgences, tolerations, and other ensnaring things brought in by the court upon the church. It is certain, that the greatest number of the strict and zealous ministers were on the protestors side, who afterwards made a noble stand against Prelacy. And it appeared afterwards, the protestors fears which they expressed, that these men, when taken into places of trust, would soon act the old game, were but too well founded. It must also be acknowledged, that though the most part of the public resolutioners submitted to Prelacy, yet several worthy men among them did not; and were exposed to sufferings for it as well as others.

At the time of the breaking out of these fatal divisions among us, an army of Sectaries under Cromwell invaded and oppressed us. These Sectaries had grown to such a height in the English army, that they invaded the Parliament of England their masters, put away the House of Peers, modelled the House of Commons according to their pleasure, and erected a new court called the High Court of Justice, before which they impanelled king Charles I. and violently took away his life, January 30th, 1649; against which our commissioners both from church and state in Scotland, then at London, did protest, and were therefore hardly used. Immediately thereupon, Scotland proclaimed his Son Charles II. their king, and out of conscience to their covenant, sent for him, and crowned him at Scoon, where he solemnly swore the covenant, January 1st, 1651. All which drew down the wrath of the Sectarian army upon us, who invaded the land, shed much blood, conquered us, and kept us in bondage ten years. During which time, a sinful toleration of Sectarian errors was granted by Cromwell and his council in Scotland, which brought in great looseness both in principle and practice; which toleration was faithfully witnessed against both by the Presbytery of Edinburgh, and a good number of ministers in the provinces of Perth and Fife, as appears by their testimonies published in the year 1659.

Soon after this, the yoke of the oppressor was broken, and the king peaceably restored in the year 1660, to the joy of the whole land, who thereupon expected good days both to church and state. (And, alas, the most part went to dreadful excess in jollity and drunkenness upon this event.) But, ah! soon was their joy turned to mourning, soon was their oppression in conscience doubled, the late glorious work of reformation razed, and all its carved work broke down with axes and hammers, as it were, all at once. For King Charles II. after his restoration, having called a Parliament in England, they restored abjured Prelacy with the service book and ceremonies, which had been laid aside: whereupon about two thousand ministers there, who could not in conscience conform thereunto, were cast out at Bartholomew day, August 24th, 1662. He likewise called a Parliament in Scotland, who in the years 1661 and 1662, removed all the legal securities of the Church of Scotland, and work of reformation therein. By that unparalleled act recissory, they annulled all the Parliaments which had met from 1640 to 1654; they asserted the king's supremacy in all causes, civil and ecclesiastic, and declared all meetings and assemblies, leagues and covenants, without the king's authority, to be unlawful and unwarrantable, and devolved the power of settling the government of the church upon the king; they declared the national covenant, as sworn in the year 1638, and the solemn league and covenant to be unlawful oaths, and all men to be free from the obligation of them; and they declared all that was done from 1638 to 1650, in prosecution of a covenanted reformation, to be rebellious and treasonable.

The king's prerogative and supremacy in church affairs being thus screwed up, he by a proclamation declared his royal pleasure to be for restoring the government of the church by archbishops and bishops, as it was exercised in the year 1637. In the meantime Mr James Sharp, minister at Crail (who had formerly been entrusted to act for the church, but now betrayed her) went to London with other three ministers, and were consecrated bishops in the Prelatic sense, having first been ordained deacons, after that Presbyters, according to the form of the church of England. (This the Prelates set up by king James VI. would not submit to.) Thereafter these, returning from London to Edinburgh, consecrated the rest of the bishops. Then they all took their seats in parliament, where they got new acts made in their favours, commanding all ministers to obey them, and attend their Diocesan meetings. A little before this, the meetings of Synods, Presbyteries, and Kirk-sessions, had been discharged by the privy council, until they should be authorised by the bishops, who were soon to enter upon the government of their respective sees: Whereupon, at the time of the meeting of provincial synods in April thereafter, several noblemen and gentlemen were sent to raise them by force. It is to be regretted, that synods at this time so readily dismissed, and that Presbyteries and kirk-sessions were deserted also, without any suitable testimony or remonstrance against these fearful encroachments and alterations.

One thing that contributed much to hinder any joint testimony, and to strike terror into many, was the severe treatment which some faithful ministers met with, when essaying a testimony of this sort: For Mr James Guthrie, minister at Stirling, with some few other ministers, having met in a private house in Edinburgh, soon after the king's return, to draw up a supplication to him, wherein, after congratulating his return, they humbly put him in mind of

his oaths unto and covenants with God, for maintaining the true Protestant religion, as established by acts of parliament and general assembly, &c. for this they were apprehended and imprisoned 23d August 1660, and all such meetings and petitions were discharged as seditious. And, to strike the greater terror, Mr James Guthrie was indicted before the parliament of high treason; and, being singularly faithful and zealous for carrying on reformation, he was condemned to die, and his head to be set upon one of the ports of the city of Edinburgh. He was accordingly execute the 1st of June 1661, and his head set up on the Nether-bow port, which continued there till the revolution, as a public witness against the woeful defections of a cruel perfidious generation. Likewise the worthy and renowned marquis of Argyle was five days before executed upon the same account, and his head set up upon the tolbooth of Edinburgh, to the great reproach of the nation; and sometime after, Lord Waristown suffered in the same manner; three eminently great and good men, who died with the resolution and Christianity of the ancient martyrs. Now, what could be expected from a reign and a government whose foundation was laid in cruelty, and soaked with the precious blood of God's saints?

After this the parliament and council went on in their cruel and persecuting designs against faithful ministers who would not conform to antiscriptural Prelacy, take presentations from patrons, and collations from bishops, and also take an oath to the king, which they called an oath of allegiance, wherein they behoved to own his supremacy in all cases civil and ecclesiastic: some of these ministers they banished out of all his Majesty's dominions: these generally went to Holland, and were kindly received there. Besides these, several hundreds were summarily ordered to leave their churches, and remove from their congregations: With which orders (it must be owned) they did too easily comply, merely upon proclamations by the council, before they were thrust out by force; thereby leaving their poor flocks to corrupt teachers that were afterwards thrust in upon them, and not giving a due testimony against such a tyrannical act and incroachment upon the spiritual kingly power and headship of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only Lord of our ministry, and of the exercise thereof. Likewise, by act of parliament, all the subjects were required to attend those who were thrust into their parishes, and other conformists, in their meetings for worship, and that in acknowledgement of, and hearty compliance with his Majesty's government ecclesiastic; which indeed the far greatest part did, whereby all degrees of persons through the land were miserably involved in the breach of covenant, and defections of the time. Nay, the wickedness of this period came to such a pitch, that our national covenant, and the solemn league, were ordered by public authority to be most ignominiously burnt at several market-crosses, to the fearful dishonouring of the great tremendous God, with whom these covenants were made.

After some time's silence, the ejected ministers began to be convinced it was their duty to preach the gospel, at the earnest desire of their people, who declined to hear the curates who were thrust in upon them, though sorely harassed for it, and that they ought to preach, notwithstanding the prohibitions of the magistrate, especially when they saw what sort of men were thrust in upon the people. At first they had worship only in private houses in the most peaceable and harmless manner; but the cruel prelates and rulers would not bear with any such meetings; so that at length, by their severities, they were driven from houses to the fields for more safety. But still severer laws were made against all such meetings, whether in the houses or fields. Nay, they came even to that height to enact, Charl. II. Parl. 2. Sess. 2. 1670, "That if any man shall preach or pray in the fields, or in any house, where there shall be more hearers than the house contains, so as some of them be without doors, he shall be punished with death and confiscation of goods." So that, by this terrible law, two or three hearkening at honest men's doors or windows in time of family-worship, though posted there out of malice or mere curiosity, did expose the worshippers of God to a cruel death. These and such like laws tended to banish family-worship out of the land, and were too successful that way. Likewise severe punishments were enacted against the hearers of ejected ministers, and those who did not hear the parish ministers, or employed others to baptize their children. And they proceeded to incredible barbarities against non-conformists, both ministers and people. Yet, in these cruel persecuting times, the Lord gave testimony to the word of his grace, and blessed his ordinances (though prohibited by men) with very remarkable success; and the more pains the persecuting Prelates and their instruments were at to suppress these assemblies, the more numerous they grew, and the parish-churches were the more deserted.

When methods of force and cruelty could not prevail to stop these assemblies, they fell upon more crafty ways, by granting indulgence to some of the ejected ministers to preach in vacant churches, under certain limitations: such as, Their being confined within their parishes, and not encouraging those of other congregations to resort to them; their forbearing to lecture before sermon; their not preaching in church-yards; their not admitting ministers who were not indulged to assist them, &c. This indulgence, and prescribing rules to ministers, being ordered by the king and his council, by virtue of his ecclesiastic supremacy, now established by law, was on the magistrates part a sinful encroachment upon Christ's headship over his church. And though poor harassed ministers might be glad of any little breathing-time for the exercise of their ministry in the midst of heavy sufferings, yet, if any of them did accept of the magistrate's indulgence upon the conditions and restrictions prescribed, they cannot be justified therein; but for those worthy ministers who left all for Christ and their conscience, and suffered greatly for not complying with Prelacy, and other defections of their time, and who always refused that they accepted the indulgence upon the terms of the king and council (though they preached in the churches they assigned) neither did observe these terms while they enjoyed the benefit, and were afterwards turned out again upon that account; it were hard to charge them with approving of the king's usurped supremacy: Though, at the same time, we wish they had given a more full and explicit testimony against the Erastian encroachments of the magistrate, than we can learn they did. Yet, notwithstanding hereof, God was pleased to glorify his sovereign grace, in giving remarkable success to the labours and ministry of those indulged in churches, as well as those who preached in the fields, betwixt whom there continued much love and peace for many years; until once some began to condemn the indulged so far, as to preach up separation from them; upon which followed very sad and mournful divisions among the

people of God, even while under violent persecution, the fruits whereof continue to this very day.

At this time, many conscience debauching oaths, declarations, and bonds, were imposed upon the people of this land, for engaging them to own the king's supremacy over all persons, and in all causes; to renounce our covenants, with defensive arms, and all the former steps taken for carrying on reformation. Among others, that self-contradictory oath of the Test was imposed, and made a handle for persecuting many of all ranks and stations. They who refused these oaths, and did not conform to Prelacy as required, were exposed to the greatest cruelties, being put to wander about in desarts and mountains, and to lodge in dens and caves of the earth. Multitudes were banished their native country; many suffered long imprisonment, and that in the most miserable and unhealthful places; others were fined and spoiled of their goods, and many pillaged and plundered by merciless soldiers and barbarous Highlanders let loose upon them; husbands were exhorbitantly fined, and entirely ruined, for their wives absenting from the parish churches, though it was not in their power to help it; preaching, praying, or even hearing, at meetings not authorised by law, was made death: Yea, refusing to witness against those guilty of the crimes of preaching, praying, or hearing, was also punishable with death. Simple conversing with persons forfeited or intercommuned, though our nearest relations, husbands, wives, parents, children, &c. or the giving them any supply when starving, or the not revealing the giving or demanding of it, was declared treason; so that men were exposed to a cruel death for pure acts of charity.

The privy council in those days assumed a parliamentary power, and made acts and laws even more bloody than those of the parliament: And though these were most cruel and barbarous in themselves, yet they were often more barbarously put in execution: so that this poor land became a miserable field of blood, cruelty, and defection. Many of all ranks, noblemen, gentlemen, ministers, citizens, and commons, had their blood shed on scaffolds, as if they had been the greatest malefactors, and their heads and members set up on pinnacles to the view of the world. Many were tortured with boots, thumbkins, fire-matches, &c. to force them to discover their secret thoughts of state matters, accuse themselves or others, and answer such questions as judges pleased to ask at them. To such a height of cruelty and tyranny were things carried, that full power was given to merciless soldiers both to be judges and executioners of innocent people; so that in time of peace, without any witnesses or form of law, they cut off many in the open fields and highways, and dragged severals out of their houses, and murdered them, if they did not take such oaths or answer such questions as they put to them; and sometimes would not give them so much time, before killing them, as to pray to God for mercy. Thus was the land soaked with blood, for the planting and growth of the bitter root of Prelacy therein. Ah! have we not cause to fear that the Lord plead a controversy with us, as he did with Judah many years after, for the sins of Manasseh, and the innocent blood that he shed, which (it is said) "the Lord would not pardon?" 2 Kings xxiv. 3, 4. O that the land were purged from it!

After king Charles's death, king James, a professed Papist, succeeded to him in the year 1685, when, not only our civil liberties, but the Protestant religion, was ready to be sacrificed: for he was admitted to the government without taking the coronation oath, which binds the king to maintain it: And our parliament, when they met, made an offer of duty to the king, wherein they openly declare for the king's absolute power and authority, and promise to give him entire obedience without reserve. This engagement surely was blasphemous, being only proper to the sovereign majesty of God. Upon such encouragement, the king took upon him, by virtue of his absolute power and prerogative-royal, to dispense with laws at his pleasure, and particularly to suspend all penal laws against Papists, and to allow them the free exercise of their religion. Sometime after, viz 28th June, 1687, he by his proclamation, suspended all penal and sanguinary laws made against other Nonconformists, viz. Presbyterians: and gave them leave to worship God in their own way in houses, injoining them to take care that nothing be preached or taught among them that might anywise tend to alienate the hearts of his people from him or his government; and to signify to the next magistrate what places they make use of, with the names of the preachers. Presbyterian ministers did generally accept of this liberty, and those who were abroad returned home, and got meeting-houses fitted up for them, and multitudes flocked to attend their ministry, and found it remarkably blessed to them. This toleration indeed proceeded from a vile spring, viz. the king's absolute dispensing power; yet Divine Providence made use of it, contrary to the design of the granter, as a mean to bring home the banished, and prepare the way for the happy revolution that soon followed upon it. There is in the proclamation an injunction upon ministers to preach nothing that tended to alienate the hearts of the subjects from the king and his government. If the meaning of that was, that in their sermons they should give no testimony against Popery or the toleration of it, it was sinful in any minister to comply with it: But we ought in charity to believe that these faithful ministers, who had long given proof, by their sufferings, of their zeal for Christ and his cause, had no regard to the injunction in that sense, but exonered their consciences in testifying against the errors and corruptions of the day, and for which some were imprisoned at that time. No doubt those who had been long oppressed in their consciences, had their blood mingled with their sacrifices, and wanted ordinances, would be glad of a breathing time to serve the Lord. But, alas, we have it to regret, that "in every thing we offend, and come short of the glory of God. Ah! we and our fathers have sinned," and we have great cause to be deeply humbled both for their sins and our own.

But, behold how the mercy of God appeared for us, after innumerable provocations, and when all ranks had made fearful defections from God and their engagements to him. And after this church had lien under sad oppression for near twenty-eight years, and Popery was far advanced, and the civil power in the hands of Papists, and there was but little wanting to accomplish the ruin both of our civil and religious liberties; the mighty Lord stept in, and made a wonderful appearance for us, by sending over the Prince of Orange (afterwards proclaimed king) in November 1688, to rescue us from Popery and tyranny, and that at a time after several attempts for our relief had misgiven, and the hearts of all true Protestants were beginning to faint within them, and the Popish faction had a numerous army to support them. Yet, now, when God's time was come, our deliverance was brought about with great facility, through the

wonderful working and concurrence of Divine Providence: So that "it was not our own arm, but the Lord's right hand, that wrought this salvation" for us; a salvation never to be forgotten by the friends of religion and liberty. In particular, the church of Scotland ought always to commemorate the glorious deliverance and revolution in 1688, whereby she was raised out of the dust, and to be thankful to the great God the Author thereof, and to have a savoury remembrance of the name of king William, the happy instrument of it under God. Since which time the Lord has granted her fifty-five years freedom from persecution, and peaceable enjoyment of gospel-ordinances and church judicatories, such as she never had since the reformation. Tho' alas! we must acknowledge with shame, that we have not improven such noble opportunities for God and his glory, as we ought to have done.

The Prince of Orange having, in his declaration for Scotland, shewn a great concern for our religious and civil liberties, and for the persecuted Presbyterians in Scotland, whose sufferings he was well informed of by our refugees in Holland from time to time; the Presbyterian ministers met and addressed him, congratulating his arrival in Britain, and thanking him for his declaration; wherein they complain of the overturning of Presbyterian government, which was generally received as of divine right, and of the establishing of Prelacy contrary to solemn engagements. When the Prince came to the throne, and had the government in his hands, he acted agreeably to his declaration: And tho' he did not all for us we could have wished, yet we have good ground to be assured of king William's hearty inclinations to serve the church of Scotland, and his willingness to have done much more for her than he did. But it was our unhappiness, as well as his, that he had a Prelatic church in England to manage and gratify, among whom the Scots Prelatists wanted not abundance of friends to agent daily for them: These proved great clogs and hindrances to the king's gracious intentions: yet notwithstanding he did a great deal to raise up a poor sinking church from imminent ruin, which we ought never to forget

Through the encouragement of his declaration, and call to our states, a convention of states met at Edinburgh, in April, 1689, who formed a claim of right, setting forth the grievances and privileges of the nation, and among the rest declaring, that "Prelacy, and the superiority of any office in the church above Presbyters, is and hath been a great and insupportable grievance and trouble to this nation, and contrary to the inclinations of the generality of the people ever since the reformation (they having reformed from Popery by Presbyters) and therefore ought to be abolished" And the said convention being afterward turned into a parliament, the king and queen, with their advice and consent, in July, 1689, did formally abolish Prelacy, and rescind all acts and statutes formerly past in favour of it. There was also the draught of an act brought in, and twice read in parliament, for excluding all those from places of public trust, who had a share in the oppressions of the former reigns: but the more zealous part in the parliament had not strength to carry it, and therefore it was dropt, to the great prejudice of both church and state. The earls Melvil, Crawford, and several others, were very friendly to Presbyterians: yet they could not this session of parliament carry an act for restoring Presbyterian government, partly because several leading members were either inclined to Episcopacy, or pretended to dread the tyranny of Presbytery; and partly because the enemies of this church had so much interest in severals about the king to cast *remora's* in the way. Yet a good many Episcopal ministers were by the council turned out of their churches, for not praying for king William and queen Mary, and for other acts of disloyalty.

Next year, April 1690, an act of parliament was past for restoring all the surviving Presbyterian ministers to their churches, who had been thrust from them since January 1661, for not conforming to Prelacy and the courses of the time. Likewise, they rescinded the act for the king's supremacy in ecclesiastic causes. June 7th, 1690, they past an act for ratifying the Confession of Faith, now received among us, after it was read in their presence: also they established Presbyterian government and discipline, as it was settled by 11th act, James VI. Parl. 12. 1592 except that part of it relating to patronages; they rescinded many acts which were made against Presbytery, and for Prelacy, and for the Five Articles of Perth, the Test, &c. and appointed the first meeting of the general assembly to be in October 1690. It is to be observed, that, in the act establishing Presbyterian government, they establish it, not only as agreeable to the inclinations of the people as in the claim of right, but also as agreeable to the word of God, and most conducive to the advancement of true piety and godliness. And by that act they expressly rescind all other acts, laws, statutes, and proclamations, in so far as they are contrary to, or consistent with, the Protestant religion and Presbyterian government now established; which includes all the unrighteous acts of the late reigns against the church.

By their 23d act, they abolished patronages, and gave liberty to parishes to call their own ministers. By act 27th and 28th, they rescinded the persecuting laws of the former period; whereby mens consciences were delivered from the thraldom of ensnaring oaths, and of attending any worship against their light. Likewise, they past an act for rescinding the fines and forfeitures of the former reigns; which was a public condemnation of the oppression and cruelty thereof. Surely then we must own that these were not small things which king William and his parliament did for this poor church when lying in the dust. Some at a distance may make light of them, because every thing was not done they would have had; but surely Christians of solid judgment, and those who groaned so long under the heavy bondage and sufferings of those times, were made to acknowledge with thankfulness, that it was the Lord's right hand that turned again the captivity of our Zion. Our restored captives were then surprised with their liberty; they were like men that dreamed, amazed at the works of the Lord, and obliged to say, "The Lord hath done great things for us."

In consequence of the act of parliament, the first general assembly met at Edinburgh, October 16, 1690, after about forty years interruption, where was a great gathering of old banished suffering ministers, who had survived the long storm of persecution that lay upon this tossed and afflicted church. These ministers had several general meetings before this: In one of them they agreed that the first day of the Assembly's meeting should be kept as a day of solemn fasting and humiliation, which was observed accordingly by prayer and preaching both before and afternoon, their majesties' high commissioner, Lord Carmichael, joining with them in that good work. Afterwards king William's letter to the Assembly was presented, in which he expresses his affection to them, but presses calmness and moderation in

their proceedings in very strong terms; yea, tells them, that his authority should never be a tool to their irregular passions. In answer to this letter, the Assembly say,—" They received this letter with all the joy and thankfulness that the rising and shining again of the royal favour upon this long afflicted and distressed church could possibly inspire. The God of love, the Prince of peace, with all the providences that have gone over us, and circumstances that we are under, as well as your majesty's obliging pleasure, require of us a calm and peaceable procedure. And if, after the violence for conscience sake, that we have suffered and so much detested, and those grievous abuses of authority in the late reigns, (whereby, through some mens irregular passions, we have so sadly smarted,) we ourselves should lapse into the same errors, we should certainly prove the most unjust towards God, foolish towards ourselves, and ungrate towards your majesty, of all men upon earth." Afterwards they say, " Desiring in all things to approve ourselves unto God as the true disciple of Jesus Christ, who, though most zealous against all corruptions in his church, was most gentle towards the persons of men " But, notwithstanding of all this moderation of the Assembly, the Prelatical party raised great clamours against them at court, and through England, for their severity. But, as the assembly observe in their foresaid answer to the king, " Great revolutions of this nature must be attended with occasions of complaint; and even the worst of men are ready to cry out of wrong for their justest deservings."

This assembly was much concerned to get Presbyterians united among themselves, who, under the late persecution, had been woefully divided by means of the indulgences and toleration granted by the civil government; and, to compass this design, they received into fellowship with this church and her judicatories, three ministers, Masters Linning, Shields, and Boyd, who had carried the point of separation on the foresaid accounts to too great a height; but now promised to live in union with, and subjection to, the the judicatories of the church for the future; having at the same time given in a long paper for the exoneration of their consciences, bearing testimony to what they judged right, and against what they took to be wrong. These three ministers afterwards proved eminently useful in the church and in the judicatories, and contributed greatly to heal the schism that was among us.

This church having been long overwhelmed with ruins, this Assembly 1690 had much work to do, to remove some of the rubbish, and establish some order: They had multitudes of curates remaining in the churches still to deal with; they had civil rulers urging a coalition with, or comprehension of, many of them; they had rents among themselves to heal, and many other difficulties to grapple with Amidst all these they did a great many things, such as appointing all ministers, elders, and probationers, to subscribe the Confession of Faith, making acts for keeping the Lord's day, and for applying the Parliament to alter markets from Saturdays and Mondays, for erecting schools in the Highlands, providing them with Irish Bibles for rescinding the sentences past by the public resolutioners and protestors against one another. They appointed large committees or commissions for visiting several parts of the national church, with instructions how to manage, they also appointed two of their number to repair to London, to wait upon the king concerning the affairs of this church. And for further healing of their rents, turning away the wrath of God, and imploring his mercy, they appointed a national fast to be observed on the second Thursday of January thereafter: In the causes whereof, they enumerate a great many sins of the land, both in the former and present times; such as, " Ingratitude for mercies, treacherous dealing with God, unstedfastness in his covenant, falling from their first love, open defection of all ranks from the ways of God, by horrid immoralities, and sacrificing the interest of Christ and privileges of his church to the will and lusts of men, introducing Prelacy, imposing and taking unlawful oaths, shedding innocent blood, the general fainting under the late persecutions, and even of eminent ministers, by either yielding to the defections and evils of time, or not giving seasonable and necessary testimony against them; ignorance and neglect of Christ, and of living by faith on him; contempt of the gospel, and barrenness under it; want of holiness and piety towards God, and of love and charity towards men, the most part being more ready to censure the sins of others, than to repent of their own." These, and a great many other evils, they mention as a ground of fasting. It has indeed been complained of, that the hints given of some of these evils are too general. No doubt, if the drawing of the act had been put in some hands, these had been more particularly and fully expressed, and the Assembly would not have scrupled to have approven the act in that shape It is wished the act had been more full and explicit, with respect to the shedding of the blood of God's saints and martyrs under prelacy, the king's ecclesiastic supremacy then advanced to a most blasphemous height, the self-contradictory oath of the abominable test, and the fearful indignities done to our covenants, which we find mentioned by subsequent assemblies and for which there is cause of mourning and humiliation to this day. Likewise we wish they had done more to retrieve the honour of these broken and burnt Covenants, by openly asserting the lawfulness and obligation of them, and applying to the civil powers for their concurrence to renew them, or rather of one made up of both, with accommodation to their times and circumstances. No doubt they were well apprised of the opposition that would be made to such a motion, as they found made to other such designs, and particularly to that of purging the church, and keeping out of judicatories those who were enemies to it; in which they met with strenuous opposition from statesmen and great men in power, and even from the throne itself; as appears from the king to the Commission of Assembly 1690, and his letter to Assembly 1692, wherein he presses strongly their uniting with the Episcopal ministers then in churches. His commissioner, the Earl of Lothian, seconded the king's letter; and, because they fell not in with it, he said he had orders to dissolve the Assembly, which he did, without naming a diet for another.

And here we cannot but observe the noble spirit and disposition of the Assembly 1692, which they shewed upon that occasion. The moderator, Mr William Crichton, in his speech to the Commissioner, delivered himself as follows: " May it please your Grace, this Assembly, and all the members of this national church, are under the greatest obligations possible to his Majesty. and, if his Majesty's commands to us had been in any or all our concerns in the world, we would have laid our hands upon our mouth and been silent; but they being for a dissolution of this Assembly without indicting another to a certain day, therefore, having been moderator to this Assembly, I, in their name, they adhering to me, humbly crave leave to declare, that

the office-bearers in the house of God have a spiritual intrinsic power from Jesus Christ, the only Head of his church, to meet in Assembly about the affairs thereof, the necessity of the same being first represented to the magistrate; and further, I humbly crave, that the dissolution of this Assembly, without indicting a new one to a certain day, may not be to the prejudice of our yearly General Assemblies granted us by the laws of the kingdom." Here the members rose up, and with one voice declared their adherence to what the moderator had said. Whereupon, the moderator turning himself to the Assembly, as if he was to pray, the members, by a general cry, pressed to name a diet for the next General Assembly. The moderator thereupon said, That, if they pleased, the next General Assembly might meet here at Edinburgh, upon the third Wednesday of August 1693 years. And the members did again with one voice declare their approbation thereof. Wherefore those who know the difficulties our ancestors had then to struggle with, will rather be inclined to pity than censure them, and to bless God that helped them to do so well; though still it must be owned, it would have been much for the church's exoneration, that matters had been more plainly and closely laid to the door of the state, that the world might have seen where the stop was.

Nevertheless, by that wonderful Revolution, all persecution was stopt, and the church enjoyed the freedom of gospel-ordinances; the Lord gave large testimony to the word of his grace, and there were great days of the "Son of man" in many places of the land, and multitudes of souls were brought in to Jesus Christ their Saviour. Likewise judicatories did many good things, some of which we shall instance.

The General Assembly, in the years 1694, 1697, 1698, and subsequent years, shewed great zeal for suppressing profaneness and immorality, by making many acts to that purpose, and by applying to the Parliament to concur with them by the civil authority; who were pleased to revive former acts, and make several excellent new acts for that end, which the Assembly appointed to be read, together with their own acts, frequently from the pulpits. Likewise, it was the care and business of the General Assembly, for many years, to get the North and Highlands supplied and planted with proper ministers; they sent diverse committees of the most experienced ministers to purge and plant the North, and transported many of the best ministers of the South to that country.

These first Assemblies, and severals since, have made strict laws with respect to licensing preachers, not only about their learning, orthodoxy, and prudence; but have appointed presbyteries "to make narrow enquiry into their moral character and piety, and what sense and impressions they have of religion upon their own souls; and they declare that such as are esteemed to be vain, imprudent, proud, or worldly-minded, by the generality of sober intelligent persons who converse with them, shall be kept back from that sacred work." Happy were it for the church, if these excellent rules were strictly observed by all the presbyteries of this church.

They made acts against the Atheistical opinions of the Deists and others. They condemned the errors of Madam Bourignon, and deposed Dr Garden for espousing them. They strictly appointed all ministers and preachers to subscribe the Confession of Faith. And for preserving of truth, and for preventing the corrupting of youth with error and immorality, they appointed all schoolmasters, chaplains, and governors of youth, to subscribe the Confession of Faith; and those who do not so, or are guilty of negligence, error or immorality, they appointed presbyteries to apply to magistrates, heritors, &c. to get them removed from their offices. They also enacted, That those who should receive licence or ordination from any of the late prelates, should be incapable of ministerial communion with this church, till they give evidence of their repentance.

They made excellent barrier acts, for preventing all innovations in our doctrine, worship, or government, by appointing that all these acts which are to be binding rules and constitutions to the church, shall first be proposed as overtures to the Assembly, and be transmitted by them to the several presbyteries of this church, that they may send their opinions or consent to the next Assembly, who may then pass the same into acts, if the more general opinion of the church, thus had, agreed thereunto. They made many acts and frequent applications to the government, for suppressing and preventing the growth of popery; and encouraged students and preachers having Irish, that they might be useful in those parts; and do still continue to send such to assist the ministers where popery abounds, by preaching, catechising, and instructing of the people, for counteracting the trafficking priests among them: In which design our Sovereign now concurs, by the yearly bounty of a thousand pounds Sterling. Also the Assembly have been at great pains to get schools erected in every parish throughout the land, and appoint ministers to see that none be suffered to neglect the teaching of their children to read, and that the poor be taught upon charity.

The commission of Assembly 1699, according to their instructions, sent four worthy ministers, Messrs. Shields, Boreland, Stobo, and Dalgliesh, with the Scots colony to America; and one great design was for propagating the gospel, and converting the Heathen in those parts. The Assembly 1700 appointed a national fast, and one special ground was for their success. Of which they acquainted them by a letter, in which they directed them, upon their landing and settling in America, "to keep a day with all the people for solemn prayer and fasting, bewailing former sins, renewing baptismal engagements, and, with the greatest seriousness, dedicating themselves and the land unto the Lord." The Assembly 1704 set on foot that noble project of propagating Christian Knowledge in the Highlands, Islands, and foreign parts of the world, by erecting charity-schools and otherwise, which they began by a voluntary subscription and contribution through the nation, instructing their commissioner to encourage and carry on the said design, which was done from time to time, until they obtained letters patent from the sovereign, anno 1709, for erecting the subscribers into a society and corporation for managing that affair; and many collections have our Assemblies appointed for that blessed design, whereby, and by donations from pious persons both at home and abroad to the society, their stock is greatly increased, and they are now enabled to maintain above 130 charity-schools in our Highlands and Islands at home, besides several missionary in America, for propagating Christianity among the Heathen. And we have certain information of the happy success of these schools at home; thousands of ignorant and barbarous people have been civilized and reformed, and many of them, we hope, have become truly religious. Likewise, the Assembly have been at great pains to get new

impressions of the Bible in Irish, and also to get the Psalms, Confession of Faith Larger and Shorter Catechisms, translated into Irish and dispersed through the Highlands, and by the help of piously disposed persons, both in this and our neighbour nation, they have got to the number of 80 libraries settled in particular places through the Highlands and Islands And what reason have we and all Scotsmen to give thanks to God for directing, countenancing and prospering this noble design so far in our land? They also established an excellent form of process in church judicatories with relation to scandals and censures, by act 11 Ass 1707, likewise an useful method for ministerial visitation of families, by act 10 Ass. 1708.

These, and many other good things, have our old suffering ministers and our General Assembly been instruments, under God, to set on foot and promote, since the Revolution, for which we desire always to offer up our hearty thanksgiving and praises to Almighty God, for helping them so far in advancing our holy religion.

It has been indeed complained by some, that after the Revolution they did not pass distinct recissory acts, for Christ's Headship over his Church, the Divine right of Presbytery, the Church's Intrinsic Power, the Obligation of our Covenants, &c. No doubt it might be some stop to them, that the magistrate entertained a jealous eye then upon the church, with respect to these points, lest they should have carried matters to too great heights against those who differed from them; and therefore the king and Parliament, Parl 1. sess 2 rescinded all the old acts in favours of the church, which enjoined civil pains upon their sentences of excommunication Yet, notwithstanding, we wish they had done more, if possible, for asserting these principles which they held, than they did, immediately after the Revolution. Had they foreseen what a handle their not doing it would have given to some to promote a separation from this church, we persuade ourselves they would have essayed to have done more. Those old sufferers indeed might reckon that the world was sufficiently apprised of their principles with respect to foresaid points, and that no man would question them, seeing they had hazarded the loss of all things for adhering to them, for it was upon that very account they were cast out of their houses and benefices, imprisoned, fined banished and hunted as partridges on the mountains And although they past not distinct Assertory Acts with respect to these points, yet we have plain declarations of their mind about them in several public acts and deeds It was upon their solicitation that the Parliament, June 7, 1690, past an act for establishing Presbyterian government among us, as being agreeable to the word of God; and at the same time ratified our Confession of Faith, and inserted it *verbatim* in their public records, in which Confession it is expressly asserted, chap 30. sect. 1. 2. " The Lord Jesus, is King and Head of his Church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate. To those officers the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed," &c. And, chap 26. sect 6. ' There is no Head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ." And, chap, 23. sect. 3. " The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven," &c. Likewise they rescinded the act for the king's supremacy in church affairs. Our first Assembly, by many acts, have approven our Confession with all aforesaid articles, and appointed all the members of this church to adhere thereto; also ministers, elders, and intrants to the ministry, are bound to make solemn profession thereof, and subscribe the same; and parents at baptism are daily required to train up their children according to it

Likewise the moderators of all our Assemblies, at the close of every Assembly, do publicly assert and declare before the king's high Commissioner, that " as the Assembly meet in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the only King and Head of his church, so they part in the same name," and also they name the diet of the next Assembly. And when the commissioner dissolved the Assembly 1692 abruptly, without naming a diet for another, the moderator did, in his face, with consent of the whole Assembly, remonstrate against, and declare, that " the office-bearers in the house of God have a spiritual intrinsic power from Jesus Christ, the only Head of his Church, to meet in Assemblies about the affairs thereof;" and he named a diet for another Assembly. All this is recorded in the Assembly's books In like manner did the Assembly remonstrate, when dissolved in the year 1703 And the very next Assembly 1704, in their answer to the queen's letter, do plainly tell her, that " they were now again met in a National Assembly in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" Also, they approved the several synod books through Scotland, which had Assertory Acts recorded in them, for Christ's Headship, the Divine Right of Presbytery, the Church's Intrinsic Power," &c To prevent which approbation, was the reason (as then generally believed) why the Commissioner dissolved the preceding Assembly. Again, the Assembly 1705, in their 7th act concerning Mr Hepburn, do assert in plain words, that " the Lord Jesus Christ is the alone King and Head of the Church" And Ass 1707, act 11. declare, that " our Lord Jesus Christ hath instituted a government, and governors ecclesiastical in his house, with power to meet for the order and government thereof"

And as for the Divine right of Presbytery, the assembly 1711 do expressly declare for it in their 10th act, when they appoint all entrants to the ministry, both when licensed and ordained, to subscribe and declare, not only that our Confession of Faith and purity of worship are founded upon the word of God, but also that " the Presbyterian government and discipline of this church are founded upon the word of God, and agreeable thereto;" and also solemnly to " engage that they will firmly and constantly adhere to the said doctrine and worship, and to the utmost of their power, in their station, assert, maintain, and defend the discipline and Presbyterian government of this church, by kirk sessions, presbyteries, provincial synods, and general assemblies, during all the days of their lives" Whereby all ministers and preachers do plainly renew our covenants And that ministers in former years were of the same mind, appears by the church's declaration by their commission in the year 1698, published in their Seasonable Admonition, p. 5. in which they say, " We do believe and own that Jesus Christ is the only head and King of his church: and that he hath instituted in his church, officers and ordinances, order and government, and not left it to the will of man, magistrate, or church, to alter at their pleasure. And we believe this government is neither prelatical nor congregational, but presbyterian, which now, through the mercy of God, is established amongst us; and believe we have a better foundation for this our church-government, than the inclination of the people, or laws of men," &c. And that commission's whole actings and conclusions were ratified

and approven by Ass. 1699, act 12. Besides all which, our assemblies and commissions have frequently owned the obligation of our covenants, by mentioning the breaches of men among our causes of fasting. Ass. 1700, act 5. they lament " our continued unfaithfulness to God, notwithstanding of our solemn covenants and engagements to the contrary." Again, Ass. 1701, act 9. they say, " Our sins are the more aggravated, that they are against so many solemn repeated vows and engagements, and covenants with our God, which have been openly violated and broken by persons of all ranks, and treated with public contempt, indignities, and affronts," &c. We bless God, that has determined our church to own these truths so openly, over the belly of all their difficulties and discouragements; and we desire heartily to join with them in declaring for the " Headship of our Lord Jesus Christ" over his church, in opposition to the pope, magistrate, or any other; likewise for the " spiritual intrinsic power of the church" to chuse her officers, meet in her judicatories, inflict censures, and govern the church, in opposition to all Erastian opinions or practices promoted by any party or person whatsomever; as also for the Divine right of Presbyterian government in the church, in opposition to Prelacy, independency, &c. and for the lasting obligation of our covenants, seeing they bind us to nothing but what we are antecedently bound to by the Scriptures of truth.

Thus the church of Scotland continued owning and adhering to her ancient principles and doctrines, and using means to promote religion through the land for many years after the revolution, without any visible declension. But, alas! her degeneracy and defection hath of late years become too visible; and our Union with England, in 1707, may be looked upon as the chief source thereof, next to the corruption of our hearts. When this transaction came to be laid before the Scots parliament, in 1706, the nation was most intent about it, not knowing the nature or articles, whether it was a federal or incorporating union: but when it was seen to be the latter, and the majority of the house disposed to agree to it, both the church and the body of the people were vastly uneasy, great numbers of addresses came up against it, and insurrections were much feared The commission by appointment sat during the whole session and was exceeding numerous; members attending by turns. They presented three addresses to the parliament, the first was for " an unalterable security of the established religion, to the people of this land, and all succeeding generations, so far as human laws can go."

To satisfy them, the parliament enacted, That " the establishment of the doctrine, worship, discipline, and Presbyterian government of this church should be held as an unalterable, fundamental, and essential condition of the Union of the two kingdoms," if concluded. This seemed to quiet many, reckoning the security of the church not so precarious and uncertain, when thus established by the mutual agreement of both parliaments in a solemn treaty of Union, than when settled by acts of the Scots parliament only; for the faith of the English in keeping treaties was at this time much spoken of. But the most part of the church continued still averse to an incorporating union, and their coming under the jurisdiction of a British parliament, in which the English members, being prelatical, would be ten to one of Scots members; wherefore the commission presented a second address, declaring this aversion. They indeed met with great opposition from noblemen and gentlemen, elders in the commission, who had views of temporal offices and advantages from court by being for the Union: yet they represented the grievances the church and her members might fall under by the Union, such as oaths, tests, and impositions, inconsistent with their principles. And in their address they plainly testified against " the subjecting of this nation to a British parliament, in which twenty six prelates would be constituent members and legislators: For (say they) it is contrary to our known principles and covenants, that any churchman should bear civil offices, or have power in the commonwealth." To this they got no answer, save a clause put in the act for securing the church, that " no oath, test, or subscription, shall ever be imposed within the bounds of this church and kingdom contrary to our Presbyterian establishment." By which (it is to be regretted) the parliament neither shewed regard to the principles of Scotsmen when out of the kingdom, nor to the obligation of our covenants: nay, they proceeded to worse afterwards, by declaring that " the parliament of England might provide for the security of the Church of England within the bounds of that kingdom, as they should think expedient;" whereby they consented to the securing of the prelacy and ceremonies of that church as a fundamental of the union. This being both against the word of God and our solemn league, we have cause to mourn over it as a national breach of covenant, in some respect; though it is a mercy the church was helped to remonstrate against it; for the commission, when informed of it, presently presented a third address (tho' greatly opposed) craving that " there might be no such stipulation or consent for the establishment of the hierarchy and ceremonies, as they would not involve themselves and the nation in guilt," &c. From all which it is evident, that this church did remonstrate against making an union with England upon terms not consistent with our ancient covenant-union with that kingdom: for the ensuing assembly, 1707, approved the commission in what they did.

But, notwithstanding of the church's remonstrance against this union and the foresaid sinful stipulation, it was concluded and ratified by both parliaments, but it doth not appear that this memorable transaction has been followed with the special blessings of heaven, seeing it hath brought on very much sin, and many growing evils upon this poor land, to the dishonour of God, and decay of true Christianity among us. For, after the Union, when our correspondence and communication with the English was greatly increased, the Lord's day began to be profaned after their example, and other immoralities much to abound, and the societies for reformation of manners to dwindle away. Likewise our nobility and gentry have been since that period giving up gradually with family religion, and the very form of godliness, and falling into a looser way of living: for many of them since the Union do either dwell or spend much time in England, whereby they learn many of their vices and evil customs; they are either reconciled to the English hierarchy and worship, or live much in the neglect of all public worship; and, being there under the inspection of no parish minister, they and their families get leave to live as they list: and, when they come down to Scotland, they get many to follow their loose example.

Also, since the Union, public oaths are prodigiously multiplied, in qualifying men for offices, in collecting and paying of taxes; and manifold perjuries are thereby committed, and particularly by custom-house oaths, and running of

goods, which also opens a door to many other sins. And thereby Atheism, Deism, and Infidelity, have made progress in the land.

Likewise, soon after the Union, the English service and ceremonies were set up in several places, and afterwards the Parliament gave a toleration for it, and the body of the Episcopal clergy embraced that worship, though their ancestors had always opposed it heretofore. Yea, by this law, almost all errors are tolerated; and now even the Popish worship is kept openly, and connived at. A superstitious form of swearing was soon introduced from England, by laying the hand on and kissing the gospels. The sacramental test, and conformity to the liturgy and ceremonies, is imposed upon the members of this church, while serving the king in England and Ireland. Likewise many other encroachments are made upon the government, rights, and privileges of this church, by the toleration act, and by the act for restoring patronages, by the act for a vacation of the Lords of Session, and other courts, in the end of December, whereby the keeping of holy days is encouraged; and, lastly, by refusing access to the House of Peers, unless the address be directed to the lords spiritual. And all these grievances are brought upon us, notwithstanding of our security by the union act, and the English faith so much talked of. From all which we may conclude, That as our union with England was made upon sinful terms, so in the event it hath proven a great judgment upon this land and church. Alas! we have been perfidious to God, and no wonder tho' men should be left to be perfidious to us.

Very soon did Scotland feel the bitter effects of the Union; for, in the view of its being concluded, several of the Episcopal clergy began to set up the English service in meeting-houses, hoping to find more countenance and support from England on this account. This way of worship was wholly new and strange, and could never find place in Scotland before. Wherefore, the General Assembly, 1706, that met soon after the conclusion of the Union, gave an honest testimony against this new worship, by their 15th act, intituled, Act against innovations in the worship of God; wherein they say, "the purity of divine worship, and uniformity therein, hath been the great happiness of this church ever since her reformation; and that the introduction of these innovations was not so much as once attempted, even during the late prelacy; that they are dangerous to this church, and manifestly contrary to our known principle," viz. That nothing is to be admitted in the worship of God, but what is prescribed in the Holy Scriptures: and that the Assembly, moved with zeal for the glory of God, and the purity and uniformity of his worship, doth discharge the practice of all such innovations of divine worship within this church; and doth require and obtest all the ministers of this church, especially those in whose bounds any such innovations are, or may happen to be, to represent to their people the evil thereof, and seriously to exhort them to beware of them, &c. And they appoint the commission to use all proper means for suppressing such innovations. Which the commission did, as appears by their act, 5th August, 1709, which they ordained to be read in all the churches through Scotland. But the more the church opposed this new worship (as they judged they were warranted to do by the laws of the land), the more forward were their enemies to set it up, and at length got the Parliament to espouse their cause.

Likewise, soon after the Union, gross profanation of the Lord's day began to abound, by travelling, carrying goods, driving cattle, and other abuses on that holy day; as appears from the 12th act of Assembly, 1708. For preventing whereof, the Assembly in that act appointed each presbytery to send some of their number to attend the Lords of Justiciary at their first circuit that falls to be in their bounds, and to represent to their Lordships the profanation of the Lord's day, by the foresaid wicked and sinful practices. And the General Assembly did seriously recommend to the Lords of Justiciary to take an effectual course to restrain and punish the foresaid abuses; which, the Assembly say, they will acknowledge as a singular service done to God and his church. Also they enjoin all ministers to represent to their people, among whom such practices are, the great hazard their immortal souls are in by such courses; and also to proceed not only with ecclesiastic censures against Sabbath-breakers, but also to apply to justices of peace, and other magistrates in their bounds, to execute the laws against them. But, our commerce with England still increasing, the profanation of the Lord's day among us is come to a great height, in spite of all the church hath done against it.

But, our sins and provocations against God being highly aggravated, as a just punishment upon us, God was pleased to let loose our enemies in the British Parliament to bring in a bill, which they got past into a law, for allowing those of the Episcopal clergy the use of the English liturgy in Scotland, containing some grievous clauses in it against the just and legal rights of the established church. While the bill was in dependence, March 1712, the commission met and addressed the queen, in which they gave free and faithful testimony against the said bill, which the Assembly that met in May 1712, did unanimously approve; and, as a token of it, did insert their address in their books, and print it with their acts. In it they say, "The Church of Christ in Scotland is in hazard of sad alterations and innovations, inconsistent with, and contrary to, that happy establishment, secured to us by the laws both of God and the realm, by the said bill. If the matters in question did only relate to our own ease and better accommodation, we should patiently bear the same: but when we see the glory of God, and the power and purity of our holy religion, and of the ordinances of Jesus Christ in this church, so much concerned, we cannot but hope that your majesty will allow us to plead our just right," &c. Afterwards they plead the several acts of Parliament for settling and securing the worship, discipline, and government of this church, with her rights and privileges; all which acts were ratified by the Parliaments of both kingdoms in the treaty of Union, and declared to be a fundamental, essential, and unalterable condition of the said treaty of Union in all time coming. It is observable after their pleading the 5th act Parl. 1690, which allows the Presbyterian ministers and elders to have power to try and purge out all insufficient, negligent, scandalous, and erroneous ministers, by due course of ecclesiastical process and censures, and likewise to redress all other church disorders: They add, By which act it is evident, that Presbyterian church-government being thus established, the ministers and elders of this church have all the powers committed by our Lord and Master to his ministers and officers, to watch over the flock, and to guard against all usurpers and intruders.

Afterwards they add, We cannot but express our astonishing surprise and deep affliction, to hear of such a bill, of

fered for such a large and almost boundless toleration, not only threatening the overthrow of this church, but giving a large licence almost to all errors and blasphemies, and throwing up all good discipline, to the dishonour of God, and the scandal and ruin of the true Christian religion, and the infallible disturbance of the quiet, and to the confusion of this church and nation. And therefore we do in all humility, but with the greatest earnestness, beseech, nay obtest your majesty, by the same mercy of God that restored this church, and raised your majesty to the throne, to interpose for the relief of this church, and the maintenance of the present establishment, against such a manifest and ruining encroachment.

The church being most earnest to oppose this toleration, and other grievances then coming upon the church, they sent three of their number, Messrs. Carstares, Blackwall, and Baillie, to London, to present this and others of their petitions, and to agent the church's cause: but, notwithstanding of all that, this and other acts were past against the church; all Episcopal ministers were allowed to preach, pray, administer the sacraments, and marry, without any other caveat that appears for their doctrine, save that they shall not deny, in their preaching or writing, the doctrine of the blessed Trinity. They are not by that act obliged to satisfy the church, or any person or society, concerning their belief of the doctrine of the Trinity: it is enough if they do not openly impugn it: so that there is a liberty given to the most erroneous or scandalous men, to preach and dispense sacraments, without being accountable to any.

We do here join with the church in testifying against such a boundless toleration, as being contrary to the word of God, and the practice of reforming magistrates and churches therein commended: as in 2 Chron. xxxiv. 33. Rev. ii. 2. and to these texts wherein such a toleration is reproved, as Rev. ii. 14, 15, 20. as also it is contrary to our Confession of Faith, chap. 23. and to our Larger Catechism upon the second commandment.

At the same time there was another distressing bill presented in the parliament for restoring of patronages, and repealing the act 1690, which gave liberty to parishes to call their own ministers. This also carried against the church, notwithstanding of the Commons address, which was in like manner approven by the Assembly. In this address they plead and assert, That "the act 1690, abolishing patronages, is a part of our Presbyterian constitution, ratified by the acts of parliament of both kingdoms in the treaty of Union, and declared to be unalterable: That, from our first reformation from Popery, patronages have still been reckoned a yoke and burden upon this church; and this is declared by the first and second books of Discipline: That the restoring of them will inevitably obstruct the work of the gospel, and create great disorders and disquiet in this church and nation; and that there is one known abuse attending patronages, viz. the laying a foundation for Simoniacal pactions betwixt patrons and those presented by them." Though this did not avail to stop the bill, yet it was a plain testimony from the church against patronages; which we cannot but approve and adhere to.

Likewise, we approve of that noble testimony which the General Assembly gave against both the toleration and patronages, May 14, 1715, when they approved a memorial concerning them, which they appointed to be sent to the Duke of Montrose, principal secretary of state, most humbly entreating him to lay it before the king, viz. King George I. The tenor of it is as follows:

"The church of Scotland, being restored at the happy revolution, was, by the claim of right, and acts of parliament following thereupon, established in its doctrine, worship, discipline, and government; and, that this legal constitution and establishment might be unalterably secured, it was declared to be a fundamental and essential condition of the Union, and accordingly ratified in the parliaments of both kingdoms. But the zeal of the established church of Scotland for, and their steady adherence to, the Protestant succession, did expose them to the resentments of a disaffected party. And now they account themselves aggrieved by some acts past in the Parliament of Great Britain; as, 1. By the act granting such a large and almost boundless toleration to those of the Episcopal persuasion in Scotland, while the liberty allowed to Protestant Dissenters in England (who had always given the most satisfying proofs of their undoubted zeal and good affection to the Protestant succession) was retrenched. And though the church of Scotland hath an equal security in a legal establishment with that of England, yet there is a vast inequality as to the toleration of the respective Dissenters. In Scotland the toleration doth not restrain the disseminating the most dangerous errors, by requiring a Confession of Faith, or subscription to the doctrinal articles of the established church, as is required of Dissenters in England: it also weakeneth the discipline of the church against the scandalous and profane; by withdrawing the concurrence of the civil magistrate. It is also an inequality and hardship upon the established church of Scotland, that those of her communion who are employed in his Majesty's service in England or Ireland, should be obliged to join in communion and conformity to the church of England; whereas conformity to this church is not required (nor do we plead that it should be) of members of the church of England, when called to serve his Majesty in Scotland, who here enjoy the full liberty of Dissenters without molestation; and the common and equal privileges of the subjects of the united kingdom, stipulated by the union, do claim the same liberty to the members of the church of Scotland, when employed in his Majesty's service in England or Ireland.

"2. By the act restoring the power of presentation to patrons, the legally established constitution of this church was altered in a very important point; and while it appears equitable in itself, and agreeable to the liberty of Christians and a free people, to have interest in the choice of those to whom they intrust the care of their souls, it is an hardship to be imposed upon in so tender a point, and that frequently by patrons who have no property nor residence in the parishes; and this besides the snares of Simoniacal pactions, and the many troubles and contests arising from the power of patronages, and the abuses thereof, by disaffected patrons putting their power into other hands, who as effectually serve their purposes: by patrons competing for the right of presentation in the same parish; and by frequently presenting ministers settled in eminent posts to mean and small parishes, to elude the planting thereof: By all which, parishes are kept long vacant, to the great hindrance of the progress of the gospel."

Although the church of Scotland was brought under distress enough by the toleration and patronages, yet, to add to it, the oath of abjuration was also imposed upon the mi-

nisters thereof in the year 1712. This occasioned a great question among them, and much writing upon it, whether the conditions or qualifications required of the successor to the Crown, in the acts of parliament settling the succession, of which this is one, that "he must join in communion with the church of England," be understood as any part of the oath, or not? Those who were not clear to take it, apprehended these conditions might be reckoned a part of the oath, because in it they were to swear to maintain the succession *as* entailed by the acts of parliament, in which these conditions were contained. Others again understood these conditions as no part of the oath, seeing when the oath was first framed in the English parliament in the year 1701, and a clause was offered to be added to it for maintaining the church of England, it was rejected, because the Dissenters could not take it: and, at the Union, the parliament had expressly exeemed these of this church from all oaths inconsistent with their principles: and consequently, that the *as* in the oath was not reduplicative upon the qualifications of the successor, but merely indicative, as only pointing out the acts wherein the succession was settled, and the illustrious family and persons on whom it was entailed failing the heirs of king William, queen Anne and her heirs, &c. And therefore they understood that the oath brought them under no other obligation, but of allegiance to the sovereign, and to an engagement against a Popish Pretender, and to the succession in the Protestant line: and, to prevent mistakes and misrepresentations they might be liable to in this matter, they resolved to give in written declarations to this purpose upon instrument, at taking of the oath, which generally they did. At this time the commission addressed the queen (as also did the Assembly) in favour of those who still scrupled at the oath, as if the *as* in it did some way refer to the conditions required of the successor, that such might be favourably dealt with, as her loyal subjects. As also they petitioned her, that their declarations of loyalty to the queen, their renouncing the Pretender, and engagements to support the succession to the crown in the Protestant line in the family of Hanover, as contained in their address, might be accepted by her as their sense of the said oath, without respect to the condition scrupled at. In answer thereto, the queen, in her letter to the assembly, declared that the address of the commission did so much manifest their loyalty to her, and their true concern for the succession in the Protestant line by law established, that it could not but be acceptable. This answer did very much confirm those who judged that the *as* in the oath did not reduplicate upon the qualifications of the successor, and gave freedom to many to take it.

After king George I. came to the throne, and understood our difficulties, by the representation of Assembly 1715, and former addresses, he interposed for the relief of those who scrupled at the oath, and got the parliament to turn the *as* into *which*, as also to declare that the oath was not meant to oblige his majesty's subjects in Scotland to any thing inconsistent with their church establishment according to law. This removed the scruples of many; but nevertheless there were not a few worthy ministers who remained uneasy and scrupulous, upon account there was still mention made in the oath of the act of parliament that required the conditions of the successor, and therefore wanted to have it wholly taken out of the oath. Which, upon application, the king was so good as to grant, by act of parliament, in the 5th year of his reign. Thus did the Lord in his mercy settle the great commotions that were in the church by reason of that oath, and extricate her out of some of her difficulties; yea, so far, that the most strict and zealous ministers in Scotland were brought to declare, both from the pulpit and the press, that the embracing or refusing the oath of abjuration did not afford the least ground for separation.

It is remarkable, that, in the midst of all these grievances and pressures which the church groaned under, the Lord did not suffer her to sink. The times indeed became very cloudy and dark; the church's friends were turned out of place, and her enemies were exalted in power; Jacobites were put in places of highest trust, and many of them became so insolent, as to maltreat and abuse the ministers of the gospel, and sometimes to cause burn at market crosses the acts of synods for fasts, because in them they appointed prayers to be made for maintaining the Protestant succession, and for defeating the designs and plots then forming for overturning it, and for bringing in a Popish pretender. Yet even then the Lord inspired the commission with courage and resolution to emit their famous seasonable warning, at their meeting, 19th August 1713, which was read from the pulpits; wherein they obtest all Protestants and lovers of their country to look to themselves, that they be not deluded by the subtile devices of a Jacobite party, who would bring us under the yoke of a Popish Pretender. Here the commission mention their articles at large; one whereof is, "They, with great appearance of zeal, espouse and promote the English liturgy through the land, tho' neither they nor their fathers would receive it heretofore; and at the same time they omit all the prayers for queen Anne and princess Sophia. Likewise they make a great outcry, especially in distant places, of their having suffered grievous persecutions because of their being of the Episcopal persuasion, though without ground. Blessed be God (say they) we can appeal to the consciences of all who know our conduct, that we have never, since the late happy revolution, in the least returned the severities, and unparalleled cruelties, which we met with when they had the ascendant; and which we from their present temper, as well as from their former behaviour, may reasonably conclude they want nothing but power to renew against the ministers and members of this church. Wherefore they seriously obtest and beseech all ranks of persons to humble themselves deeply under the many sad causes and tokens of the Lord's anger, and turn to him with all their hearts, and flee to the blood of sprinkling for reconciliation, and pray earnestly to God to disappoint the designs and hopes of a Popish and Jacobite party, preserve the Protestant succession in the house of Hanover, sanctify the troubles which have afflicted our Zion, and turn us from all these sins which have procured them, &c

And glory be to a prayer-hearing God, who soon blasted all the Jacobites plots and hopes, and made the Protestant succession take place, by the accession of King George I. within less than a year, to the joy of this poor oppressed church, and of all true Protestants.

Towards the end of the queen's reign the Jacobites turned so uppish, that they encouraged Episcopal ministers to intrude into vacant churches, and ministers and preachers, who were sent to preach in them, were rabbled. They and their preachers did publicly solemnize the Pretender's birthday, set up bonfires, drink his health as king before great multitudes, and confusion to all the Presbyterians. But, upon the accession of King George I., these riots and in-

sults were suppressed, and the laws and good order began again to take place. The church represented her grievances from the laws lately made; but the breaking out of the rebellion in 1715 put a stop to designs of that sort for a time. Until then, there were a good number of Episcopal ministers continued in churches through the North; but they, joining with others in that rebellion, were soon afterwards turned out. The Lord was pleased again to pity us, and work a great deliverance for us: for though the Jacobite and Popish party rose of a sudden, and gathered together in great numbers, threatening to carry all before them, to cut off our sovereign King George and all the friends of the Protestant succession, attacked the king's forces, and killed many; yet the Lord soon brake all their measures, poured shame upon their attempt, and made many of them flee their native country: so that in a wonderful manner God delivered us from the bloody sword, and the cruel designs of Papists and Jacobites, and restored peace in all our borders, in the year 1716.

It might have been expected, that such astonishing mercies and deliverances would have produced humility and thankfulness to God, have led us to repentance and reformation, and have animated our zeal for God and his truths, and our activity to get the church's grievances redressed, when such a fit opportunity seemed to offer. But, alas! we became unthankful to God, and soon forgot his goodness; we turned secure and confident under King George's protection and favour, and began to lose that zeal for preserving the purity of doctrine and worship, for suppressing error and immorality, and for the advancement of religion and godliness, which former Assemblies manifested. Now our old zealous suffering ministers were generally gone off the stage, and a woful lukewarmness and indifferency began to seize upon the following generation.

At this time there was a great noise of Mr John Simson, Professor of Divinity at Glasgow, his venting and teaching Arminian doctrine and gross errors. The worthy Mr James Webster, one of the ministers of Edinburgh, having conversed with him thereupon, was the first that complained of him: And he was therefore appointed to process him before the presbytery of Glasgow; though it seems hard that Mr Webster should have been burdened with an affair which was the common cause of the church. But Mr Webster's appeal, the libel he gave against Mr Simson, and Mr Simson's answer thereto, came before the assembly, 1716, who remitted the same to a committee to consider the whole process, and to make a full and distinct report to the next assembly. In Mr Simson's answer to this libel, and his letters to Mr Rowan, there were found several very dangerous errors, contrary to the word of God, and our Confession of Faith and Catechisms; such as, "That there is nothing to be admitted in religion, but what is consonant to reason. That regard to our own happiness, in the enjoyment of God, ought to be our chief motive in serving him; and that our glorifying God is subordinate to it. That the Heathen may know, by the light of nature, that there is a remedy for sin provided; and if they would pray sincerely for the discovery of the way of salvation, God would grant it to them. That if men would with diligence, sincerity, and faith, use the means for obtaining saving grace, God has promised to grant it; and that the using of the means in the foresaid manner is not above the reach of our natural powers.— That there was no proper covenant made with Adam for himself and his posterity; and that he was not our federal head. That it is inconsistent with God's justice and goodness to create souls wanting original righteousness; and that the souls of infants since the fall are created pure and holy. That it is probable there are more of mankind saved than damned: And it is more than probable that baptized infants, dying in infancy, are all saved. That there is no sinning in hell after the last judgment," &c. All which erroneous scheme of doctrine is fully refuted and exposed by the reverend Mr John Flint and Mr John M'Claren, both ministers of Edinburgh, in two different books, the one written in Latin, and the other in English, to which Mr Simson never offered any reply. Mr Simson, when before the Assembly and their committee, declared his adherence to our Confession of Faith, and studied to put senses upon his doctrine to make it seem to agree therewith, and made use of very subtile distinctions for that end; but such hath been the zeal sometimes of our Assemblies against error, and for purity of doctrine, that they would have had no great difficulty to have agreed that Mr Simson, or any man that vented or taught such doctrine as above, was not fit to be continued a professor of divinity, to instruct and train up young men for the holy ministry. But, when his process came to be finished by Assembly, 1717, there were so many members in it, who either had been his scholars, or were his relations, comrades, or acquaintances, who stood up for saving him, that the Assembly were brought to dismiss him with a very gentle censure, by their 9th act; wherein they only say, "He hath given offence, and hath vented some opinions not necessary to be taught in divinity, and that hath given more occasions to strife, than to the promoting of edification: That he hath used some expressions that bear and are used by adversaries in a bad and unsound sense, though he doth disown that unsound sense. And, for answering more satisfyingly (as he supposeth) the cavils and objections of adversaries, he hath adopted some hypotheses different from what are commonly used among orthodox divines, that are not evidently founded on Scripture, and tend to attribute too much to natural reason, and the power of corrupt nature; which undue advancement of reason and nature is always to the disparagement of revelation and efficacious free grace. The general assembly, for the reasons above-mentioned, prohibits and discharges the said Mr John Simson to use such expressions, or to teach, preach, or otherwise vent such opinions, propositions, or hypotheses as aforesaid." But, as a just rebuke upon the Assembly for their lenity, Mr Simson persisted in his unsound doctrine, contemned their sentence, and still went on in a course of error, till in a few years he is arraigned before the Assembly for Arianism.

About this time there arose debates and great noise, as if some ministers were bringing in a new scheme of doctrine, because in their sermons they disused and censured several old approven words and phrases as too legal, and affected some new modes of speaking; and because they recommended to their people an old book called the "Marrow of modern Divinity." This book was laid before the Assembly, 1720, as containing gross Antinomian errors; and several passages and propositions being excerpted from it by a committee, the Assembly proceeded in a hurry to pass a commendatory act against them all in *in cumulo;* and, among the rest, they condemned as erroneous two propositions, viz. "That believers are altogether set fre

from the law as a covenant of works; and that they are set free both from the commanding and condemning power of the covenant of works." Which two are surely sound and orthodox propositions in themselves. Likewise that same Assembly, by another act, recommended to ministers to insist in preaching several doctrines, and, among others, "the necessity of a holy life, in order to the obtaining of everlasting happiness." This certainly was very ill worded, however sound their meaning was.

Although there were several stumbling and unjustifiable expressions in that book called the *Marrow*, &c. yet, before the Assembly had proceeded to pass their acts concerning them, it had been their wisdom, to have first remitted them (as in other cases) to the consideration of presbyteries; which happy step would have prevented the oversights or mistakes of the Assembly aforementioned, and consequently the Twelve brethren's representation against the foresaid act, given in to the Assembly, 1721, which was once likely to have landed in a schism. But it must be owned, that, when the Assembly, 1722, came to review and explain these hasty acts past in 1720, they did justice to truth, and declared their minds, concerning the acts and propositions quarrelled, in very sound and orthodox terms. And particularly, as to "the necessity of holiness for obtaining everlasting happiness," they declare the expression is meant of "obtaining the enjoyment and possession of everlasting happiness," but not of "the right and title to it," which (they say) all justified persons have already attained, viz. thro' the imputation of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Thus peace and truth were preserved in the church at that time.

No doubt it had been much for the interest of truth, as well as the honour of our Assemblies, that they had manifested as much zeal against other erroneous books, which have been published or recommended before or since that time by other ministers of this church, and some of them far more dangerous than the *Marrow*, such as Dr Whitchcot's sermons, &c. Oh that our ancient and true zeal for truth and purity, and against all kind of error and corruption, were again happily revived in the land! But, alas! how little ground have we in an ordinary way to expect any national reviving or reformation in the church and land, while the floodgates of error and corruption are still kept wide open by the laws for the Toleration and Patronages?

In consequence of applications to the king by the church, some amendments were made upon these laws by the parliament in 1719: As, 1. They discharged any person to preach or pray in any Episcopal meeting-house in Scotland, that did not pray for king George, and take the abjuration oath, under the pain of six months imprisonment, and having the meeting-house shut up. This act, had it been execute, would have put a stop to many of the erroneous Jacobite preachers; but not being execute against them, they still went on in disseminating many Popish errors through the land.

2. The Parliament enacted, That presentations given by patrons to vacant churches shall be of no effect, if the person presented do not accept or declare his willingness to accept of the presentation given him. By which act, the parliament put it (as it were) in the church's power, to ease herself of the great grievance of patronage; which was ground of joy to many: for, at that time, it was generally thought that this limitation was equivalent to plain repealing of the patronage act, and that no Presbyterian would ever expressly declare his accepting of a presentation, or go so far to approve or comply with patronage, which Presbyterians had always declared a heavy yoke and burden on the church of God. And accordingly there was no man that presumed to take, accept, or make use of, a presentation to a church for several years after this act was past; and so the church was easy, and continued to settle vacant churches upon the call of congregations, without any molestation from patrons.

During this lucid interval, the church seemed to turn secure, as if she feared no danger from the acceptance of presentations; and therefore was at no pains to shut or bar the door against such acceptances. Had this been done, the church was effectually delivered by the foresaid favourable act from the yoke of patronage. Now was the proper juncture for our Assemblies to have made a new declaration, in corroboration of what former Assemblies had done, concerning the woful corruption and evil consequences of patronage; and to have warned all the members of this church of the evil of encouraging or promoting the same, and particularly all ministers and preachers, of the sin and danger of complying with this corruption, by accepting of presentations; especially seeing there was no law requiring it as necessary, but, by the late act of Parliament, an open door was left for their entering into churches in a gospel-way, if they pleased to chuse and accept of it. No doubt, if things had been set in such clear light by our General Assemblies, the authority of the church would have restrained these woful acceptances. But, alas! while the church slept, the enemy was busy sowing his tares, and prompting some to devise subtile conditional acceptances, wherein they might disapprove of patronages, and declare for Presbyterian principles with respect to the people's rights; yet, in the mean time, take such hold of the stipend presented to, that another could not make a legal title to it. When this was complained of to superior judicatories, some leading men, alas! were found to patronize these accepters, till at length they proceeded to the most open and barefaced acceptances. For these practices, indeed, some preachers were censured and silenced, but they were reponed by superior courts; whereby at length acceptances went on without controul. So that, by such defections, the yoke of patronage is faster wreathed upon the church than ever, and her condition under it more lamentable than in any former period: for in former times all honest men groaned under patronage as a burden; and though they were presented by patrons to churches, yet they neither said nor wrote any thing in favours of the patron's deed, but silently submitted the presbyteries proceeding to their settlement, when they had the parishes concurring in it: but, alas! by such active written acceptances as now in use, the whole church shall, in process of time, be involved in approving of patronages, in such a way as was never done by the church of Scotland since the reformation.

Wherefore we judge it the duty of all the lovers of truth and purity in the church of God, to bear open testimony against the yoke of patronage, and the acceptance of presentations, as we hereby desire to do, especially seeing they have been productive of such dreadful evils in this church of late years.

It is well known, that the church of Scotland hath, ever since her reformation, remonstrated against patronages,

and asserts, in her 2d book of Discipline, chap. 12. That patronages have flowed from the pope, and the corruption of the canon law: and the intruding of persons this way into churches, hath no ground in the word of God, but is contrary thereto, &c. Likewise the Parliament, 1649, in their act abolishing patronage, do say, It is an evil and bondage under which the Lord's people and ministers have long groaned; and that it is a custom popish, brought into the church in times of ignorance and superstition; and that it is contrary to the 2d book of Discipline, &c. Also the Assemblies, 1712 and 1715, gave plain testimonies against patronages to the same purpose, and assert, That they lay a foundation for Simoniacal pactions, and many other evils. To these testimonies we do adhere, and likewise shall add some further reasons against patronages:

1. Patronages are neither agreeable to the rules of God's word, nor to the apostolical practice: seeing it is evident from the word, that it was only the church herself, with her officers, that exercised the power of nominating and electing ministers and officers to the church, according to the authority derived to them from Christ their Head and Founder, Acts i. 15.—vi. 2.—viii. 14.—xiii. 3.—xiv. 23.—xvi. 4.—1 John iv. 1.—2 John 10. So that a patron's right of nominating the officers of the church, is nothing but a manifest usurpation over the church of God.

2. Patronage is also contrary to the practice of the primitive and purest ages of the church, and was not known in the church until true religion and Christianity began to decline, and then it came in gradually with other Popish corruptions and abuses. We find Cyprian, Athanasius, the apostolical constitutions, with many ancient councils and fathers, declaring in the plainest terms for the free liberty and power of the church to chuse her own pastors, without any extrinsic influence whatsomever.

3. As it is disagreeable to scripture and antiquity, so it is contrary to reason, and to the interest and safety of the church, that the power of chusing her own pastors should at any time be lodged in the hands of heretics and profane men, as frequently the right of patronage is, being conveyed to them with their earthly inheritances. Can there be any thing more unreasonable and absurd, than that the power of chusing officers to the church, should fall into the hands of the declared enemies of the church! or that this power, which is a spiritual and ecclesiastical privilege, should be conveyed, disponed, sold, or bought with money, like other civil rights or heritages, and so be lodged frequently with infidels and the worst of men.

4. For patrons to impose ministers upon Christian congregations, is a plain encroachment upon the natural rights of mankind, and upon the laws of free societies; as much as it would be for them to impose physicians and lawyers upon societies, to take care of their bodies or estates. The churches of Christ are as free societies as any in the world, having their liberties from Christ to chuse their own pastors; and ought not to be brought in bondage to any in this matter.

5. It is a cruel imposition to oblige societies of men, who duly value their immortal souls, and would place them under proper spiritual guides, to entrust the edification, comfort, and eternal concerns of these precious souls, to the care of patrons; many whereof are indifferent about the concerns of their own souls, being negligent, erroneous, or profane; and so are not like to be much concerned to chuse proper pastors to take inspection of the souls of others. How can serious Christians be easy who it be that chuse their pastors, or those who know that patrons cannot secure them against the bad consequences of a wrong choice, nor be responsible for their souls at the great day?

Lastly, Patronage, by long experience, has been found to be an open door for a corrupt ministry to enter into the church: and this is sadly exemplified in those churches where this corruption doth reign without controul.

Upon all which accounts, we judge it our duty to bear testimony against the usurpation of patronage, as most sinful in itself, and injurious to the church of God; and to pray that God may open the eyes of all patrons, that they may be convinced and repent of it, and cease from oppressing Christ's church any more.

And as we bear testimony against patrons and their usurpation, so we judge ourselves bound to testify against all those who encourage and voluntarily comply with this sinful usurpation, and particularly by accepting or declaring their willingness to accept of presentations from patrons, which, alas! is now become the common practice; and, being so common and general, both preachers and people are like to lose all sense of the evil of it. But that these acceptances are sinful, and provoking to a holy God, is evident from these considerations:

1. If a patron be guilty of a sinful usurpation over the church of God, in spoiling her of the right she hath from Christ to chuse her own officers (as certainly he is) then the accepter of a presentation doth become partner with the patron in his sin, by homologating his usurped power, and strengthening him in it. Now, the scripture expressly forbids us to be "partakers of other men's sins."

2. As the law now stands, the accepter is more guilty of robbing the church of her right than the patron is: for the Legislature have been so tender of the church by their act, 1719, as to put it absolutely in the power of ministers and preachers to *accept* or *reject* the usurpation of patronage as they please; so that a patron can give no trouble to the church, if he be not encouraged and assisted in it by an accepter. His presentation would be but like a dead serpent, altogether lifeless and harmless to the church, if an accepter did not come and inspire it with life, and put a sting in it. Though patronage be a grievous usurpation and burden on the church, yet it is now so limited and tied up in Scotland by law, that the church would not feel the burden of it, if it were not pulled down upon her by accepting presentees; so that now the accepters are properly the oppressors of the church of Christ. If Christ condemns the Pharisees for "binding heavy burdens, grievous to be borne, and laying them upon other mens shoulders;" how condemnable must accepters of presentations be, who bind such a grievous burden as patronage on the shoulders of Christ's church?

3. The minister or preacher, who accepts of a presentation, doth not only bring sin upon himself, by oppressing the church, and spoiling her of her just right; but also takes the ready way to encourage and harden a patron in his guilt and sinful usurpation, and to obstruct his conviction, repentance, and reformation: for he will readily think that his conscience needs not be more strait-laced than theirs, who should inform his. Wherefore we earnestly wish and pray, that God would bring accepters, with their advisers and supporters, calmly to consider what a sinful hand they have in ensnaring patrons in a corrupt course, and in hardening them in their usurpation over the church of God.

4. The way of accepting presentations doth open a door to many sad evils, such as Simoniacal pactions and intrigues, unchristian contentions and divisions in judicatories, oppressive concussions in parishes, vexatious prosecution and appeals, and many scandalous intrusions into churches, to the great discredit of religion, and reproach of the ministerial character: hereby congregations are robbed of their just rights to call their own ministers, and very oft Christ's flock is scattered and broken in pieces, the godly are grieved, and the wicked hardened: hereby ordinances come to be neglected, the Lord's day profaned, ignorance and vice encouraged, church-discipline weakened. Yea, this pernicious practice has given occasion to many violent settlements, and to a woeful schism in the church, to the deposing of several worthy ministers, and to the discouragement of many pious students and preachers from serving the church: so that our accepters have need to consider how they will answer for all these direful consequences of their practice, and whether the commonness of it will excuse the sinfulness of it? O that we could look to God, who only can open their eyes!

5. Accepters of presentations act contrary to the known principles of Presbyterians, and to their own engagements; and so are chargeable with sad defection and breach of faith. Our Second Book of Discipline, which is sworn to in our National Covenant, declares patronages to be contrary to the word of God, chap. 12. And it was the general opinion in the year 1719, that accepting of presentations was inconsistent with Presbyterian principles, and with the rights and rules of this church, which all ministers and preachers oblige themselves to maintain; upon which account, none adventured to meddle with them for a good many years thereafter. In our opinion, they act contrary to their engagements which they come under by the Assembly's *formula*, 1711; wherein they subscribe and promise, that they will never, directly or indirectly, endeavour the prejudice or subversion of the discipline and government of this church, but that they will, to the utmost of their power, maintain and support the same. Now, it was still reckoned a branch of our discipline and government, for parishes to have the liberty of free elections, and for Presbyteries to have access to free moderations in the calling of ministers. And it is visible to all, that accepters of presentations do stop and hinder this free liberty and access, contrary to their engagements by the *formula*, and also by the national covenant.

6. Seeing it is notour that the design of accepting presentations is to secure the stipend to the presentee, so as another cannot have a title to it; it is plain, that the accepter doth hereby invert the order which Christ hath appointed in his church, viz. that a minister's right to maintenance should be consequential to his ordination to the ministry; whereas, by the method he takes, he would make a minister's ordination to the ministry consequential to his having a right to the maintenance; which is contrary to Christ's stated order, and the nature of things.

7. By accepting presentations, ministers do sadly prejudge the success of the gospel and their own ministry, by offending and stumbling the parishes concerned, besides many others, at their conduct. And is it any wonder tho' a parish be offended with a man for going about to secure a title to their stipend, before they have access to know him, or shew any inclination for him; and for his binding the yoke of patronage upon them, and spoiling them of their just right of chusing their own pastor; and for hindering them to get another worthy pastor whom they dearly love? What must they think of a man that tells a reclaiming parish, by word or deed, "I'll be your minister in spite of your teeth, I'll have the charge of your souls whether ye will or not; and, if ye refuse ordinances and means of salvation from me, ye shall have none. Nay, come of your souls what will, though they should perish in a state of ignorance and prejudice, I'll possess the kirk, manse, and benefice, and hold out another minister from you?" Have they not too good ground to suspect such a man of earthly-mindedness, greed of filthy lucre, or of being more concerned for "his own things than" for the things of Jesus Christ," and the salvation of their souls? Which apprehensions are sufficient to stuff the breasts of people with prejudice against him at his entry, and to blast his ministrations to them for many years thereafter. For it is no wonder if they think such language or practices is not like that of one who sincerely designs to advance Christ's kingdom, and win souls to him, as a faithful minister ought to do; but rather of one that hath base worldly ends in view! The language of a pastor, whom Christ sends, is that in 2 Cor. xii. 14. "I seek not yours, but you;" whereas that of an accepter seems to be the very reverse, "I seek not you, but yours."

8. It increaseth the prejudice of many against such *accepters*, when they see there is no necessity for their accepting of presentations. Indeed, if there were no coming to a church or stipend but by the Patron's right, something might be said to alleviate the crime: but at present there is no necessity from the law to accept of them; nay, on the contrary, the law leaves an open door, by which ministers and preachers may have an orderly gospel access both to churches and benefices, without having any dealing with Patrons at all, if they would but exercise a little patience till six months elapse. Now, how can people think charitably of those who refuse to enter by the safe *gospel-door*, and chuse rather to climb up by the window of presentations and violence, when they cannot but see their so doing tends to blast their own ministry, and bring a heavy yoke on their mother-church, after she was in effect freed of it by the tenderness of the legislature in 1719? Now, seeing these acceptances were unnecessary and of most pernicious consequence to the church and the interest of the gospel, it cannot but be surprising that our General Assemblies were at so little pains to discourage or prevent them, when it might have been easily done at the beginning. We find indeed that the Assembly, 1724, referred it to their commission, to think of an overture thereanent, and lay it before the next Assembly; but it doth not appear that there was any more done, notwithstanding of repeated instructions from Presbyteries concerning the same. We know no reason can be assigned for the Assembly's indolence in this matter, but their pusillanimity, or sinfulness of offending the government; but this fear of man hath brought a woeful snare upon the poor church. Several synods indeed shewed a willingness to restrain these *acceptances*; but Presentees knowing where to have recourse, their acts were soon disregarded. At first one or two probationers began to mint at accepting presentations, but the outcry against them was so great, that they soon retracted, and past from them again. But some time after, when Principal George Chalmers adventured to accept a presentation to the church of Old Machar, several young men took courage and followed his example; and though at first they qualified their acceptances with having the

peoples consent, yet they would not retract them after the people shewed their aversion to them; which occasioned many intrusions and violent settlements through several places of the church, contrary to our known principles.—These intrusions came gradually into the church, but were not commonly practised, nor countenanced by superior courts, till after the year 1728. For we find the Assembly, 1725, after a great struggle about calling a minister to Aberdeen, appointing, that besides the voting of magistrates, town-council, and elders in the call, the inclinations of heads of families shall be consulted about it. And the Assembly, 1726, censured the commission for proceeding to transport Mr James Chalmers from Dyke to Aberdeen, without having due regard to the inclinations of the people of that city, who opposed his call. But, alas! our Assemblies did not continue long in such a disposition; for they and their commission began soon afterwards to pay more regard to patrons and heritors in planting of churches, though few of these were hearers, than they did to the whole body of the people that attended ordinances. The Crown having the patronage of most of the churches of Scotland, this melancholy turn of affairs was thought to be brought about by strong court-influence, and by the activity of several leading ministers, who had their dependence upon or expectations from that airth. These began to vent themselves in judicatories against the rights of the Christian people, and to assert that there were no stated rules nor directions in Scripture about the calling of ministers, or who should be the electors. Some of them wrote pamphlets against the peoples rights, pretending to answer the Scripture-arguments for them; and maintained that the clergy or judicatories were the proper electors.—These were sufficiently answered by Mr Currie, Mr Hill, and others; but their opponents had the ascendant in judicatories, and carried things there as they pleased.

At this time the church of Scotland was in a most lamentable condition, and the wrath of the Almighty seemed to be kindled against her, in letting loose many adversaries at once to attack and destroy her: for at the same time we find her many ways dreadfully tossed and shaken: as by patronages, and intrusions pushed on by the court and great men; By *Independent* schemes and constitutions of churches, zealously promoted by Mr Glass and Mr Archibald; By Arian errors taught and propagated by Professor Simson; By many gross errors vented by others, both Presbyterian and Episcopal; And by legal sermons and moral harangues (to the neglect of preaching Christ) introduced by many of the young clergy. All these evils, working and fermenting through the land at once, occasioned dreadful shocks and convulsions in this national church, likely to rend her in many pieces. Yet, alas! we were not sensible of, nor suitably affected with our danger and misery, nor with the sins which were the procuring cause of all. "Turn us, O God of our salvation, and cause thine anger towards us to cease! Oh, wilt thou be angry with us for ever? wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?" Whatever the Lord think fit to do with this backsliding church and land, we judge it incumbent upon us to bear witness against the foresaid evils.

As to the impugning and invading the rights which congregations have to chuse and call their own ministers, and the intrusions made upon them, which, alas! still continue to be practised; we shall give our reasons for testifying against them, and for the rights of the people. And the first and great reason is, because, by the rule and pattern of God's word, and by the dictates of sound and sober reason, the Christian people have an unquestionable interest in the choice of these pastors to whom they are to intrust the care of their souls: and particularly, this right of the people is established by several passages of the "Acts of the Apostles," a book intended to give us the apostolical practice and pattern in the settlement of the Christian church.

1. In Acts i. 13, 14, 15, &c. when the eleven apostles met for the choice of an apostle, the laity present with them were allowed a share in the election of two, of which God did chuse one to fill the vacancy of the apostolical college. From which we infer, That ministers should much more consult them in the choice of ordinary pastors, who are to have the stated inspection of their souls; and that this condescension of the apostles to the people in this case, doth condemn their practice who violently impose ministers upon Christian congregations, while they are dissenting and reclaiming against them, and willing to receive others every way as fit for them. And we find our reformers and Protestant divines, such as Calvin, Beza, Junius, Zanchy, Chamier, Voetius, Amesius, Turretine, Cartwright, Calderwood, Gillespie, Forrester, Lauder, and many others, improving this passage for the peoples rights against Papists, Prelatists and patronages.

2. In Acts vi. the apostles called the multitude or body of the disciples to the choice of the first standing church officers which they appointed, viz. the deacons for taking care of the poor; from which we infer, If the disciples have a right to chuse these officers who are to dispose of their charity, then much more these who are to oversee their souls. And if the apostles reckoned the people competent to judge who had the qualifications for deacons which they prescribe, viz. "who were most eminent for honesty, wisdom, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost; why are they not competent to give their judgment of the like qualifications in those who are to be their pastors? The apostles, being under immediate Divine direction, were abundantly capable to choose these officers without the people; yet they will needs have them concurring in it, as a patron to the church in their after chusing of church officers. And it is observable, the apostles took this method, to silence the complaints among the people about providing for the poor. Which loudly calls upon judicatories with us to follow their example, in order to silence the peoples complaints of violent intrusions made upon them, contrary to the apostles practice and our acknowledged principles, to the great hinderance of the gospel and the edification of souls. Likewise we have the forecited Protestant divines concurring to improve this passage of the deacons for the peoples rights: and it might be expected that the ministers of the church of Scotland would not oppose them, or join with the Papists in this question.

3. The apostles practice in the election of church-officers, being sufficiently evident by the foresaid two instances, the sacred penman of the Acts insists no more upon this subject, save that he hints at their known practice in ordinations, Acts xiv. 23. In our version it is, "And when they had ordained them elders in every church." Now, the word here rendered *ordained*, is but half translated; for in the original it is χειροτονήσαντες, which Erasmus renders *cum suffragiis creassent*; and Beza, agreeing with him, hath it *per suffragia creassent*: So that, according to these learned

men, and many others, the passage should have been rendered, "When they had by suffrages appointed to them elders in every church." So it is in all old English translations, and so it was brought in by our last translators, until the version was committed by king James to some of the English bishops to be revised, who altered no less than fourteen passages of the New Testament, and this among the rest, to make them speak the language of the church of England; but the original language, being that of the Holy Ghost, is to be our rule. The word here is not χειροθεσια, which signifies action of ministers in ordaining; but it is χειροτονια, which is expressive of the peoples act in electing of pastors, by stretching or lifting up the hand, as was the custom: and in this sense doth the apostle make use of the word χειροτονια, and ascribe it to the people, 2 Cor. viii. 19.

4. The spoiling congregations of their right of calling their ministers, and imposing pastors upon them, is not only against the example of the apostles, but also contrary to the commands of our glorious Head, to our own prayers, and to the very spirit of the gospel. Doth not Christ enjoin us in his word to "glorify him in all things," to "do all to the glory of God," and to "do all things to the edification of his people?" to "condescend to men of low estate," and to "be gentle towards all men?" Doth he not forbid us to "exercise dominion over the church," to "set at nought our brother, and rule over his people with rigour?" doth he not command all Christians to "judge of what they hear," to "try the spirits," to "beware of false prophets?" Are not all ministers and others bound to pray, that "God's name may be hallowed," that "his kingdom may come," and that "the whole earth may be filled with his glory?" And do not they act the very reverse of these commands and prayers, who would in a magisterial way intrude ministers upon Christian congregations, and thereby stop the spreading of his gospel, the conversion of souls, and the increase of his kingdom upon earth? Are forced settlements agreeable to the meekness and gentleness of Christ our Master and Pattern? Or are they like the mild disposition and condescensions of the apostle Paul, who used the most tender, soft and condescending methods to advance the gospel among men, and was willing to "become all things to all men for their spiritual good?" and, when he saw it needful for the winning of their souls, he laid aside his authority, and fell to entreaties and beseechings with them, Rom. xii. 1. 2 Cor. v. 20.—x. 1. Philemon ix. 10. And observe what he says, 1 Thess. ii. 7, 11. "We were gentle among you, as a nurse cherisheth her children:" And (saith he) "we exhorted you as a father doth his children." Now, as a tender nurse or father will not impose any upon weak children to feed them, at whom they have the greatest aversion, nor tell them that they shall have no food unless they take it from such hands; so neither ought judicatories to intrude pastors upon dissenting or reclaiming parishes. They pray for the spreading of Christ's glory and kingdom, and therefore should not counteract their prayers, as they manifestly do by violent settlements; for thus they lay the foundations of strong prejudices in peoples breasts against ministers and the success of the glorious gospel, and frequently drive people quite away from the gospel net, to the great increase of ignorance and immorality. This course is directly against the Bible, that forbids us to give any occasion of stumbling or prejudice unto others, whereby their edification may be hindered, Rom. xiv. 13, 19, 21. Alas! people have naturally strong enough prejudices against the gospel itself, be the pastor never so acceptable; and what a pity is it that occasion should be given them to conceive prejudice also against the preacher of it? seeing thereby the strong holds of Satan are rendered more impregnable. For how can it be expected that a parish will be free of stumbling or prejudice against a man that makes it his business to obtain a right to their stipend, and will not part with it when they show the uttermost aversion to him, but gets himself, *viis and modis*, thrust in upon them? Will they not be ready to look upon him as "an earthly-minded man, greedy of filthy lucre," that thrusts himself into the "priest's office for a piece of bread," that seeks the fleece more than the flock, "and minds his own things more than the things of Jesus Christ?" Is not this the way to bring both the person and ministry of such a man into contempt among the people, to shut their ears against his admonitions, and render his labours among them unsuccessful? Whereas, should a minister come among a people by their call, he has a fair door opened to him to promote their salvation: they think themselves bound to attend his ministry, receive him into their houses, hearken to his counsels, and submit to his reproofs; and so the gospel hath free course among that people.

5. Seeing the right of Christians to judge for themselves in matters of religion is undeniably secured to them both by the light of nature and of revelation; they must consequently have an interest in the choice of their teachers. For if a man may judge for himself concerning the schemes of doctrine and ways of salvation laid before him, and may prefer one to another; it must follow, that he hath also a right to judge who is fittest to instruct him according to it; otherwise he might fall into the hands of those who would lead him into schemes quite opposite to what he hath chosen. It is evident that both Scripture and reason allow men a judgment of discretion about the pastors to whom they are to commit the instructing, guiding, and edifying of their precious souls. That text is plain for it, in 1 John iv. 1. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." Likewise that text, Mat. vii. 15, 16. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheeps clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits." And that in 2 John ver. 10. "If there come any to you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not." From all which texts it is evident, that Christians have right to judge concerning those who bring them true gospel doctrine, and whom they are to receive, and whom not. The Bereans are highly commended for their using this right, Acts xvi. 11. And Christ declares it to be the privilege of his people to distinguish the voice of a stranger or hireling from the voice of a true shepherd, and to flee from the one, and follow the other, John x. 4, 5.

6. The consent of parishes to the settlement of a minister is requisite to constitute the pastoral relation betwixt him and his flock, and the obligation of mutual offices and duties one to another. It was anciently a received maxim among Presbyterians, that the consent of the flock is as necessary to fix the pastoral relation, as the consent of the minister; seeing the tye is mutual and reciprocal.

7. The apostles example, in ordaining pastors by the choice and consent of the people, was followed by the primitive church for many centuries after them, as Eusebius

and others testify.' And the learned Turretine, vol. 3. quest. 24. *De jure vocationis*, quotes many of the ancient fathers and councils as maintaining the peoples right. And Mr Petrie, in his church history, p. 63, 65. observes, That the church of Rome in the 7th century had not given up with this principle of Christianity. It hath been the fixed principle of this church, and of our reformers from the very dawning of the reformation, That congregations ought to have ministers settled among them with their consent. This can be made evident from our books of discipline, and many acts of assemblies; and this is confirmed by assembly 1736, act 14. wherein they declare, "That it is, and hath been since the Reformation, the principle of this church, that no minister shall be intruded into any parish contrary to the will of the congregation; and therefore they seriously recommend to all the judicatories of this church, to have a due regard to the said principle in planting vacant congregations, as they regard the glory of God, and the edification of the body of Christ." But it is to be regretted, that neither the ancient principles of this church, nor the recommendation of Assembly 1736, are much regarded in the settlement of churches at this day, more than the Scriptural arguments afore-mentioned for the peoples right. O how great ground hath this backsliding church to imitate that famous General Assembly 1596, who made the thrusting of men into congregations one special cause of their keeping a day for solemn fasting and humiliation before the Lord! Likewise it is to be noticed, what they observe of these intruders, "That they manifest thereafter, that they were not called of God." O that judicatories would keep in mind the apostle's warning against being "partakers of other mens sins, by laying hands suddenly upon them;" and would consider how far they may be accountable for these precious souls, who may perish in an ignorant and Christless condition, during the scatterings and prejudices of congregations intruded upon! Surely that text hath an alarming sound to all concerned in intrusions, Jer. xxiii. 1, 2. "Wo be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pastures, saith the Lord. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God of Israel, against the pastors that feed my people, Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them; behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord." Likewise the 34th chapter of Ezekiel hath some very awful things relative to this case. O that the Spirit of God would carry them home to the hearts of men, with such power and efficacy, that their eyes may be opened in time; so that intrusions, scatterings, and contempt of Christ's flock, may not issue in the destruction of vital religion, and of this once famous national church!

This woful contempt and disregarding of the flock of Christ, by intruding pastors upon them, neglecting their petitions, and otherwise, could not but be very provoking to a holy God; wherefore he was pleased to visit this church with severe awful rebukes, and particularly with violent attacks upon her beautiful constitution, running it down, and promoting Independent schemes of government, and setting up new models of congregational churches, with new improvements. This was first attempted by Mr John Glass, minister at Tealing, and Mr Francis Archibald, minister of Guthrie. After a while's more secret management, they came at length to vent their principles openly, and to go about preaching them in the streets, fields, &c. and printed several pamphlets in favour of their new opinions. They found fault with our Confession of Faith and Formula, and refused to subscribe them: They maintained, that there is no warrant for national churches under the New Testament, but only for congregational: That single congregations are not subject to any superior judicatory, nor censurable by them: That they may ordain their own pastors, and that all the members have right to govern: That the church of Israel was but a typical church, and their kings were ecclesiastical officers: That their national covenanting with God was typical, and not to be imitated by Christian nations: That our national covenanting was unwarrantable, and is not obligatory on us: That our martyrs, who suffered for adhering to our covenants, were so far unenlightened: That Christian magistrates have no more power in religious matters than others, and ought not to employ their power to advance religion, to make laws with penalties in favours of it, nor to restrain or punish heretics or false teachers, nor to give encouragement to good Christians more than other good subjects: That the Christian religion ought not to be defended by arms: That the example of the reforming kings of Judah in punishing idolatry and false worship, or encouraging true religion, is not to be imitated. These, and a great many other new and strange doctrines, they spread; and would by no means be reclaimed, nor forbear venting them. At length the church did process them both for their singular doctrines and practices. It was the opinion of many, that seeing they were both very pious men, acting according to their light, and had been and might be further useful in the church, they should not be severely dealt with, but only brought under prohibitions and restraints; and if they could be engaged to stay with their own congregations, and no more to spread their new opinions, they might be connived at. Likewise, many had greater sympathy with Mr Archibald than with the other, in regard he was led off by him in his simplicity to these new things, neither did he vent himself so against our covenants as he did: but, seeing none of them would promise to forbear, they were both suspended; and, upon their contemning the church's sentence, they were afterwards deposed. Yet the church showed much regard to them both; for, sometime after, they took off the sentences, and reponed them both to the ministry in general, though not to their churches. They did all they could to shake the established church government, by setting up Independent churches in several places of the land, and ordaining several mechanics and illiterate persons to be their ministers: and they preached and wrote for Independency: but their pamphlets are confuted, the Divine right of Presbytery established, and the absurdities of the Independent scheme laid open, by Mr Aytone in his Original Constitution of the Christian church, and by several others: so that we need add no more to what is already written, but our approbation thereof.

At the very same time the Lord was pleased to visit this church with a far more terrible rebuke, by permitting Professor Simson to vent Arian errors among his students at Glasgow, for which a process was commenced against him by the Presbytery of Glasgow; and after some time it came to the Assembly, and continued before them, Assemblies 1727, 1728, and 1729. And though the process was drawn out to a great length, by the extraordinary methods he took to defend himself; yet it must be acknowledged that all the three foresaid Assemblies manifested their zeal and concern for the orthodox faith against any thing that tended to Ari-

anism, as appears from the process in print. At length the Assembly found it proven, that Mr Simson had denied the necessary existence of our Lord Jesus Christ and the numercial oneness of the three persons of the Trinity in substance or essence; and had uttered several other words derogatory to the Supreme Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. Notwithstanding the Professor still refused that he taught these opinions, as he calls them, (the Assembly in their act calls them gross errors) and said, they were contrary to the sentiments of his mind; and, if he uttered such words, they must be only a slip of his tongue. He likewise came to give it under his hand, that he disclaimed and renounced all these erroneous expressions, and made an orthodox confession of his faith concerning the glorious Trinity and the Supreme Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, both before the Ass. 1728, and 1729. And whereas he had said that *Christus est summus Deus,* is to be taken *cum grano salis;* and that *summus Deus,* and the only true God, may be understood in a sense as including the Father's personal property, and so not applicable to the Son; he declared he was exceeding sorry for giving any offence by such ways of speaking, and said, that *summus Deus,* and the only true God, are equally applicable to the Father and the Son, and not in any lower sense to the Son than to the Father; and that he adhered to the truth of Christ's necessary existence, and the numercial oneness in essence of the blessed Trinity. But notwithstanding of all these renunciations and declarations (which came so very late) many in the Assembly declared that he deserved deposition, because at the beginning of the process he refused to answer questions for clearing himself, and had neglected many opportunities, for two years, time of satisfaction to the judicatories as to the soundness of his faith concerning these important articles, when called upon to do it. But the Assembly 1728, because of his confessions and orthodox declarations, and for other considerations, proceeded no further than to suspend him from preaching and teaching, and all exercise of any ecclesiastical power or function; and delayed the finishing of the process till next Assembly, that they might know the mind of Presbyteries concerning him.

When the Assembly 1729 met, he made a long moving speech before them, declaring his orthodoxy, which was printed. The Assembly finished the affair, by confirming the sentence of suspension formerly past, and giving it as their judgment, "That it is not fit, nor safe that he be further employed in teaching divinity, and instructing of youth designed for the holy ministry." The generality of Presbyteries, notwithstanding of his confessions and declarations, had sent up to this Assembly their instructions for his deposition, with which they ought to have complied; especially seeing by a former process in the year 1717, he had been found teaching Arminian doctrine, which the Assembly discharged him to do for the future: and yet, contrary to that prohibition, it was found proven by a committee of Assembly, that he persisted to teach the foresaid doctrine. This the Assembly knew very well, and might have called for that other process. Some alleged, it would be better to keep it over his head undiscussed, to prevent after designs of reponing him to teach. And some said, it would be safer for truth to bind up his pen by a suspension, and by keeping him under it, than by a deposition, to provoke a man of his learning to make open attacks upon the most important truths of our holy religion. And it must be owned, that he replied nothing to all that was written against him, but continued silent under the suspension for many years, until the day of his death, without any motion or mint by any to get it taken off. It is desireable also to find the Assembly, in their last act concerning him, expressing "their thankfulness to God, for directing all the judicatories of this church, which had this process under their consideration (which includes all the Presbyteries thereof) so happily, that there hath not appeared the least difference of sentiment; but, on the contrary, there hath been the most perfect and unanimous agreement among them, as to the doctrine of the glorious Trinity, and the proper supreme Deity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, according as the same is revealed in the holy Scriptures, and contained in our Confession of Faith and Catechisms." It was much feared that the seeds of Arianism were sown in this church by Professor Simson and others: wherefore there were many excellent books written at this time against Arianism and Socinianism, and in defence of the foresaid doctrine of the glorious Trinity, and the proper supreme Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and, being so well written, we need add nothing, but join our testimony therewith, and pray that Arianism may never more set up its head in this land. AMEN.

Although God was thus visibly contending with the judicatories of this church, for their disregarding his flock and remnant in the land; yet it is matter of deep regret, that, instead of reforming, they proceeded to greater heights in their arbitrary decisions relating to them: for in the years 1729, 1730, 1731, and afterwards, we find the complaints of worthy ministers, elders, and bodies of Christian people, concerning intrusions upon congregations greatly increased; which occasioned many remonstrances, dissents, and protestations in the Assemblies, commissions, and inferior judicatories. In the Assembly, 1730, when the stream of violence began to run very high, many entered their dissents against the settlements of Sutton and Old Machar, but were denied liberty to record them; which made a great noise, and increased the ferment among the people; but, instead of yielding or doing any thing to quiet them, that Assembly did summarily make an act, discharging the recording (as usual) of reasons of dissent against the determination of church judicatories; without remitting the affair to presbyteries to know their mind about it, according to former acts of Assembly. There were several remonstrances and petitions presented by numbers of people to the synods of Merse and Lothian, but not regarded. Likewise they gave in a paper, signed and adhered to by great numbers, to Assembly, 1731, complaining of violent settlements; but got no hearing. All which proceedings did awaken many honest and zealous ministers to correspond and meet for drawing up a representation and petition to the Assembly, 1732, concerning the intrusions and other grievances; which was accordingly drawn up, signed, and adhered to by 42 ministers and three elders; wherein they expressed not only their own sense of these evils, but also the sense of many others through the church, who had not access to sign the said paper. And seeing we think ourselves called to adhere to the honest testimony given therein against many of the evils of the present time, we shall, as an evidence of our approbation and adherence, briefly insert the contents of it in this our testimony.

In their petition offered to the Assembly, 1732, they humbly move, that the Assembly should address the king and parliament concerning several grievances of this church, which they only can redress, such as the imposing of the

sacramental test, and conformity to the English liturgy and ceremonies, upon the members of this church, when serving the king in England and Ireland: The toleration established in Scotland, whereby error, superstition, and profaneness, are greatly encouraged, and church discipline weakened: The establishing of patronages, subversive of the right of congregations to chuse their own pastors: The not receiving addresses from this church to the House of Peers, because not directed to the Lords Spiritual: The introducing from England into some courts in Scotland a form of swearing, by laying the hands upon and kissing the gospels.—Also they represent, that, notwithstanding it is the undeniable right of Christian congregations to have the free choice of their own pastors, and their call and consent is necessary to sound the pastoral relation betwixt ministers and them, according to the word of God, our book of discipline, acts of the General Assembly, and the concurring suffrages and unanswerable arguments of the most eminent divines both at home and abroad; yet many ministers have been imposed and forced upon Christian congregations, when dissenting and reclaiming, and that especially by sentences of the commission for several years past; and not only where presentations were insisted upon, but also where there was none, but the right fallen into the presbytery's hands. And the commission have appointed committees to try and ordain ministers for vacant congregations, not only without the concurrence of presbyteries and synods concerned, who have best right, and are fittest to judge therein, but in direct opposition to their minds; and calls have been received, not moderated in presbyteries, but attested only by public notaries. Likewise the commission have repealed several sentences of synods, when they had but a scrimp quorum of ministers, much inferior in number to those who past them: and of late years, especially in the years 1729, 1730, and 1731, there were many supernumerary elders named to be members of commissions, beyond the proportion allowed by acts of Assembly, many whereof reside at Edinburgh, and are brought in to vote upon occasions; and there is ground to question if they be qualified according to acts of Assembly. Wherefore, for remedying and preventing such intrusions, they humbly move, That the Assembly should repeal the commission's sentences appointing them, such as may come regularly before them; and discharge in time coming all settlements without the consent of elders and Christian people; and enact, that no call or subscriptions for ministers be sustained but such as are attested by order of presbyteries, or verified before them or their committees; and, if the commission shall in time coming appoint committees to try or ordain ministers without consent of the congregation and presbyteries immediately concerned, that the said committees shall be discharged to proceed, until the Assembly give their judgment, in case the causes are sisted before the Assembly by complaint or protestation: and that appeals from sentences of synods be not referred in time coming to the determination of the commission, but reserved for the Assembly's decision; unless it be provided that the sederunt of the commission judging therein be supernumerary to the synod in ministers as well as elders; it being disagreeable to our principles, that a greater number of ministers should be subjected to the authority of a lesser; and that the commission be better regulated both as to the number and qualifications of elders therein than at present; and that the Assembly enact, at appointing of their commission, that if any of their actings shall be found contrary to the acts, constitutions, and known principles of this church, that they shall not only be censured for the same, but their said acts shall also be reversed; and, if any protestation or complaint be entered against their sentences, it shall be sufficient to sist all parties concerned before the General Assembly. Also they plead, that the Assembly may repeal the 7th act of Assembly, 1730, discharging the recording reasons of dissent, as being past irregularly, without consulting presbyteries, and which must prove a very heavy grievance to many, if it stand in force.

They complain likewise, that some judicatories, who have testified their just displeasure against ministers and probationers, for their unworthy and offensive practice in accepting presentations contrary to our known principles, have been condemned by the commission for it: And therefore desire the Assembly may give an effectual check to such dangerous practices, and that none be licensed or ordained that favour this course. Also they complain of several innovations in the method and strain of preaching introduced of late by some preachers and young ministers, which are very offensive to many of God's people, and an obstruction to spiritual edification. And, though some former Assemblies have referred it to their commissions to bring in an overture thereanent, nothing is yet done; therefore they humbly move, that the Assembly may provide an antidote against these evils. They also desire the Assembly to emit a solemn warning against Professor Simson's errors, and others which are spread through the land, in order to prevent the infection of them.

As to the act of Assembly, 1732, concerning the method of planting vacant churches, (which was then but an overture,) they shew their dislike to it, as it gives much power to Jacobite and disaffected heritors in the settling of parishes, which is not agreeable to the Scriptures and our known principles: but (say they) it cannot be turned to a standing act, unless the generality of presbyteries consent to it, which they hope is not to be expected in this case.

Now, though the evils above complained of were manifest grievances, and the brethrens representation concerning them was drawn up in a humble and moderate strain, and signed by 42 worthy ministers, and severals of them old reverend fathers, and was presented in a dutiful manner according to order; yet it is to be regretted that it was not allowed so much as a hearing by the Assembly; which obliged the petitioners to protest, and publish their paper to the world. Likewise there was a petition of the same nature from many hundreds of elders and Christian people given in to that Assembly, which had the same effect. This strange conduct of that and preceding Assemblies towards many godly ministers and people, did exceedingly stumble many, lessen the regard which was wont to be paid to General Assemblies, and pave the way to the schism which soon followed upon it. Yet the Ass. 1732, did not stop here, but proceeded to turn the overture anent planting of churches into a standing act, though evidently disagreeable to the mind of presbyteries, and the general opinion of the church: which increased the ferment through the land to a higher pitch than ever. Alas! this was not like the conduct of our old suffering fathers, who dreaded a schism in the church like fire, and were careful to prevent and crush it at the first appearance. But when God hath a controversy with a church or people, and designs to bring a stroke upon them, he ordinarily leaves their leaders to infatuate measures, so as they have neither skill nor will to take any wise step to ward off the blow.

That act of the Ass. 1732, did greatly inflame this poor church for two or three years: but seeing at that time unanswerable arguments were brought against it in several pamphlets and sermons then published, to which we adhere, and seeing likewise it was repealed by a subsequent Assembly, as contrary to the mind and rules of this church, and prejudicial to it; we shall not here insist much upon the evil of it. Only in regard there are many dissatisfied with the repealing of it, and alledge it was the same with the act of Parliament, 1690, for which the church had great regard for many years, we shall shew the manifest difference that is betwixt them, both in the words, and the sense which was put upon them. The act, 1690, runs thus: "That in case of the vacancy of any particular church, and for supplying the same with a minister, the heritors of the said parish (being Protestants) and the elders, are to name and propose the person to the whole congregation, to be either approven or disapproven by them; and, if they disapprove, that the disapprovers give their reason, to the effect the affair may be cognosced upon by the Presbytery of the bounds, at whose judgment, and by whose determination, the calling and entry of a particular minister is to be ordered and concluded." The act, 1732, being notour, we shall not resume the words, but observe the difference in these things: 1. The act, 1690, is by a civil court, the act, 1732, by an ecclesiastical; and though it might be expected that the latter would in their acts keep closer by the rule of the word than the former, yet the act, 1732, is more distant from that rule than the act, 1690, in regard the act, 1732, tends more to spoil congregations of their rights, and countenance intrusions upon them, than the act, 1690, doth. 2. By the act, 1690, the heritors and elders are only empowered to name and propose a person to the whole congregation; but, by the act, 1732, they are empowered to elect and call one to be minister of the parish. 3. According to act, 1690, the election was not to be held as finished until the man was proposed to the congregation, and their approbation had; and, if they disapproved, the affair was to stop as unfinished until the presbytery give their judgment whether to proceed further in it or not: but the act, 1732, holds the election as finished by the votes of the heritors and elders, and the man to be legally elected and called to be minister of the parish, before the consent of the people be asked. 4. By the act, 1690, and another soon past after, to explain it, all unqualified or disaffected heritors were excluded from voting; but, by act, 1732, all heritors whatsomever, whether hearers or not, were allowed to vote, if they were not professed Papists: so that, in many parishes where the disaffected heritors were supernumerary to the other, they had power to thrust in a minister upon a well-affected congregation. 5. For what appears from the words of the act, 1690, the heritors and elders might have acted as distinct bodies in the nomination, and the one might have had a negative upon the other therein, and so the heritors nomination would not be valid without the concurrence of the body of elders; for, by the act, the man was to be named by the elders, as well as by the heritors! but, by act, 1732, it was expressly provided, that the heritors and elders should elect in a conjunct body; so that, considering the superior number and influence of heritors in most places, ministers might be chosen where the eldership and whole body of the congregation reclaimed, as frequently has happened. 6. The act, 1690, and the act, 1732, differed prodigiously as to the sense and meaning put upon the words thereof. The execution of the act, 1690, being intrusted to presbyteries, the sense they then put upon the approbation of the congregation, and the reasons of the disapprovers, was far from the late sense put upon them: by their approbation, the church then understood their judgment concerning the candidate's gifts of preaching and prayer, that they judged them suitable to their capacities, and adapted to their edification; and if the body of the congregation disapproved the man nominate, and gave for their reasons, that his gifts were not edifying to them, nor suited to their capacities, and that they could not in conscience consent to his being their minister: such reasons, given by a knowing well disposed people, were then judged sufficient to stop the affair, lay aside competing candidates, and to proceed to a new election. But, by the sense put upon the act, 1732, no reasons or objections could be received but against the man's life or doctrine; and, if the people did not prove error or immorality against him by witnesses, they must receive him as their pastor: so that by this sense the people had no more interest or concern in the settlement of their pastor, than those of any other congregation; which is most absurd, and different from the sense of the act 1690.

Our noble patriots at the revolution, being sensible of the violent intrusions which had been made upon parishes under Prelacy and Patronage, they did in the year 1690, restore Presbyterian government, abolish patronages, and put the people's rights under the guardianship of presbyteries, who then took special care of them, according to our known principles; so that their settlements gave general satisfaction. Our judicatories then understood the act, 1690, as designed to deliver parishes from the intrusions made upon them under patronages, and to restore them to their primitive liberty, according to the word of God. This is evident from the Assembly, 1712, their approving the commission's address to the queen against patronages, in which are these words: "Whereby your majesty may plainly perceive the act, 1690, abolishing patronages, must be understood to be a part of our Presbyterian constitution, secured to us by the treaty of Union for ever; and that the Parliament, 1690, was sincerely desirous only to restore the church to its just and primitive liberty, in calling ministers in a way agreeable to the word of God." That this was the sense put upon the act, 1690, appears also from the form of calls then constantly made use of by the church, which is printed in our larger overtures, and runs thus:—"We, the heritors and elders of the parish of , have agreed, with the advice and consent of the parishioners, to invite, call," &c. No call could then be received without that clause, "of the consent of the parishioners" No doubt the words of the act, 1690, might have been perverted to the peoples hurt in some hands: but the church being allowed to explain and execute that act agreeably to their own principles, as they then did, the people continued easy under it, as finding their rights safe, their consent always necessary, and no intrusions made upon them. This consent of the people, in settlements, had been judged necessary by this church in all periods since the reformation.

Object. Those who favour intrusions, object, "That by act of Assembly, 1649, settlements might sometimes be made contrary to the inclinations of the majority of the people, if their dissent arose from causeless prejudices; and

consequently, that ministers might be settled against the mind of congregations, in case they had nothing to object against their life and doctrine."

Ans. We must certainly understand and explain the act, 1649, by the known principles and practice of the church at that time, and by the Second Book of Discipline, which the Assembly, 1649, and the whole church, had several times sworn to in the national covenant. In that 2d book, our church doth three or four times declare for the consent of the congregation as necessary in settling of ministers, as also against intruding any man upon them, contrary to their will; and doth affirm that this order of settlement is according to the word of God, and the practice of the apostolical and primitive kirk. And that famous Assembly, 1638, which abolished Prelacy and restored Presbytery, did explain the national covenant as binding us to maintain the Second Book of Discipline, December 8th. Likewise the Assembly did, within ten days after, expressly renew their declaration for the peoples rights, by their act, December 18, viz. "That no person be intruded in any office of the kirk, contrary to the will of the congregation to which they are appointed." And that the Presbyterians of that period were of the same mind, appears from the 8th act of Parliament, 1640, by which they restored to presbyteries the patronages of those parishes which the bishops had possessed, but with this *salvo* of the interest of the parishes, "that they be settled upon the suit and calling of the congregations," according to the acts and practice of this church.—And from the Assembly, 1642, their act, August 3d, for making lists of probationers for patrons to chuse upon; they appointed, that "Presbyteries, with the consent of the most or best part of the congregation concerned, shall make up the list of six willing to accept." And by the directory for the ordination of ministers, agreed upon by the Assembly at Westminster, and approven by the General Assembly, 1645, the candidate is appointed to preach three several days, and to converse with the people among whom he is to serve, for the end that they may have trial of his gifts for their edification, and afterwards they were to signify their consent to the Presbytery as they found cause. From which it is evident, that church judicatories then allowed the people to judge of the suitableness of the candidate's gifts for their edification, and held their consent necessary to his ordination. And that the Assembly, 1649, were of the same mind, is plain from their swearing to the Second Book of Discipline, which declares so strongly for the consent of congregations in settlements, which surely they would be careful not to contradict by their act. They indeed lodged the election in the hands of the session; but at the same time appointed them to use all possible tenderness for obtaining harmony in the congregation, and to proceed to a new election, in case the major part of the congregation dissented from their choice, if their dissent was not grounded on causeless prejudices. Now these elders, who were the electors, being the representatives of the people, and the most eminent in the parish for piety and knowledge, would doubtless previously consult the inclinations of the better sort, particularly the communicants, who are properly the members of the congregation; and, if they found that the most knowing and religious part of the congregation was for the settlement, they might reckon that the causeless prejudices of others, not complete members of the congregation, were to be less regarded. We are firmly persuaded the church in that period were far from reckoning it a causeless prejudice against a man, if the most religious or knowing part of a congregation declared their dissent from the session's choice, because they found the preacher's gifts unsuitable for their edification; no, in that case, the session would have been appointed to make a new election. The people then were not confined to objections only against the life and doctrine of the candidate, but allowed to dissent from, and object against, the election itself, and give what reasons or grounds for it they thought proper; and, if the session could not satisfy them, after all pains taken, they proceeded to a new election. All this appears from a known pamphlet, printed anno 1733, intituled, "Account of the method of electing a minister to the parish of Strathmiglo, in two instances in the years 1654 and 1655, in a letter to the minister there." If it be asked, What is then to be meant by causeless prejudices mentioned in the act 1649? *Ans.* Any groundless or trifling objection against a man, because of his mean extract, low stature, bodily infirmity, or blemish; or because of some groundless report, or the strictness of his walk, zeal for his principles, or the like: in which groundless prejudice the Assembly might judge that ignorant and unreasonable people were not to be too much indulged; though at the same time they enjoin all possible tenderness in dealing with parishes to bring them to harmony, even then when a lesser part of the congregation dissent from the election, without relevant objections.

But, *lastly*, Seeing this objection from act, 1649, is commonly brought to countenance the intruding of men who force themselves in upon reclaiming parishes, by accepting and holding fast by presentations; we take this occasion freely to own, that a congregation's offence against a man for evident tokens of "earthly-mindedness, greedy of filthy lucre, and unconcernedness for the success of the gospel, is not a causeless prejudice;" as for instance, when there is a gospel-door open for preachers to get access to parishes, for a man to despise that door, and chuse rather to enter by the door of a presentation and violence, and thereby endeavour to thrust himself in upon a congregation against their will, secure a title to their stipend, so as no man else can have it, keep fast his hold against all persuasions and intreaties, keep the people long without gospel ordinances, bind the heavy yoke of patronage upon their neck, and hinder them from getting a minister whom they love and desire; now, when a man acts so directly against the interest of the gospel, the advantage of precious souls and his own professed principles and engagements; and when a congregation dissents from his settlement upon these grounds; we cannot say their dissent is grounded upon causeless prejudices: nay, they are so well grounded, that the day hath been, when church-judicatories would have stopt their mouths who would be guilty of such things.

Object. "Though it be wrong for preachers to take such methods, yet judicatories are under necessity by the law to settle them, or keep parishes vacant."

Ans. 1. Seeing intrusions into churches are contrary to scripture, reason, and our professed principles, no laws or commands of men can oblige us to be accessory to them: for, seeing Christ commands us to do all for the edification of his flock, we must never act for its destruction, as intrusions manifestly are. Whenever human laws do clash with the Divine, it is indisputably "better to obey God than man."

2. There is no law yet in being, that obligeth us to in-

trude men into churches: for though there be an act past in 1712, for restoring patronages, yet it doth expressly reserve to the Presbytery and church judicatories the power of judging of the Presentee's qualifications and fitness for the charge to which he is presented. Now, the power of judging of a man's qualifications must not be restricted to these which render him fit for the ministry in general, but must be extended to qualifications necessary to make him fit for being minister of the parish to which he is presented; because a man may be fit and qualified for one charge, that is not so for another. Now, if a Presbytery do find that a presentee is incapable of answering the design of a gospel-minister to a parish, and is in no condition to instruct or edify their souls, by reason of his offending them, or their incurable aversion to hear him, or submit to his ministry; they may safely judge that such a man is not qualified nor fit to be settled in that parish, and therefore may set him aside. And if, in case of an appeal, the Assembly affirm the Presbytery's sentence, the law is most express and clear, that the cause must *take end* as the Assembly doth decern, according to act 7. Parl. 1567, which act is confirmed by act 1. Parl. 1581; and this act is again ratified by act 1. Parl. 1592, which act is ratified by act 5. Parl. 1690, and stands still in force, being not only ratified by the Union, but also confirmed by queen Anne's law, in 1712, for establishing patronages. And as the General Assemblies of this church have been always before 1712, in possession of the foresaid power, so well secured to them by law; so also, since that time, their sentences concerning all presentations have been submitted to and held as final. From which it is evident, that judicatories are under no force by law to make intrusions or violent settlements. Why then should church men, who ought to be guardians of the church's liberties, go about to destroy them by violent proceedings? Is it not soon enough for church courts to take such destructive courses, when the Parliament makes new laws obliging them to it?

But, to return to the state of the church *anno* 1732: this was a very critical time to her, and most afflicting to many of her best friends, by reason of the stretching of church authority; the intrusions made upon parishes; the disregarding of remonstrances and petitions of a godly remnant both of ministers and people; the passing that act, 1732, which encouraged heritors not of our communion to impose ministers upon many parishes; and the refusing to record ministers dissents with their reasons against such deeds.— These proceedings were grieving to the hearts of honest ministers, and provoked many to go to pulpits and testify against them, particularly at the opening of synods, and other occasions; and severals of them printed their sermons, as a testimony against these prevailing evils. Tho' this was very offensive to many of our leaders, and to the court chaplains (whose number was then increased) yet none was so much noticed as the reverend Mr Ebenezer Erskine, minister of Stirling, whose turn was to preach at the opening of the synod at Perth, in October 1732. The synod judged him censurable, and appointed him to be rebuked for his sermon, because in it he had impugned the acts and proceedings of the Assembly, and had used some strong expressions against the judicatories and ministers of this church, which they reckoned indecent. Upon which Mr Erskine appealed to the Assembly, 1733, who affirmed the synod's sentence, and rebuked him at their bar. Whereupon Mr Erskine, with three other ministers, gave in a paper protesting against the Assembly's sentence, *viz.* Mr Wilson at Perth, Mr Moncrieff at Abernethy, and Mr Fisher at Kinclaven; and they all protested for liberty to testify against the act, Assembly 1732, or the like defections.— This protestation the Assembly, 1733, could not bear with.

As it was very unwise in the synod to proceed against Mr Erskine for his sermon in such a judicial manner, so it was in the Assembly to resent the protestation as they did. In former times such protestations were not reckoned so criminal as now. Mr Andrew Hunter, minister, protested against the Assembly at Edinburgh, 1586, for releasing Mr Patrick Adamson from the sentence of excommunication without signs of repentance; and Mr Andrew Melvill and Mr Thomas Buchanan adhered to his protest. Mr John Davidson, minister at Prestonpans, protested against the Assembly, at Dundee, 1598, for allowing ministers to vote in Parliament in name of the kirk, where the king was present. Mr James Melvill protested against the Assembly their meeting at Holyrood-house, 1602, where the king was present. Mr David Calderwood protested against Assembly 1649, for enacting the directory for election of ministers.— Yet none of all these were censured for their protestations: neither do the House of Peers censure those who protest against their proceedings. Likewise the Twelve Brethren, who were rebuked by Assembly, 1722, for impugning the act of Assembly, 1720, against the *Marrow*, offered their protestation against the censure; as did Mr Gabriel Wilson against the admonition of Assembly, 1723: yet none of these were censured for their protestations. And doubtless it had been greatly for the interest and peace of the church, that Assembly, 1733, had followed the example of their wise predecessors. But now their authority must be screwed up higher than at former times: wherefore the Assembly, without hearing the four protesting ministers any further before them, did summarily proceed to appoint their commission, in August thereafter, to suspend them, if they did not retract their protestation, and shew their sorrow for the same; and to proceed to a higher censure, if they disobeyed the said sentence.

Accordingly the commission, in August, did suspend all the four brethren for adhering to their foresaid protestation. And, upon their acting contrary to the suspension, the commission, in November, determined to proceed presently to a higher censure against them, and would not delay it until March, though the Assembly's act allowed it. This decision was carried only by Mr Gouldie, the moderator, his casting vote. And it is to be observed, the commission went on in this forward and hasty procedure against the four brethren, notwithstanding of the earnest applications and intercessions of many synods, presbyteries, kirk-sessions, magistrates, and others throughout Scotland, in their behalf, pleading that the commission might delay them, spare them, or deal tenderly with them. The sentence which the commission came to against the four protesting ministers was, to "loose their relation from their respective parishes, and declare them no longer ministers of this church to employ them." And they declared their charges vacant from the date of this sentence.

As the judicatories at this time seemed to act with much heat and severity, in order to support or screw up their authority; so we must own that the four brethren seemed to shew no little honour and stiffness in opposing their authority, and despising their sentences: for they would give no ear to their friends, who dealt with them to shew some

subjection to the judicatories, as to their fathers and superiors; and though they were just now abusing their church power, and unwarrantably provoking their children, yet some regard is to be shewn to their authority, even when so doing, as we to our natural parents, though correcting us in an arbitrary way; according to Heb. xii. 6. As to Mr Erskine, though he was contending for the truth, many of his friends wished that he had not used such asperity and tartness of expression about the ministers and judicatories of the church as he did; and many of the leading men in judicatories said, This was the only thing they quarrelled in his sermon: but Mr Erskine would make no acknowledgement or submission of any sort, though even Mr Wilson and Mr Moncrieff said in their reasons of dissent, that they do not "pretend to justify his modes of expression" in that sermon; and they grant that in several cases it is most proper to use soft and modest expressions in maintaining of truth. We do not see that it would have been any loss to the truth the four brethren appeared for, that they had all shewed more respect to the supreme authority of the church in their conduct than they did; particularly, though they had forborn to protest, as they did in express word, against the sentence of the Assembly as UNJUST, and against any censure they should inflict on them as null and void of itself; and if, upon their being suspended, any minister or probationer should preach in their parishes, the same should be held as intrusion upon their charges And as they protested, so they submitted not to the sentence for one day; though many worthy ministers have formerly submitted to unjust sentences of this sort, to shew their regard to the authority of lawful judicatories of a church, which they owned as a true church. and this is approven by the most orthodox and judicious divines of the Presbyterian persuasion. Again, the brethren had the more encouragement to have submitted for a time, that they had reason to expect the next Assembly would take off the sentences, consider their complaints, and do them all manner of justice; and this they might have looked for, from the interposition of so many synods and presbyteries with the commission in their favours. And though many of their friends were disobliged and offended at them, for their contemning the authority of the church, yet there was a great plurality in the Assembly 1734, for restoring them to their charges and the communion of the church; and neither that nor any subsequent Assembly did ever approve the commission who past the hard sentences against them.

When the sentence of the commission in November 1733, loosing the relation of the four brethren from their charges, was past; many protested against it, as did the four brethren themselves, who also appealed to the first free, faithful, and reforming General Assembly of the church of Scotland. Had they sisted here, they had done well! but they went a great deal further, by making a secession from the judicatories of this church, and in a short time after constituting themselves into a distinct judicatory for licensing preachers, and ordaining ministers, wherever they should find encouragement. At the same time they protested they would still hold communion with all who were true Presbyterians, and groaned under, and wrestled against, the evils they had been complaining of. This was then their declared resolution, though, alas! they soon departed from it. At first they seemed to be determined to continue in ministerial communion with many worthy ministers they had been formerly intimate with, though these had not freedom to secede as they had done, nor go all their lengths: and Mr Erskine, in his answers to the synod, owned that there was "still a body of faithful ministers in the church of Scotland, with whom he did not reckon himself worthy to be compared." Which body had the truths contended for at heart, together with the peace of the church, as well as the four brethren. And, seeing the case was such, the brethren ought in justice to have communicated counsels with that faithful body of ministers, who were willing to meet with them at the ensuing Assembly, before they had taken two such strong steps as their *secession* and *constitution*: which uncommon steps, they might easily see, tended greatly to affect that whole body, yea, even to divide and rend them asunder, together with the people who should adhere to them respectively, in case that faithful body should not have light to go into all the measures of the four brethren. Whatever thoughts the brethren might have about the union of the church in general, it might have been expected they would have shewed something of concern for the union of that faithful body of ministers, for whom they did then profess a great regard. Moreover, since they had appealed for redress to the first faithful General Assembly, they should have delayed any such extraordinary steps until the meeting of the next Assembly then approaching, and so have kept the matter entire until the whole case was laid before them; which the brethren themselves should have been ready to do. For, considering how sensibly touched the whole church was with their case, and what preparations were making for the approaching Asssembly, the brethren could not be sure but it might prove the reforming Assembly they had appealed unto. O what dreadful calamities to the church might have been prevented, had the four brethren continued praying, and deliberating upon the foresaid two steps until the meeting of the Assembly in May 1734; and not have so precipitately seceded from the national church, and constituted themselves into an *Anti-presbytery*, by which means, alas! they became too much engaged in honou to persist in their separation, whatever steps the Assembly should take to redress their grievances and we know not if there was an Assembly since the Revolution, more willing to do it than the Assembly 1734, had the brethren applied to them for it, as they were urged by many to do.

The whole church had been so much alarmed by the arbitrary proceedings of former years, and the present threatened confusions, that there came up to the Assembly 1734, from all parts, and even the remotest, many pious and experienced ministers, with sincere intentions to have matters settled upon a better footing if possible. And, upon trial, the plurality of the Assembly was found to be upon their side, to the great joy of the friends of peace and truth. Now, it would have exceedingly strengthened their hands in their good designs to redress grievances and advance reformation, if the four brethren had tabled their complaints before them, and represented what they would have the Assembly to do for to satisfy them: but this they declined to do, though they were all in the town at the time. But notwithstanding of this discouragement from the brethren, and the mighty opposition of *great men*, ruling elders, who had a strong party in the house to support them, the Assembly, in the short time they had, did all that was in their power to satisfy the friends of reformation, and to put a stop to violent settlements and the prevailing evils of the time, and they were zealously inclined to have done much more,

if their time and the situation of their affairs could have allowed. Particularly, they renewed and strengthened the old acts of Assembly, which were made to be barriers and fences of our constitutions against innovations; such as those made by Ass. 1639, Ass. 1697, Ass. 1700, and Ass 1705, And they rescinded the 7th act of Ass. 1730, which hindered members to testify against wrong deeds of judicatories, by recording their reasons of dissent; because the said act was not made according to the foresaid rules and barrier acts. And, upon the same account, they repealed the 8th act of Ass. 1732, anent the method of planting vacant churches; and because it gave too much countenance to violent settlements, and too much power to disaffected heritors, and was unfavourable to the liberties of the people. They reversed the settlement of a minister made by the commission, at Auchtermuchty, against the will of the congregation, and of the Presbytery of the bounds; and by that decision they declared the commission's sentences reversible. Also they brought the commission under several new regulations, and discharged them to execute any settlements of churches, when the presbytery or synod of the bounds declined to do it. They impowered their commission to address the king and Parliament for relief from patronages; which they did, though in vain. Also they impowered the synod of Perth and Stirling to restore the four ejected brethren to their charges and the communion of this church; which they did very soon after the Assembly, without requiring any acknowledgements from them. And, to facilitate their return, the Assembly sincerely designed an act for removing their apprehensions, that, by the late sentences past against them, they were laid under greater restraints than before as to their ministerial freedom in testifying against wrong acts and deeds of the church: wherefore, for the satisfaction of the four brethren, and all others, the Assembly made an act, declaring, "That due and regular ministerial freedom is still left entire to all ministers." They also appointed a committee to draw up an overture for an act to give directions as to the right preaching of the gospel, and to restrain the legal preaching and moral harangues of many not so agreeable thereto. This had been several times attempted in former times, but still dropt, till now that the Assembly formed and referred the overture to their commission to ripen it. They also referred it to their commission to appoint a national fast, which had been long neglected, that all ranks might mourn for the prevailing evils and defections of the church and land; which they did immediately after the rising of the Assembly. This Assembly 1734, was a singularly faithful and reforming Assembly, who did very much in a short time, against great opposition, to rectify what was wrong, and put matters upon a better footing. They gave remarkable checks to violent settlements, and relief to several parishes oppressed by them; for at this Assembly, methods were concerted to get sealing ordinances to those persons who submitted not to them, from other ministers they chused to apply to. As this Assembly turned out one minister violently settled, so they were ready to have cast out others, if complaints had been regularly tabled before them. Their time of sitting did not allow them to consider and provide remedies for every thing amiss, and particularly for that wrong act of Assembly 1733, concerning the presbytery of Dunfermline, and their behaviour toward the minister that was forcibly settled at Kinross, wherein the said Assembly annexed high censures against those who refuse to own him as minister of Kinross, or who admit of any of that parish to sealing ordinances without his consent. This was plainly oppression, and a very high strain of church-authority, to settle ministers contrary to the rules of the word and of the church, and then oblige presbyteries to receive them, and people to submit to them. But the Assembly 1734, gave a seasonable check to such oppressive courses; and for the people of Kinross, it was afterward referred to the synod of Fife, to do what was proper for their relief, who thereupon allowed them the benefit of church privileges wherever they should think fit to ask them. And letters were written to presbyteries in other places, to indulge people in such circumstances in the like manner.

Thus did the faithful body of ministers (of whom Mr Ebenezer Erskine did speak) use their utmost strenuous endeavours in the Assembly 1734, and in the meetings of their commission, and in after Assemblies, to get the door opened, stumbling blocks removed, and the way paved for the return of their four brethren to communion with them as before. Yea, they got ministers sent up year after year to London, to solicit the King and Parliament for relief from patronages. And when honest ministers were in this manner travelling, sweating, labouring and struggling, even above their strength, to get things that were wrong reformed and rectified; it was extremely afflicting to them, that the four brethren, with whom they had formerly taken sweet counsel, would by no means return to their assistance, though invited and pressed to it; but, instead of that, would be still disparaging their actings, and misconstructing their most sincere intentions. Notwithstanding of this discouragement, they continued struggling, and doing all they were able, to promote reformation in the Assembly 1735, and Assembly 1736: still hoping the four brethren would bethink themselves, and cease from their dividing course. And though that honest body of ministers could not get all done which they designed, yet they got several good things carried; such as an act for better regulating the commission, and limiting their powers; an act against intrusion of ministers, and declaring it to be the principle of this church, "That none should be intruded into any parish contrary to the will of the congregation." How happy were it if this act were observed, and the foresaid principle maintained and adhered unto! Some things also were done at this time for the relief of those parishes that had been intruded upon; and an excellent overture was agreed upon, with respect to evangelical preaching, which was transmitted to Presbyteries, and their consent to it was obtained; so that after long dependence, it was got enacted by Assembly 1736, May 21. act 7. in which "they recommend to ministers and preachers to warn their hearers against any thing that tends to Atheism, Deism, Arianism, Socinianism, Arminianism, Bourignianism, Popery, Superstition, Antinomianism, or any other errors: And that they insist in their sermons upon our sinful and low estate by nature, the necessity of supernatural grace, and of faith in the righteousness of Christ, without which the best works cannot please God: And that they make it the great scope of their sermons to lead sinners from a covenant of works to a covenant of grace for life and salvation, and from sin and self to precious Christ our Surety and Saviour. And as they are to press the practice of all moral duties, so also to shew the nature and excellency of gospel holiness, without which no man can see the Lord: and, in order to attain it, they are to shew men the corruption and depravity of their nature by

the fall, their natural impotence for, and aversion to, what is spiritually good; and to lead them to the true and only source of all grace and holiness, viz. Union with Christ by the Holy Spirit's working faith in us, and renewing us more and more after the image of God: and that they must count all their best performances and attainments but loss and dung, in point of justification before God, and to make it their great desire only to be found in Christ their Surety, clothed in his righteousness, which is infinitely perfect and law-binding; and to make gospel subjects their main theme and study, &c. And they recommend to all professors of divinity, to use their best endeavours to have the students under their care well acquainted with the true method of preaching the gospel as directed by this act, and appoint Presbyteries at their privy censures to enquire concerning the observation of this act." This is a short abstract of that excellent act, which godly ministers had been intent about for many years past, in order to give some check to the legal way of preaching, and the loose moral discourses of several preachers, to the neglect of the true preaching of "Christ and him crucified," introduced by many of the younger clergy. However long this act had been delayed, yet it was most seasonably past in 1739, when a little before there had been a great noise of Deism spreading among the students of divinity at Edinburgh; and one of them, Mr William Nimmo, had delivered a discourse in the divinity hall, March 1735, to the prejudice of the Christian revelation; for which he was excluded by the masters, and excommunicated by the Presbytery of Edinburgh.

But seeing there is so great reason to fear that the foresaid excellent act concerning preaching, is but little noticed and observed by many, and that there is in this church and land very much of a legal or moral way of preaching, exclusive of Christ, and to the neglect of the peculiar doctrines of Christianity; and seeing the church of God, and the souls of men, appear to be in the greatest danger from this airth; we judge it our duty to give plain and open testimony against this sort of preaching, and to declare for the true gospel way of preaching Christ and him crucified, which ought to be the great study of every gospel-minister, as it was of the apostle Paul, 1 Cor. ii. 2.

We grant that morality, or obedience to the moral law, is an excellent thing, and absolutely necessary to be studied by every true Christian, seeing God requires it, and without morality and "true holiness no man can see the Lord;" but then it must be preached otherwise by a gospel-minister than by a moral philosopher: Why? It must flow from gospel-principles, be performed in a gospel manner, and be pressed mainly by gospel-motives and arguments. But it must be sad indeed, when there is almost as little of Christ or an evangelical strain to be found in the sermons of Christian preachers, as in the discourses of Seneca, Plato, Socrates, or other Heathen moralists.

This Christless way of preaching morality, is an inlet to Deism and Infidelity: for, when men are accustomed to hear moral sermons with little of Christ in them, they are apt to think there is but little difference between them and the discourses of moral Heathens; and therefore they may be good enough, and win to heaven by their morality, without Christ or his righteousness. O how natural it is for men to go about to establish a righteousness of their own, with a view to be saved by it, and to neglect that new righteousness which the eternal wisdom of God hath established as alone sufficient for it! And therefore they need often to be called, after their utmost lengths in moral attainments (which are but poor and wretched at best) to renounce them all, and go to the imputed righteousness of Christ, viz. the obedience of his holy life, and his sufferings unto death, for justification and salvation.

Morality is a desirable thing, when kept in its due place; but, when allowed to possess the place of Christ's righteousness imputed to us, it is a soul-ruining thing, and the greatest hindrance of the soul's coming to Christ, and of its entering into heaven. God will have us come entirely off from the old bottom of a covenant of works, and from resting upon any thing done by us, or wrought in us, for acceptance with God: and look only for attaining to it by believing on whom God hath sent, and resting upon his righteousness only: nothing of ours must be added to it otherwise we mar it. Though faith be required of us as the mean or instrument whereby we receive and apply Christ and his righteousness, and also true repentance and sincere obedience are required as evidences and fruits of our faith, yet neither faith, repentance, or obedience, nor all of them together, are any part of our justifying righteousness in the sight of God, nor are they the foundation of our acceptance, or of our title to eternal life: Christ must be all our righteousnes, or nothing. So that none must think to be saved partly by his own obedience, and partly by Christ's, in order to make up his defects; but we must be saved wholly by the complete morality and obedience of Christ imputed to us. Our proud natures must be humbled and changed, and must be brought to submit to accept of an entire new clothing, instead of our own righteousness; for the glory of God will not allow the least place to this in our justification, he will have all boasting excluded for ever.

Quest. "Seeing morality and the duties of the moral law are to be preached and pressed, in what manner then must we do it?"

Ans. If we would do it in an evangelical strain, and with success, we must, 1. Press duty as the natural and necessary fruit of faith in a crucified Christ, and love to him, who suffered thus to satisfy for our sins, to purchase to us the image of God and holiness which we had lost; and therefore let us represent the love and sufferings of Christ in a lively manner to our people, in order to lead them to abhor all known sin, and to love Christ that first loved us, and live to him that died for us; and pray earnestly for the Spirit of regeneration and sanctification which he hath purchased for us: and this is the most effectual way to promote morality and holiness among them. 2. We must set before the eyes of our people the attractive charms and beauties of a crucified Jesus in all his offices, that they may get a view of his glory, as the "chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely," and as the "pearl of great price;" that so the desire of all nations may come to be the desire of their hearts, and they may "count all things but dung and loss" in comparison of a crucified Christ. And as we must recommend to them to close with him as their priest, and sacrifice to atone for their sins, so also to subject themselves to him as the lovely King of Zion, whose government is easy, his service pleasant, his commandments not grievous, and his rewards to obedient subjects unspeakably great. The whole precepts of the moral law are the laws of this King; but, to all his willing subjects, he makes his "yoke easy and his burden light." 3. We must enforce duties from a principle of love, and of gratitude to Christ for his love. It should not be so much authority, as grate-

ful love to Christ, that should constrain us to live to his glory, to study holiness and constant obedience to his commands: and this we should do, as we should approve ourselves to be Christ's disciples, and as we would enjoy communion with him here, and be accepted of him at his appearance to judgment. 4. We should direct our people to perform duties by the grace and strength of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Head, Surety, and Treasurer. We must be united to him by faith, as our Head of Influences, and derive all our life and strength for duty out of his fulness. Alas! this direction is little minded by many of our moral preachers, whose discourses generally seem to proceed upon the supposition of the strength of our natural powers, as if we had no natural impotence or enmity to what is good, nor been at all disabled by the fall. 5. We must persuade men to leave sin, and perform duty, by the terrors of Christ's coming to judgment, and the wrath of the Lamb, that will then be intolerable to all who slight his grace and disobey his laws. 6. When we press duties, let us put our hearers in mind, that all our duties and good works have no worth or merit before God; they are not our justifying righteousness; they are only accepted of God through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ: and that, after we have done all, we must say, we are but unprofitable servants; and our main desire is to be found in Christ, not having our own righteousness, which is but as filthy rags, and cannot be any screen or covert to us before God. 7. Let us instruct our people, that though Christianity doth enforce morality by the strongest arguments, yet unregenerate morality will never please God. Till the heart be renewed, and the soul grafted in Christ the true Vine, the fruit will be always sour and unpleasant to God. A moral man, though he profess himself a Christian, is not really so, unless he be united to Christ, and look for daily influences from him to perform duties, and to the righteousness of Christ to cover him and all his duties: and be still saying, Though I could perform never so many duties, I should be lost and undone for ever, if it were not for the righteousness and mediation of Christ my Surety and Saviour, in whom is all my hope and trust. For all true holiness and acceptable morality is the proper result of the soul's union with the holy Jesus our living Head, who is the first and immediate receptacle of the holy Spirit, and of all sanctifying influences for the use of his members; and out of Christ's fulness we must by faith receive them for our sanctification.

Let us make every subject we insist on point to Christ. If we discourse upon the attributes of God, let us consider them as they shine forth in Christ and his glorious undertaking: If upon the blessings and promises of the gospel, let us consider them as the purchase of Christ's blood: If on the providence of God, let us mind that the administration is put in Christ's hands, and he is Head over all things for the church: If we exhort to repentance and mourning for sin, let us direct our hearers to look to him they have pierced: If to prayer, let us direct them to look to Christ, by whom only they can have access and success in this duty.

O how happy were it both for us and our hearers, if we did thus reduce every thing to Christ, and make him the main subject of all our sermons; and if the scope of them all were to persuade sinners to come to Christ, and all that profess him to live by faith on him, and make daily use of him! To this glorious person did all the prophets of the Old Testament give witness, and much more should all the ministers of the New.

Now, this way of preaching is surely the most excellent, and preferable to any other way: Why? 1. The preaching of Christ crucified is the mean which God hath appointed for gathering in elect sinners to himself, and to which he promises his blessing. Hence it is that Paul saith, God makes the preaching of the cross and of Christ crucified the POWER OF GOD to them that are called: and though natural men count this way of preaching foolishness, yet it pleases God by this way "to save them that believe," 1 Cor. i. 18, 21, 24.

2. It was by this way of preaching among the Corinthians, that the apostle Paul had such wonderful success in bringing them to Christ, 1 Cor. ii. 2. it was when Peter preached a crucified Jesus and the peculiar doctrines of Christianity to the people, that the Holy Ghost fell on them, and converted multitudes of them; as Luke observes several times, Acts ii. 36, 37, Acts x. 43, 44. It was not when he was preaching morality that the Spirit descended and gave success to the word. Also he observes, when these preachers from Cyprus preached the Lord Jesus to the people of Antioch, "the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed, and turned to the Lord," Acts xi. 20, 21.

3. It is the preaching of a crucified Christ, that God in his wisdom hath pitched upon as the way to reform men from their vices, and to bring in virtue, godliness and good order into nations, cities and congregations The Heathen philosophers and wise men had, for some thousands of years, tried all means, which the powers of nature or reason could afford, to bring men to God and virtue, but in vain; for they remained still ignorant of God, and run farther away from him into all abominable impieties. Likewise in many places there are several masters of reason and eloquence, who excel in a sort of rational and moral way of preaching, exclusive of Christ; but what success have they in it for converting souls? Alas! their people still sink in vice and corruption; all their fine reasonings cannot change the perverse will of one sinner. They may, perhaps, entertain two or three, or a few of their audience, who have a taste of the beauties of fine reasoning; but the body of the congregation remain untouched and asleep, so that all they hear is lost to them. Surely the value and usefulness of things are to be reckoned from their capacity and fitness to answer the end they are designed for; now the end of preaching is to win souls to Christ, so that these sermons are the most excellent that serve this design most: and these, we see, are the sermons which are fullest of Christ. Alas! Christless moral sermons bring few off from their vices to the practice of morality, and far fewer into Christ. Such a way of preaching is a longsome unsuccessful method to reclaim and reform the vicious: whereas the short and effectual way to reform sinners, and make them moral, is to preach Christ to them; if you bring them to Jesus, you turn them from all their sins, and make them moral at once, yea, inwardly holy, which is more. O then, let us preach Christ above all things!

4. If we look through the world, we will find it is only those ministers who preach Christ most, who have most success; and that the life and spirit of true religion rises or falls among a people, according as a crucified Redeemer is faithfully preached among them or not. And those acquainted with church-history observe, that when God is

about to leave a people, and his glory to depart from his house, he usually gives them up to a lifeless and formal ministry, who neglect the preaching of Christ and the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, such as free justification by the righteousness of Christ, and inward regeneration by the Spirit of Christ; and do not inform their people that it is from a crucified Jesus the virtue must come for breaking the power of sin in the soul, and subduing it to God. No wonder our flocks look poor and lean, when we take no care to lead them into these green pastures of evangelical truths, but set before them the dry insipid stuff of a Heathenish morality, which can never feed them nor keep them in good liking! How can we expect assistance from Jesus Christ in our work, or the influences of his Spirit in preaching, (upon which all our success depends,) when we take no more notice of Christ in our sermons than the moral philosophers among the Heathens? Wo will be to this national church, if such a way of preaching shall prevail in it, notwithstanding of the foresaid act of Assembly, and a sound Confession of Faith, which all ministers subscribe to. God forbid that the church of Scotland become ever like the church of England in this respect, who subscribe to sound articles of doctrine, and never mind them more afterwards.

Likewise as by the word of God ministers are bound to separate between the precious and the vile, the clean and the unclean, the sincere and the formalist; so, by the foresaid act 1736, concerning preaching, all ministers are appointed, in application of their sermons, to endeavour rightly to divide the word of truth, speaking distinctly to the various cases of their hearers, whether converted or unconverted, &c. Alas! it is to be feared, the making of this difference is too much neglected by many, both in dispensing the word and sacraments.

These, and several other good things, did the Assembly 1736, but it is to be regretted they were not steady and uniform in their proceedings; for, while they discouraged and stopt some intrusions, they encouraged others: and they gave no small occasion of offence by their management in the affair of Professor Campbell at St Andrews, who had vented several dangerous errors in his writings, such as his Oratorio Academica, his Enquiry into the Original of Moral Virtue, his Discourse concerning Enthusiasm, &c. wherein he asserts, "That men, by their natural powers, without revelation, cannot find out the being of a God: That the law of nature is sufficient to guide rational minds to happiness: That self-love, interest, or pleasure, is the sole principle and motive of all virtuous and religious actions: That Christ's disciples had no notion of his Divinity before his resurrection, and before that they expected nothing from him but a worldly kingdom; and, during the interval between his death and resurrection, they looked on him as an impostor." Likewise, while speaking against Enthusiasts, he utters several things very disparaging and reproachful to the work of the holy Spirit upon the souls of the people of God. These errors were brought before the Assembly 1735, who referred them to their commission; and they appointed a committee to consider them, and prepare their report to the next Assembly. Mr Campbell laboured to give in sound and orthodox explications of these his positions, which the committee brought before the Assembly 1736, with their remarks and censures upon them, and the recommendations they judged fit to be given him. The Assembly, upon hearing Mr Campbell at great length, were of opinion, that the committee's examining and stating the matter as they had done, was sufficient to caution against the errors charged upon Mr Campbell, without giving any judgment or formal sentence upon the committee's report; only they recommended to him not to use doubtful expressions or propositions, which may lead his hearers or readers into error. This issue of the process many, in the Assembly and out of it, were highly dissatisfied with, judging that Mr Campbell did justly deserve a sharp rebuke for the many incautious and unsound expressions he hath in his writings, however orthodox his explications might be: and with these we do heartily join.

Though the Assembly gave no judgment upon Mr Campbell's positions or explications, yet severals would charge the Assembly with adopting one of his errors; because, when he explained his positions concerning Self-love, he declared he meant no more but "that our delight in the honour and glory of God was the chief motive of all virtuous and religious actions." Now (say they) this Delight is the same with the Self-love, or the desire of our own happiness, which is the error charged on him: yet the Assembly dismissed him without quarreling it. But this should be looked upon as a pure oversight in the Assembly, through their not adverting to the import of the word Delight, but taking "delight in the glory of God," for the same with "regard to the glory of God," because of their affinity. For when Assembly 1737, was informed that severals had taken offence, as if the Assembly 1736, had adopted some of Mr Campbell's offensive expressions on the head of Self-love, they vindicated this church from that charge, by making an act, declaring that they do stedfastly adhere to the doctrine expressed in our standards on that head, particularly in the answers to that question in our Larger and Shorter Catechisms, What is the chief end of man?

In the year 1735, there was an essay made by an unknown hand to alter our Shorter Catechism, which was printed at London, under the title of The Assembly's Shorter Catechism Revised, and rendered fitter for General Use. The reviser casts it into such a mould, as to make it agree with Arian, Socinian, Popish, and Arminian schemes of doctrine. As soon as it was publicly known in Scotland, the commission took it under their consideration, as the synod of Lothian had done before them, and past an act condemning it, and gave warning about it to all the presbyteries in this church, that they might be on their guard against the spreading and infection thereof. And would to God that our Assemblies had, in like manner, given plain and faithful warning to all the corners and members of this church, against Professor Simson and Professor Campbell's errors, and others which have been vented and spread in this church, and shewn to them their inconsistency with the word of God, and our Confession of Faith and Catechisms! May God in his infinite mercy revive our zeal for all the truths therein contained, and against all sorts of error opposite thereto!

After all, it is to be regretted that the national church was not duly humbled by all these awful rebukes for her manifold defections, and particularly for disregarding Christ's flock in settlements; neither did she amend her ways and doings, and turn to the Lord: wherefore we find the hand of the Lord stretched out against her still, and a new sharp trial carved out for her from an airth that

none could have expected. One Captain Porteous, that had had been condemned to die for several murders, having obtained a reprieve by the interest of some great men, the mob rose up notwithstanding, and executed him at Edinburgh, the 7th of September, 1736. The King and Parliament resented this affront so highly, that they framed a strange and extraordinary act for discovering the actors. and because some of the church's enemies suggested, without all ground, that the Scots clergy, at least a set of them, encouraged the people in such mobbish actions, they appointed all the ministers of Scotland to read the said act in time of divine service in their churches every first Sabbath in the month for a whole year, beginning in August, 1737: and the penalty for the first neglect of reading it was, that "they shall be declared incapable of sitting or voting in any church judicatory; and this was to be executed against them by the civil judges in Scotland. The most part of ministers in many synods and presbyteries, though they scrupled not to condemn the outrageous insult of the mob as murder, yet they had not freedom to read the said act, because they judged the penalty foresaid to be properly a church censure, seeing by it ministers would be divested of the power of church government and discipline, which is given them by the Lord Jesus Christ the Head of the church, and is essential to their office as preaching or dispensing the sacrament. Now, for the civil magistrate to assume the power of the keys, or of inflicting church censures, which Christ hath put in the hands of his own officers, they judged a manifest incroachment upon Christ's Headship over his church, and contrary to the word of God and the Confession of Faith they had subscribed, chap. 30. par. 1, 2. and chap. 23, 3. And for ministers to become the magistrate's heralds, to proclaim this law on the Lord's day, in such a solemn manner, would be an homologating of this incroachment, and a consenting to this Erastian power of the magistrate. Likewise they judged, to approve or concur with a law so prejudicial to the doctrine and discipline of this church, as established by law civil and ecclesiastical, would be to give up with fundamental securities, and act contrary to the solemn engagements ministers come under to maintain the doctrine and discipline of this church, and do nothing prejudicial thereto. Besides, they did not think it agreeable to the office of those, who were "ambassadors of the gospel of peace," to become heralds or executors of this or any sanguinary law, especially when they apprehended there were several things in it inconsistent with justice and equity, besides the Erastian penalty aformentioned. These and other arguments, set in a clear light in several pamphlets published at that time, determined us to join with those who bore testimony against the reading of the foresaid act, and to run the hazard of all its penalties. And we wish the light of all the ministers of Scotland had been the same with ours in this matter, which would have prevented much division and stumbling that different practices have occasioned.

But yet we must do justice to those of a different light, so far as to own, that there were several pious and conscientious ministers who read this act, because of the quite different view they had of it from those who refused it: and seeing by the whole tenor of their lives and actions, it appears they have acted uprightly and honestly in other matters, we are in charity bound to think they acted sincerely in this also. Their reasons for reading were: A sinful penalty in the act, should not hinder their reading those parts of the act which might be lawful; and they judged they were bound to read some parts of it, to warn their people of the danger of harbouring or succouring the rioters. And they did not look on the penalty scrupled at as any church censure, or Erastian incroachment upon Christ's Headship; and, as they judged, no more was meant by it, but that the non-readers should forfeit the magistrate's protection in sitting in church-courts: and that the magistrate, without assuming the power of the keys, might, by his civil power as a magistrate, exclude or render ministers incapable of sitting in church-courts, by confining or banishing them. And they sincerely declare, that, if they had thought their reading of that act had in the least wronged the Headship of the King of Zion, they would rather have suffered the loss of their stipends, or any thing else. Now charity obligeth us to believe pious men to be ingenuous in such declarations.

But, alas! notwithstanding of all these shaking dispensations, the church was not brought to a right sense of her sins and defections; and therefore the Lord's controversy with her was not at an end: for we find the Assembly 1738, continuing in former steps, and giving new offence to many in the church, by another decision in a process of error. The magistrates and town-council of Edinburgh having chosen Mr William Wishart, a minister at London, to be Principal to their college, and having got a call to him also to be one of the ministers of the city, the presbytery of Edinburgh refused to concur with the said call, and charged him with venting several erroneous propositions in two of his printed sermons, with respect to the power and office of the magistrate in religious matters, the liberty of Christian subjects, the subscribing of Confessions, the education of children, the influence of arguments taken from the awe of future rewards and punishments, his excessive charity to Heathens and others who reject the gospel-offers and institutions, and the sinful and corrupt state of all men from their birth, &c. This affair being brought by appeals to the General Assembly, and Mr Wishart having made his explications, and given in a subscribed declaration of his adhering to the Confession of Faith, and the particular articles of it which his propositions seemed to oppose, and also of his disclaiming all errors whatsomever (whether charged upon him in the presbytery's articles or not) that are contrary to the Confession of Faith, or any article of it; the Assembly thereupon assoilzied Mr Wishart from the process against him, and also they sustained his call to be one of the ministers of Edinburgh, and appointed the presbytery to admit him as such.

Here we cannot but testify against such soft proceedings, whether in the case of Professor Campbell, Doctor Wishart, or others processed for error; seeing we judge it far from being sufficient to terminate a process for error, or to vindicate persons accused of it, that they explain their words into a sound and orthodox sense, though perhaps contrary to the obvious meaning of them, according to the plain and ordinary acceptation of words; or that they profess their adherence to our Confession of Faith, and its articles, which their tenets are thought to contradict. For a heretic, when in hazard of censure, may make a shift to put an orthodox sense upon his words, if that will save him, tho' it should be quite contrary to the common sense and meaning of them; and he may declare his owning the words of our Confession of Faith, and yet affix a sense and meaning

to them directly opposite to the known sentiments and doctrine of this church: so that it is plain, such a loose superficial way of managing a process for error, is not an effectual way to suppress it. Wherefore we think it further necessary for that end, that those who are processed for venting error or unsound propositions, should particularly and directly renounce the erroneous tenets and principles charged upon them, upon account of their words, and the unsound sense which they naturally convey; and that they be at least rebuked for departing from the form of sound words contained in the word of God, and our standards, which are framed agreeable thereunto. We see it is God's express command concerning such men, Titus i. 13. "Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be found in the faith." Sharp rebukes preserve soundness, but easy absolutions encourage error. No sooner is Dr Wishart assoilzied, but he falls a recommending and prefacing books of bad character, such as Dr Whitchcot's sermons, that savour of Socinianism, as the Reverend Mr Bisset of Aberdeen makes appear in a letter he hath lately published.—Ah! how low must the case of this poor church be, when the head of the most frequented college in Scotland recommends such books *impune* for college-students and preachers to form upon!

These and other proceedings of our Assemblies were very grievous to many worthy ministers and others in this church; and the four seceding brethren before mentioned, with other four, viz. Messrs Nairn, R. Erskine, Mair, and Thomson, who afterwards joined them, took occasion from such actings, to carry their secession and separation to very great heights, by licensing preachers, invading parishes, and preaching up separation every where, not sparing their best friends, nor those who dissented from the evils of the time, and took all regular methods to testify against them; but charging the whole ministry with very black things.—They also framed an Act and Testimony of many sheets, with very much of church authority in it, which they required all their followers to adhere to. Though we own there were many good things in it, yet there were also many mistakes in it, and misrepresentation of facts, very harsh and unsuitable expressions, and also bitter reflections against their brethren, and even our worthy forefathers, &c. These things being laid before the Assembly, they appointed the ministers of the presbyteries and synods where the said brethren reside, to be at all pains, by conference, and other gentle means of persuasion, to reclaim them; and to report their diligence to the commission, whom they empowered, if they should see cause, to take all proper steps to sist the said eight brethren before the Assembly 1739. Accordingly, these eight brethren were libelled and cited to the said Assembly, who all compeared before them in the capacity of a constitute judicatory; and, instead of answering to their libel, they, by their Moderator, read an act of their court, condemning the judicatories of the national church as not being lawful courts of Christ, and declining all their authority and jurisdiction over them. Upon which they withdrew, and attended the Assembly no more. Whereupon the Assembly past an act concerning them, declaring, "That for their declinature, contempt, and schismatical courses, contrary to their vows, and for the many groundless and calumnious reflections which they have cast on the church and her judicatories, they deserve deposition: but that they resolved to forbear them another year, to give them further time to bethink themselves, and return to their duty; and they appointed them to be cited to the next Assembly 1740."

Being cited accordingly, and not compearing, the Ass. 1740, proceeded to depose the whole eight brethren. But there having been debates about wording the sentence, and different senses put on it, we must look to the words themselves, which are, "They depose them from the office of the holy ministry, prohibiting them to exercise the same within this church." And we must say, we are sorry to see a sentence of this sort so ambiguous. If these words, *Within this Church*, be connected with the word *Depose*, as well as with the word *Prohibit*, they mean no more but that they depose them from being ministers of this church; and many who voted it, say they meant no more; so that, in this sense, the sentence is only a loosing of their relation from the national church; which the brethren themselves had done in effect, by their secession from her, by their renouncing all her authority and jurisdiction, and refusing all communion with any of her ministers. But, on the other hand, if the words, *Within this Church*, be not connected with the word *Depose*, then the Assembly meant to depose them *simpliciter* from the office of the ministry itself: and in this sense many members understood the sentence; and therefore a good many voted against it, and dissented from it. For though they did not approve of their wild divisive practices, yet they had not freedom to unminister them, seeing they looked upon them as pious orthodox Presbyterian ministers, who had been useful in the church, and might still be useful in preaching Christ to lost perishing sinners. And, if the sentence be taken up in this sense, we join with those who testified against it; in regard we think the world cannot easily spare any of those ministers who are upright and zealous in preaching a crucified Jesus to fallen men, especially at a time when Deism and dry moral discourses are like to thrust out true Christianity. Neither do we think it was time for the church to proceed to censure the brethren, till once they had done all they could to remove the evils and redress the grievances which were the grounds of their separation, and thereby had made them inexcusable in their schism; which, alas! is far from being done. And as for the brethrens licensing of preachers, which is one article of their libel, the Assembly and commission might prevent that, if they pleased to observe our good rules, and particularly the 11th act of Assembly 1736 against intrusions; seeing it is manifest, that, by every new intrusion and forced settlement which they make, they give encouragement to the brethren to erect a new tent, and license a new preacher; and, till such time as they shall cease from the one, they cannot well expect the brethren will cease from the other. And, with respect to several other parts and articles of their libel, we think them too general, and no ways so particular, nor duly laid, as ought to have been in a process of this kind; and some of the most material things charged against the brethren are left out.

But as we cannot justify the Assembly in their conduct, so neither can we vindicate the brethren in theirs. And seeing we proposed in this performance to give a fair and impartial testimony against the defections and evils of the time, whether upon one side or another, we shall briefly mention some of our seceding brethrens defections and strayings from the good old paths; which they have been led into, partly by their own precipitancy and misguided zeal, and partly by the headstrong humours of their followers: Such as,

1. Their unprecedented secession which they have made from their mother-church, and the lamentable schism they have begun and carried on with so much heat and uncharitableness, when they were under no necessity of going into any sinful terms of communion, and when they were joined with a body of faithful ministers who witnessed against the evils complained of, as well as they. Our histories assure us, that such a schismatical course is contrary to what was the approven judgment and practice of our reforming ancestors, for above an hundred years after our reformation from Popery, tho' somtimes they had greater provocation to it than our seceding brethren had.

2. They both seceded, and constituted themselves into a presbytery for the exercise of discipline and government through the whole national church, without ever consulting with their brethren and fathers in it, whom they then owned to be a numerous body of faithful ministers: tho' they could not but foresee that the said body of ministers, with their flocks, would be much affected, nay, distressed, shaken, perplexed, and rent, by such singular and extraordinary steps as they were taking.

3. Their irreverend and disrespectful carriage towards their mother-church, to whom they had solemnly vowed submission; as appears in their *Declinature*, wherein they disown all her authority and jurisdiction over them, and pronounced judicially a sentence of their newly erected presbytery against the General Assembly, and all the other judicatories of the church, FINDING and DECLARING that they are not lawful courts of Christ; which sentence they presumed formally to intimate in face of the General Assembly, by their moderator, before many witnesses, May 17th, 1739. They ought to have remembered, that the laws both of God and man do highly resent childrens beating, cursing, or maltreating their mother, even when she is somewhat severe and out of her duty to them; and that it is necessary that zeal should be attended with meekness, courteousness, and humbleness of mind. Surely such a declinature, and such a sentence as theirs, would seem to import no less than the unchurching the whole church, and unministering her whole ministry, faithful body and all, as if they were all given up to some dreadful apostacy or fundamental errors. Now, we are pretty sure there are few judicious orthodox divines in the world that will adventure to unchurch the church of Scotland, or declare her no church of Christ, for all the saints she hath. They have owned others as the churches of Christ, who have been as corrupt as she, if not more. Nay, the glorious Head of the church, the best Judge, hath owned some no less corrupt, as *golden candlesticks*, walked in them, and held communion with them; such as, the church of Corinth, some of the churches of Asia, Galatia, and other places.—And is it thank-worthy in any of the members to outrun the Head, or to be more forward to unchurch his churches, or to unminister his ministers, than he himself inclines to be.

4. We cannot justify the brethren in refusing to return to assist those whom they owned to be a body of faithful ministers, to promote a work of reformation; when, by a surprising providence, they had got the upper-hand in the Assembly 1734, and were doing all they could to remove the evils they complained of, and had the door opened for them, and the act 1732 repealed, which was the great occasion of their protesting and seceding; and were most willing to do every thing in their power to satisfy them and all the friends of reformation. But after they had continued for two or three years to struggle even above their strength, and thereby had got many good things done, still hoping their brethren would return to their assistance; they were grievously discouraged when they saw them still bent upon their begun schism, so as to set at nought all they had been doing, and misconstruct their most honest designs; yea, they were at length so disheartened by their measures, that many of them gave over travelling, and attending the Assemblies, who thereupon, alas! soon returned to their old bias. So that it is manifest the brethrens wilfulness in their dividing way, put a stop to a begun national reformation, which, if they had favoured and struck in with, might have been advanced very far, through the blessing of God, and many dismal consequences of their schism prevented.

5. We must disapprove the brethren in seceding not only from the church, but also from their old Christian temper and disposition, and from that royal law of love and charity which they once preached up: this appears in their excluding from the room they once had in their charity and communion, all their old friends and acquaintances, though never so sound and pious, or willing to spend or be spent for Christ and souls, if they have not light to secede and join with them. Whatever esteem of them they had before, they must now no longer employ them, hear them, nor preach for them. Now, why should they treat the body of faithful ministers, they once took sweet counsel with, as if they were gross apostates, when it is notour they continue the very same men they were before, when the brethren sat with them in judicatories? They still witness and contend for reformation principles as well as they; they give testimony against licensing or ordaining corrupt men, and against all errors and intrusions; against countenancing patronages, and accepting presentations; against all encroachments made upon the rights of the church and Christian people, and upon the Headship of Christ over the church; against the preaching up a sort of Heathen morality, and the neglect of the true preaching of Christ and gospel holiness, &c. Now, what must be the reason for the brethren's separating and departing from their old friends, as if they were become Papists or Mahometans? Is it a good reason, because they continue to witness against the evils of the time in the judicatories as they did before, and not in conjunction with the eight seceders? Why must it now become such a deadly sin for worthy men to go with Joseph and Nicodemus to backsliding judicatories, to plead with their mother, to testify against corruptions, to do all they can to hold out English prelacy and ceremonies, and maintain the national establishment of presbytery, and a sound Confession of Faith, and to strive to do all the good in their power, while waiting for better times, when God will open the eyes of men to see the evil of their ways? Now, when honest men think these ends may be better answered by going to judicatories than by joining a few seceders, ought not their brethren to forbear them, and allow them the same place in their charity and communion they had before?

6. We cannot approve of their marking so narrowly the failings, mistakes, and wrong steps of their sincere godly brethren, as they do; and, instead of covering and forgiving their weaknesses (as Christ injoins), aggravating and magnifying them so, as to make every mistake a dangerous error and defection; and not only doing this in

private conversation, but going to the pulpit, and proclaiming them at times of greatest concourse, such as sacrament occasions, which should be feasts of love and charity among Christians, and not engines of strife and debate. Such an uncharitable course we judge the ready way to mar the usefulness of many of Christ's faithful servants in his vineyard, tending both to break their ministry, and break their hearts at once; to scatter their poor flocks, and do great harm to many precious souls.

7. Likewise we must witness against their exciting and stirring up poor people plainly and directly to leave their godly pastors, by whom many of them have been brought to Christ; and doing so at the very time while they are feeding and profiting under their ministry, and for no other reason but because these ministers have not freedom to join in their secession and testimony, &c. yea, persuading the people to leave these, and come to them, as they would not fall under the curse of Meroz, &c. and doing this both when they preach at home, and when they invade the parishes of others abroad. We cannot but testify against such flock-scattering doctrine and practices, as most sinful; and judge it to be a counterfeiting of our Lord's words, "He that despiseth you despiseth me," and also great cruelty to go and pluck weak children from the breasts, while sucking strength and nourishment from pure ordinances, and to tell them (as seceders do) that some few occasional meals, like their itinerant sermons, will be better for them, though perhaps they are not so good as their daily fare. This doctrine tends to ruin souls, by fostering ignorance, error, infidelity, looseness, carnality, worldliness, Sabbath-breaking, and all sorts of profanity through the land; for thus many thousands of ignorant Christless souls, if they obey them, must sit at home on the Lord's day, and live without the gospel, except when they get a transient sermon of this kind now and then from a seceder.

8. We must also bear witness against the brethren, their narrowing the terms both of ministerial and Christian communion, so as no reformed church ever did. 1. As to ministerial, they have come the length to refuse communion with the most strict and holy minister in Scotland, if he do not secede and approve of their long act and testimony, notwithstanding of the many visible blemishes that are in it. And this they do in contradiction to their protestation at their first secession, Nov. 16, 1733, by which they profess still to hold communion with all true Presbyterians, who groan under the evils of the time, and wrestle against them: and again, they say the same in their first testimony, page 95. But they continued short while in that moderate disposition; for they soon came to refuse communion with all ministers but these of their own presbytery. 2. As to Christian communion, they go a prodigious length in excommunicating from the Lord's table all who hear or communicate with any other ministers, although these ministers might possibly be the instruments of their conversion, and signally blessed to them; and men upon whom they can charge no defection or fault, but their not seceding from the church, and acceding to their long testimony in all points. Surely, for men to prescribe such new terms of communion to God's children before they can get their bread, terms not appointed by the Head, is both to incroach upon the Headship of Jesus Christ, and break in upon that article of our Creed, *The communion of saints.*

9. We must regret their casting slanders on their worthy ancestors, and on their mother-church, in their *Act and Testimony*, and other papers emitted or adopted by them; particularly by alledging, that the Assembly 1690 (which consisted of many confessors and old sufferers) "made no particular acknowledgment of the backslidings of the land under prelacy; and that they declared the perfidious prelates were not to be deposed for their treacherous defections: That the parliament which met at that time imposed the oath of allegiance, to exclude the oath of the covenant: That Professor Simson and Professor Campbell's errors, and these favoured by the Assembly's Shorter Catechism revised, have overspread this church like a flood: That the judicatories have overturned the foundations of the doctrine and government of Christ's church: That they have subverted both her doctrine and worship: That they have done what in them lay to pull the crown off Christ's head: That they have refused to give him the glory of his supreme Deity, and involved themselves in denying the Son of God, which is one special mark of Antichrist: they have made sinful terms of communion, &c. For all which, see Testimony, first edit. pages 51, 53, 59, 105, 109, 144, 145, 148, besides others of their papers. These are but a swatch of the many false aspersions contained in their writings, besides those which they daily cast upon their brethren in their sermons. Alas! that brethren, who are concerned for the same gospel interest, should take such methods to slander their own mother's sons, to discredit their persons and blast their ministry; especially when God is pleased to countenance severals of them remarkably in their work. There are indeed many evils in the national church; but it is sinful to calumniate her, and make her defections greater than they are.

But notwithstanding of all these extravagant steps and accusations of our seceding brethren, occasioned through their intemperate party zeal; we still have regard to several of them, as good men upon the main, and useful preachers of a crucified Jesus; and upon that account, we wish well to them, not doubting but they have as good title to our charity as the Donatists and Novatians of old, and the Brounists and M'Millanites of later years. And we pray God to incline their hearts to unite with other godly ministers.

As we have thus endeavoured to give our impartial testimony against the defections and wrong steps of the national church, and likewise of these who have of late separated from her; so we do also bear our testimony against the defections of the Episcopal clergy in meeting-houses through Scotland. Ah, how wofully have they degenerated from the principles and practice of their fathers! Of old, their fathers did not differ much from the established church-government, their doctrine and worship being very much the same: but now they are generally said to be Arminian and erroneous in their doctrine. And upon our incorporating union with England, and the Toleration in 1712, they changed their way of worship, and fell in with the English service and ceremonies, which their fathers would never receive, and which many Presbyterian writers have refuted to excellent purpose. Tho' this was a very great and remarkable change in the Scots Episcopal clergy, yet now it appears to have been introductive to a greater: for, being strongly attached to Jacobite principles and a popish Pretender, they were thereby induced to entertain favourable thoughts of other Popish superstitions and errors, which at length many of them began to vent and

stand up for: such as, A middle state for souls after death, and prayers for the dead: The making the sacrament of the Lord's Supper a proper sacrifice or propitiatory oblation for sin, and mixing the sacramental wine with water: Pleading for the necessity of absolution by a priest, and confession of sin to him, in order to the forgiveness of sin: The anointing with oil in baptism and other cases: The necessity of Episcopal ordination and baptism to salvation: And the practice of bowing towards the altar, and at the name of Jesus, with other Popish practices, for which they have no foundation nor warrant in the Bible, but to the contrary. Wherefore they do not much encourage their people to read the Scriptures, unless it be with such commentaries as they recommend to them; telling them that they must only receive the sense and meaning of the Scriptures from the church or clergy, and they must have a special regard to ancient liturgies, fathers, councils, traditions, &c. And, because the English prayer-book doth not favour some of their new usages, they would have some places of it altered, or a new liturgy composed. In the prayers for the church, they leave out the words in the English Liturgy, Church militant here in earth, to favour prayers for the dead; and also they begin to favour the Arians, by passing over the Athanasian Creed in their public worship. These innovations have occasioned in several places very great divisions both among the clergy and people: but still the innovating clergy gain ground against those who are more orthodox: and when they find people offended, or ready to leave them, upon account of their innovations, they either deny them, or artfully palliate them, until they get the people (who are but too tractable) reconciled to them; and thus they are gradually drawing nearer to the superstitions and idolatry of Rome from time to time.—Yea, some of them begin to preface and recommend Popish books, which contain devotions and prayers to the Virgin Mary, and to the saints, besides other errors. May the Lord stop their career, and preserve the land from an inundation of Popery, that Antichristian, tyrannical, bloody, blasphemous, idolatrous, and damnable religion!

In such a time of general defection and degeneracy in this and other churches, when infidelity, error, superstition, lukewarmness, deadness, carnality, profaneness, schism, and divisions were on the growing hand; what might have been expected from a holy and just God, thus dreadfully provoked, but that he would remove our candlestick out of its place, or come against us with some desolating judgment? But, behold! instead thereof, God is pleased to glorify his sovereign mercy and free grace in pitying his forlorn remnant, and to arise and maintain his own cause, by pouring out his Spirit from on high in several parts, to renew the decayed face of the earth. Amazing goodness! when the enemy was coming in as an overflowing flood, and God in justice might have given us all up for a prey to him, the Spirit of God was pleased to lift up a standard against him in a very surprising manner, for reviving his own work in many places through the world, and in this land in particular.

In or about the years 1732 or 1733, the Lord was pleased to pour out his Spirit upon the people of Saltzburg in Germany, who were living in Popish darkness, in a most uncommon manner; so that above twenty thousand of them, merely by reading the Bible, which they made a shift to get in their own language, were determined to throw off Popery, and embrace the reformed religion; yea, and to become so very zealous for the truth and gospel of Jesus Christ, as to be willing to suffer the loss of all things in the world, and actually to forsake their houses, lands, goods, and relations, that they might enjoy the pure preaching of the gospel. And O with what earnestness and tears in their eyes did they beseech Protestant ministers to preach to them in the places where they (when banished from their own country) came in different bodies! For it pleased the Lord to stir up Protestant princes and states to receive them, and provide for them, in many different places.

Near to the same time, or about the year 1735 or 1736, the Lord poured out his Spirit on many in Moravia, another country in Germany, to enlighten them in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and inspire them with extraordinary zeal to propagate it to others; insomuch that Count Zinzendorf, bishop of the Moravian church, hath sent forth his missionaries to preach the gospel, not only in Germany and other parts of Europe, but in many places of the Heathen world, where they call the Indians, the Negroes, the Hottentots, and Greenlanders, to the knowledge of a crucified Christ; and we are told of the great success of their ministry. and the Count himself travels and preaches in very many different and remote places; though it is matter of regret to hear that these zealous preachers of Christ are tainted with several errors; and so indeed were several of our reformers at the first. May the Lord purge them from all error whatsoever.

Likewise, about the year 1736, there was a marvellous outpouring of the Spirit upon the people of Northampton in New England, and neighbouring places, where God displayed the riches of his grace, and the power of his Spirit, in the wonderful conversion of several hundreds in a short time, under the ministry of Mr Jonathan Edwards and others there. O how glorious was that work! as appears by the narrative then published of it.

At the very same time, the Lord was pleased to raise up and qualify a number of students at the college of Oxford, in our neighbour nation of England, to be instruments of much good, although not altogether purged from the corruptions of that land. They joined in a religious society, wherein they agreed upon certain methods and rules for spending their time in fasting, praying, communicating, visiting the sick and the prisoners, instructing the ignorant, &c. and hence they were called Methodists. And, being afterwards ordained to the ministry, they preached with great warmth, chusing subjects very much neglected in that church, such as the doctrine of grace, of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ; of original sin and the corruption of our nature, of the nature and necessity of regeneration, and the new birth, &c. These doctrines being new, they were much admired and followed wherever they preached: they used also a good deal of freedom in speaking against the loose and negligent clergy, for which they were at length denied the use of churches; whereupon they went and preached in the fields, in houses, and wherever they might have access, collecting money for erecting schools, hospitals, and other pious uses; travelling to many places, and preaching every day, and several times in one day, having many thousands to hear them, in London, Bristol, Gloucester, through Wales, and very many places in England. Many of their hearers were brought under great impressions, shedding tears, and crying out, "What shall we do to be saved?" And great changes

were made upon very profligate persons, and upon severals who went to scoff and ridicule them Also many of the clergy were quickened to their work by them

In the year 1740, Mr Whitefield, one of the foresaid Methodists, went to New England, and Mr Gilbert Tennent after him, where they preached some months two or three times every day, with singular and extraordinary success, the people being greatly awakened, especially by Mr Tennent's preaching, so that there followed a remarkable change upon their lives and a wonderful revival and appearance of religion through all that country for several years The like also was very observable in Pensylvania, and the Jerseys, about the same time It is to be regretted that the work began to be much clouded by some zealous but imprudent ministers and a set of illiterate exhorters, who went through the country preaching and venting errors and sometimes very rash censures against their brethren and some of them pretended to visions prophecy, and great attainments and running into several extravagancies, upon which account some have endeavoured to expose the whole work as *Enthusiasm* and *D[illegible]n* But it being Satan's ordinary way when he sees Christ's kingdom advancing in a place to exert himself to bring a reproach upon religion by leading some zealous professors into errors and disorders, this can prove no more against the work in general than the delusions of the Anabaptists and Fifth-monarchy men did against the reformation But these clouds did not long continue

Likewise in the year [illegible] and afterwards, in Scotland even amidst our backsliding and divisions in some parts promising tokens began to appear of a revival of Christianity for in Edinburgh and elsewhere some new praying societies were set up and sundry students did associate with them which gave hopes of a further reviving, and for this many prayers were put up through the land and that a good time before Mr Whitefield came to Scotland, which was in the end of July, 1741, where he abode some time and preached many awakening sermons in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and other places

In Cambuslang, a small parish four miles from Glasgow, there were several praying societies, who spent much time in prayers and wrestling with God (especially in Feb 1742) that he might pity them and the whole land, and pour out his Spirit upon them, as on other places And the Rev Mr William M'Culloch, their minister, who frequently met with them, having at their desire (joined with others in the parish) set up a weekly sermon upon Thursday a little before, and preaching closely to them upon the nature and necessity of regeneration, it pleased the Lord, that, upon Thursday the 18th of Feb 1742, the holy Spirit so wrought upon his hearers that about fifty of them, with many attending them came into his house, under alarming apprehensions about the state of their souls, crying "What shall we do to be saved?" The minister, being much affected with their case, spent all that day and night with them, either separately or together, in exhortations, instructions, prayers, and singing psalms; being assisted in the work by some preachers and elders. And, the awakened and wounded people daily increasing, he was obliged to preach to and converse with them every day for a great many weeks thereafter, the people filling all the rooms of his house after sermon, and continuing in prayer and singing psalms in different companies till near midnight. Many ministers came from other places to Mr M'Culloch's assistance, with multitudes of people to hear the word, and to be witnesses of that very uncommon work, and there many of them felt the power of the word, and went home with the arrows of God sticking in their hearts, and great numbers of these convinced people attained also to a fair appearance of a hopeful outgate, having their minds filled with peace and joy in believing This was a wonderful time at Cambuslang for many months in the year 1742 and the pleasant fruits of it continued to appear both in that and the following years In summer same year, viz. 1742, the work began to spread and appear remarkably in Kilsyth Calder, Kirkintilloch Campsie, Cumbernauld, Gargunnock, Baldernock, Muth[illegible] and many other parishes, and even in Edinburgh and Glasgow there was a considerable revival in religion In May, 1742, there was published a narrative of the work at Cambuslang, attested by many, and soon after another narrative of the work at Kilsyth and parishes about it, continued in different parts, and published from time to time by the reverend Mr James Robe These narratives being well attested were spread and reprinted in America and different places of the world, they were translated into Dutch, and had several editions in Holland, and were well received by the ministers and divines there

The work indeed was very surprising and extraordinary much resembling that which was in the last century at Stewartown, Irvine kirk of Shots, and other places in the years 1625 1626 and several years after though in a very dismal backsliding time, and that work in Ireland about Antrim and the Six mile water, about the year 1628, of both which Mr Robert Fleming once minister at Cambuslang gives account in the Fulfilling of the Scriptures, as do Mr Robert Blair and Mr John Livingston in the manuscripts of their lives And there being much said and written about this work in the west of Scotland, we have thought ourselves bound to enquire into the nature, fruits and evidences of it and from what some of us have seen of that work and hath been attested by the ministers immediately concerned and others who have seen it, we judge ourselves warranted to give our testimony to it, as a glorious work of the Spirit of God, which he hath been pleased to send in his sovereign free mercy in a time of great infidelity formality and backsliding to glorify his own name, by awakening, convincing humbling, converting, comforting reviving, strengthening and confirming many souls through the land, and our reasons for it are these 1 The convictions and comforts of the people of Cambuslang, and other awakened parishes, have come to them in a scriptural way by Christ's ordinances, and particularly the word preached, and passages of scriptures carried in upon their minds suited to their cases and circumstances 2 The fruits and effects of that work in the peoples lives and conversations do evidence themselves to be from the Holy Spirit, according to the Scripture account of these fruits for those who formerly were blind and ignorant, have soon come to advance in the knowledge of Jesus Christ and divine things, and the tongue which were dumb in the things of God have soon learned to speak the language of Canaan — They who formerly were given to cursing swearing, drunkenness, Sabbath breaking, scoffing at sacred things, and other immoralities, have presently changed their course into sober living godly conference, reading praying, and singing psalms They who formerly were trusting to their own performances, attainments and self righteousness have presently renounced all these for the righteousness of Christ only, imputed to them for their justification [illegible] Co[illegible]

They who formerly were glewed to the world, and to the love of sensual and sinful things, are made willing to part with all these for the love of Jesus Christ their Saviour, desiring earnestly to be conformed to him in his contempt of the world, self denial, humility, and holiness, both in heart and life. They who before thought it an unmanly thing to shed tears for sin and piercing of Christ, have been made to mourn as for an only son, and be in bitterness as for a first born. Those who have been guilty of secret acts of injustice, have been filled with remorse for them, and made restitution to the persons injured or their children — They who hated and mocked the people of God, have their hearts warmed with love to them, and account them the excellent ones of the earth. They who before were contentious, malicious, and revengeful, do presently drop their quarrels, forgive their enemies wish well to their souls, and the salvation of all around them They who before minded only their own things, are highly concerned for the interests of Jesus Christ and for the declarative glory of God in the world. Swearers have dropt their oaths, and with reverence mention the name of God And they who loved carnal company, merry jests, profane songs, and foolish talking, seek after the company of those who will join with them in prayer, praises, and talking about their soul concerns They who before complained of nothing but bodily ailments, worldly losses, crosses, and disappointments, now complain mainly of unbelieving hearts and indwelling corruptions They who before ascribed their virtues and good things to themselves, do now exalt Christ and free grace for every attainment, and in the whole of their salvation and yet, while they ascribe all to free grace, they aim in Christ's strength at universal holiness, at the subduing of every sin, and the practice of every duty and good work, according to both the first and second tables of the law, and make conscience of stational and relational duties as well as others Families, that formerly were synagogues of Satan, are now temples where God is devoutly worshipped and many of all ages and sexes do form themselves into little societies for prayer, praise, and religious discourse And though tares are mixed among the wheat, and several hypocrites discovered yet the body of the awakened persevere, as to what can be seen, in the ways of religion

Notwithstanding of all these gracious changes, which are clear evidences of the operations of the Holy Spirit yet this blessed work is mightily opposed and reproached, and that not only by atheistical and profane men, but even by many of those who have long been praying for the effusion of the Spirit, and the coming of Christ's kingdom, particularly our seceding brethren, who have (alas!) preached, prayed, and printed against this good work, and even kept fasts in all their meetings, for putting a stop to it, as a delusion and work of the devil, who hath transformed himself into an angel of light (as they say), and have thereby given their followers very frightful notions of it, and stopt them from going near the places where they might have got full satisfaction And also they have hindered many from giving praise to God for his wonderful goodness, and from praying for the continuance and spreading of the work. May the Lord lay all this to their hearts, but not to their charge! Their main quarrel with the work seems to be, that it is begun and carried on by the instrumentality of the national church, and some whom they judge accessory to the defections therein; and because it is attended with outcryings, trembling, falling down and fainting in many of those who are awakened, which (they say) are not symptoms of a work of the Spirit

Concerning which we shall observe these few things:

1 Our brethren had certainly acted much more the part of wise and unbiassed judges, if, in obedience to Christ's commands to "try the Spirits," and "prove all things," they had used all proper means of enquiry, such as going themselves to the places, conversing with the ministers, and with the subjects wrought upon, before they had pronounced a judicial sentence in such a weighty case, and intimated it from their pulpits, and not have proceeded to a decision so hastily upon hearsays, or the malicious reports of profane spirits, and those who were enemies of the work. They also had done wisely, to have waited some time to see the issue of the work before they had past such a terrible sentence upon it for they might have remembered that it is not an easy thing for clergymen, after doing a bad thing, to own their mistake.

2 It cannot be denied but there have been many eminent godly ministers employed in promoting this work, and, though there had been some not so remarkable that way, we must not find fault with a holy sovereign God for making use of what instruments he pleases. Our brethren cannot but know that it is a most provoking sin to limit the Holy One of Israel, who frequently thinks fit to employ mean and despised instruments to do his work, that so he may stain the pride of all our glory, and shew that he is not beholden to any

3 We are grieved in our very heart, that our brethren should have adventured upon such a daring step, as by a judicial sentence to ascribe to the devil such a gracious godlike work, as that before described, when they cannot bring an instance from Scripture, or any other history, of the devil's being permitted to work in the like manner before Surely it may make us tremble to think what kind of a sin it must be to make the devil the reprover of sin, and minister of righteousness, and so to assign the office and work of the Holy Ghost to that wicked one! Doth it not look like a fearful limiting of God, for a few men to act as if they would confine the Holy Spirit's workings to themselves, and give up the ministry of all their brethren throughout the Island to the devil? As Jesus Christ himself so his ministers, Moses, John Baptist, the apostles Peter and Paul were of quite different tempers and dispositions, they rejoiced to see the Spirit poured down upon others, and to see Christ preached, sinners brought in to him, and his kingdom enlarged, whoever were the instruments of it.

4 As for the effects of this work upon the bodies of some of the awakened, such as outcrying, trembling, falling down, or fainting, these are not at all new in this land: for many instances of such like symptoms in persons under piercing convictions of sin, or under ravishing views of Christ, can be given, even since our happy Revolution, as well as in former times, as is evident from Messrs Robe, Currie, and Webster's writings on this subject. And yet we hear not of any heretofore ascribing the work in those people to the devil, nor condemning it as contrary to Scripture, upon account of these symptoms. No—for the Scripture gives frequent instances of such impressions made on the body, by the great inward exercise and concern of the mind. The sharp convictions of the three thousand, Acts ii. brought them under great agonies, being pricked as with a sword in their hearts, and forced to cry out, and say to the apostles, "Men and brethren, and what shall we do?"

The auditory being great, they must have cried in such a manner that the apostles heard them; for Peter was forced to cry aloud that they might hear him, Acts ii. 14. So Paul when he was thoroughly convinced of his sin of persecuting Christ, and the wrath due to him for it, he was seized with "trembling and astonishment, and fell to the ground," Acts ix. 4, 6. Also the jailor, when awakened to see his sinful and lost state under wrath, "trembled and fell down," saying, "What must I do to be saved?" Acts xvi. 29, 30. And it appears to have been usual in the apostles days for sinners to "fall down before God," when they were first convinced, and got the secret wickedness of their heart laid open to them by the Word, 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. Even that great man, Felix, was made to tremble under his conviction of sin and apprehension of wrath, while Paul preached to him, Acts xxiv. 25. And that mighty king, Belshazzar, was strangely affected when he saw the hand writing on the wall, which he took to be a presage of wrath against him, Dan. v. 6. "His countenance was changed, his joints loosed, and his knees smote one against another." A view of the wrath of a sin-revenging God, is enough to throw the stoutest sinner into the most terrible disorder, and to overwhelm all his senses and faculties.—We see Baruch, when in danger of the wrath of man, was so overwhelmed with grief, that he fainted under it, and cries out, Jer. xlv. 3. "Wo is me now, for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow: I fainted in my sighing, and had no rest." And how much more would he have been distressed with the immediate views and approaches of the wrath of God! for, "Who knoweth the power of his anger?" Job, when under the apprehension of God being his enemy, and his terrors pursuing him, was so little master of himself, that he "stood up, and cried in the congregation," Job xxx. 15, 28. King David says, he "roared by reason of the disquietness of his heart," Psal. xxxviii. 8. Nay, he had such impressions of the wrath of God upon his soul, that they made all his flesh to tremble, Psal. cxxix. 120. "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments." Heman saith, "While I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted," Psal. lxxxviii. 15. We see also how the prophet Habakkuk was seized with the greatest bodily distress, with "quivering lips, and trembling," over all his body, at the view of approaching wrath, Hab. iii. 16. Again, it ought to be remembered, that God hath told us, that in the New Testament days he would pour out his Spirit upon people in such a manner, that they should "look upon him they pierced by their sins, and mourn, and be in bitterness," as parents "for an only son or first born." Now, it is well known that some parents will not only cry out bitterly, but also faint, upon such occasions; nay, some will be brought to such agonies and faintings, by the mere apprehension and prospect of man's wrath and of temporal difficulties: and have they not much greater cause for them, who get a clear and manifest discovery of the heinous guilt of their sins, and of the wrath of an angry God hanging over them? Who can paint forth the distress of these poor creatures, whose spirits are wounded by the amazing apprehensions of God's wrath for sin, and the fearful expectations of judgments and fiery indignation, without having any view of relief? Such a wise man as Solomon would not have been surprised to see such persons tremble, cry out, or faint; for, saith he, "A wounded spirit who can bear!" Proverbs xviii. 24.

We read also in Scripture of persons fainting upon other occasions. Jacob fainted for joy, when he heard that his son was alive and highly exalted; so Daniel, after singular manifestations from God, fainted and was sick certain days, Dan viii. 27. and x 8, 9. And the apostle John, when he saw the Lord in his glory, fell at his feet as a dead man. So it is no wonder that a poor soul, that was like to sink in despair under a sense of sin and wrath, when coming out of this plunge to a surprising view of Christ's mercy, loveliness, and fulness, should in like manner be overwhelmed and faint for love and joy. Wherefore it is our duty to put favourable constructions upon the various cases of awakened and exercised souls, when thereby they are thrown into extasies, faintings, or bodily distresses. The holy Spirit is a free sovereign agent; and, in times of large effusions, he may, for his own wise ends, take an uncommon latitude in his way of dealing with sinners, for bringing them into Christ. And as their discoveries of sin and wrath, and the commotion in their affections, prove very different; so the impressions upon their bodies must be either less or more, and exceeding various, according to the measure and degree of inward exercise and concern of their minds; for as their sorrow for piercing Christ by their sins is compared to that of parents for an only son, which admits of many different degrees, and produceth very different effects in different persons; so it must be unreasonable in any to require instances in Scripture for every minute circumstance of the innumerable various cases of persons brought into Christ; for then the Spirit of God must have enlarged the Scriptures into very many different volumes, which had not been convenient for us. If we read the accounts given us of the conversions of Augustine, Luther, Junius, Beza, Latimer, Bolton, Professor Halyburton, and many other eminent saints, we will find particular circumstances in them for which no Scripture precedent can be shewn: but no wise man will say upon that account, that the work in them was delusive or diabolical.

But let some object what they will against the conversions in the West, because of the outward impressions attending them in severals (for in many the changes are wrought without any noise at all): It is our judgment, if these bitter throws and agonies of some, have a merciful issue in landing them in Jesus Christ and true holiness, as it is visible they do in the most part; then there is great matter of praise, whatever way the Lord take for awakening and humbling them before hand. But seeing worthy Mr Edwards of Northampton hath written two treaties concerning this extraordinary work of the Spirit of God, and hath taken notice of all the prejudices and objections of adversaries, we judge it unnecessary to add any more to what he hath written so fully and to such excellent purpose. May the Lord, by new showers from above, continue, revive, increase, and spread this blessed work through the land and all corners of the earth! Amen and Amen.

That we may draw to a conclusion, we shall briefly sum up the principal sins, errors, evils and defections in the church and land, which we think ourselves bound to lament and mourn over, declare, warn, and bear testimony against, in order to promote reformation, and healing in the land: For although God, in his boundless sovereignty and rich grace, be pleased in a backsliding time to grant some remarkable reviving to his work in particular corners, to shew his willingness to return to his ancient dwelling-place; yet we despair of any general reviving or national reformation, until we are made sensible of public sins, errors and defec-

tions, as well as these of a more private nature. Wherefore we desire to be humbled for, declare and testify against, all doctrines and practices which are opposite to the Bible, and to our Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, Directories for Worship and Church government, which we judge drawn out of, and founded upon, the Scriptures of truth.

And particularly, against all Deistical and Socinian errors, and doctrines, which tend to decry the necessity of supernatural revelation. and cry up the sufficiency of reason or the light of nature to guide men to eternal happiness.

And against all Arian errors, and these doctrines which any ways disparage the Christian revelation, or derogate from the scheme of salvation thro' the mediation and righteousness of Jesus Christ our only Saviour; or from the doctrine of the glorious Trinity, and the oneness of the Godhead; or from Christ's true supreme Deity, his self-existence, necessary existence, independence, and equality with the Father; or from the true Deity of the Holy Ghost, and his equality with the Father and the Son; or from the truth of Christ's manhood, and of his Priestly office, and the necessity of his death as a real and proper sacrifice to satisfy Divine justice for our sins.

All Popish errors, idolatry and superstition, maintained either by professed Papists, or by Protestants who are making advances towards Popery, by pleading for a middle state for souls departed; prayers for the dead; the Eucharist's being a proper sacrifice for sin; the necessity of confessing sin to the priest, and of the priest's absolution in order to the forgiveness of sin; of mixing the sacramental wine with water; of bowing to the altar, to the East, and at the name of Jesus; of kneeling at the sacrament, observing saints days and uninstituted festivals, and putting them on a level with the Lord's day; the cross in baptism, the organ in praise, the reading of prayers, and other human inventions in God's worship and service.

All Pelagian and Arminian doctrines, which derogate from God's efficacious free grace in saving sinners, or put it in the power of a man's own free will or natural abilities to repent, believe, or convert himself; and make a necessary connection betwixt a man's moral seriousness and his obtaining of saving grace. Also all these doctrines which tend to exalt self, or any ways place it in God's room; and these which make self love, and the desire of our own happiness, the proper spring and principle of all virtuous and religious actions.

The magistrate's assuming the power of the keys, and all Erastian encroachments upon the intrinsic power of the church, or upon Christ's headship and supremacy over her. The granting an almost boundless toleration to all sects, errors, heresies and innovations. The imposing the sacramental test upon officers civil and military when out of Scotland, as a necessary qualification for their offices; whereby the holy sacrament is much debased and profaned. The multiplying of oaths without necessity; introducing the new form of swearing by kissing the gospels, the Yule vacance, the repealing of the laws against witchcraft, &c.

The imposing the yoke of patronage upon the church, and spoiling Christian congregations of their right to chuse their own pastors, and obtruding pastors upon them. As also the practice of these ministers or preachers, who contribute to encourage, strengthen or bind the yoke of patronage upon the church, by allowing their friends to apply to patrons and procure presentations for them; or by accepting these presentations, and cleaving to them when obtained. And the practice of those ministers or judicatories, who encourage or support these accepters in this pernicious course, or who obtrude them or any other persons upon parishes against their consent.

The denying the lawfulness or obligation of our national covenant engagements, the warrantableness of national churches, Confession of Faith, subordination of church judicatories one to another; the maintaining the independency of single congregations upon any superior church-judicatory; the lodging the power of the keys, not in the hands of church officers, but in the communion of the faithful.

The prosecuting or censuring of ministers for preaching or protesting against any of the evils or defections of the time, such as the despising of Christ's flock, making intrusions upon them, incroaching upon the rights and liberties of the church, or Christ's Headship over her, &c.

The neglect and unfrequent administration of the Lord's supper, and the abuse and profanation of it, by admitting ignorant or ungodly persons to it. As also the neglect of appointing national fasts, and days for humiliation and extraordinary prayer, in a time of national defections, and of abounding sins and provocations, when many spiritual judgments are inflicted, and other great judgments are impending over us. And, when such fasts come to be appointed, alas! what an aversion is there to a particular condescendence of the sins and defections which are the true cause of the Lord's controversy with the land!

Likewise we judge ourselves bound to bewail, lament, and witness against, all these God dishonouring sins and evils which universally abound and prevail among all ranks and sorts of men; such as ignorance and forgetfulness of God their Creator and Preserver; Atheism, infidelity, and enmity to God; ingratitude to God for mercies; putting the creatures, the word, and self, in the room of God; consulting with necromancers, wizards and charmers; ascribing our mercies to fortune or second causes rather than to God. Self-love, self seeking, unbelief, distrust of God, hatred of him and of his image in others. Pride, presumption, carnal security; loving pleasures more than God. Restraining of prayer before God in secret; neglect of family-worship; tempting God by neglecting means, using unlawful means, and trusting in lawful means. Superstition and false worship; giddiness and unsettledness in religion, and drinking in error. Mean and low thoughts of Christ, and of the infinite love of God in providing Christ to be a Surety and Sacrifice for us. Contempt of the glorious gospel, and the glad tidings it brings; and mens unfruitfulness under it Not receiving and loving of Jesus Christ; not relying on Christ as all our hope; not making use of Christ in all his offices, not rejoicing in Christ and him crucified. Mens resting upon their duties and frames for acceptance with God: their joining something of their own with Christ's righteousness for their justification before God, and not accounting all things loss and dung for Christ, that they may be found in him, not having their own righteousness, which is nothing but filthy rags. Grieving of the Holy Spirit, sinning him away from ordinances, not lamenting the withdrawing of the Spirit, nor wrestling for his return. Opposing and reproaching the work of the Spirit in awakening and convincing sinners; calling it enthusiasm, delusion, or ascribing it to Satan. Blind and intemperate zeal; discontent and impatience under the dispensations of Divine Providence. Backslidings from God, and the decay of the life

and power of godliness. Setting our affections upon earthly enjoyments and sensual satisfactions; and neglecting these things wherein our chief happiness doth consist, namely, the enjoying of God, and communion with him. Our unthankful forgetting of the many signal deliverances which God hath wrought for this church and land; and our unthankfulness for and abuse of the valuable mercies we still enjoy, such as health, peace, plenty; freedom from pestilence, sword and famine; and the continuance of the gospel and pure ordinances with us. Our minding our own things, more than the things of Jesus Christ. Our little praying for the coming of Christ's kingdom, and for the peace and prosperity of Jerusalem.

Our neglecting the ordinances of God's appointment, careless attending upon them, and not regarding them as trysting places for meeting with God, and as means of communion with him. Our being wise above what is written, and advancing mens devices before Divine appointments. Our resting upon outward attending of ordinances, and a name to live, without the new birth, and a work of grace in our souls. Our contenting ourselves with man's teaching, without the teachings and influences of the Spirit with the Word. Our being little affected or afflicted with the blasting of ordinances, and the suspending of the Spirit's influences. Our unworthy communicating, and formal approaches to God at his holy table; neglecting due preparation, by self-examination, secret humiliation, renewing covenant with God, and wrestling with him for his presence. Our losing soon the impressions of Christ's sufferings, his precious blood, and matchless love, set forth in that ordinance; and not living answerably thereto. Our putting our hearing, praying, communicating, charitable acts, just dealing, or moral honesty, in the room of glorious Christ, who alone is "the Lord our righteousness."

We also lament and witness against the abounding profanation of God's holy name, by the irreverend use of it in common discourse, by formal and hypocritical addresses to him, by customary and rash swearing, cursing, blaspheming, perjury, swearing falsely in matters of trade or taxes, bribing, and tempting others to do so. By perfidious dealing with God, in breaking both national and personal covenants, sacramental vows, and sick-bed resolutions. Decay of zeal for maintaining of truth, purity and piety, in opposition to abounding error, superstition, and profanity. The profaning and abusing of God's titles, attributes, ordinances, Scriptures, servants, and providences; by many scoffing at sacred things, jesting upon the Scriptures, mocking the professors of religion, misconstructing God's providences, wrestling and misapplying his word to favour their corrupt sentiments and practices; vain jangling, and disputing about smaller points, and taking up their thoughts and time therewith, to the neglecting and eating out the life of religion. Slighting, aspersing, and reviling many of God's faithful servants, thereby marring the success of their ministry, and scattering their flocks, to the prejudice and ruin of many precious souls. Many taking up a profession of greater strictness in religion than others, while strangers to humiliation for sin, regeneration, heart-holiness, tenderness of walk, humbleness of mind, meekness, and the true spirit of Christianity. Alas! many are so puffed up with pride, vanity, self-conceit, and contempt of others, that they cast out of their charity and communion every one that agrees not to their sentiments and practices in all respects, though some of these have more evident marks of the image of God upon them than they themselves! And many are hereby tempted to infidelity, even to mock, hate, and cast off all religion, because of the divisions among the professors of it. Ah! many professed Christians show a great propension to exalt natural reason, and decry supernatural revelation; to magnify the religion of nature, and disparage the religion of Jesus! to ascribe such to man's free-will and natural powers, and overlook the free grace of God, and preventing the work of his Spirit. Many speak more of their own moral performances, than of Christ's imputed righteousness; and seem to regard Christ more as a pattern than as a propitiation; exalt their natural powers and self-righteousness, through ignorance of the righteousness of God; cry up the preaching of morality, while they themselves remain immoral, and ignorant of their own corrupt natural estate, and of the nature and necessity of regeneration. Alas! there is ground to fear that many outwardly assent to our Confession of Faith, who scarcely read it, consider it, or believe it; and it is to be feared that severals, even preachers, may come to subscribe it, as those of the church of England do their Thirty-nine Articles, rather as *vinculum pacis,* than as *vinculum veritatis.*

We also bewail and testify against the profanation of the Lord's day which sadly abounds, as being a nursery of, and an inlet to, all manner of sin and corruption: by many speaking their own words on this day, and discoursing of worldly affairs and business: By many doing their own work, such as unnecessary pieces of servile labour, or travelling about worldly business: By many finding their own pleasures, by idle walking, needless visits, and other worldly diversions and recreations: While in the mean time few make conscience of setting apart and spending this day as a day of sacred rest, according to its institution. for entertaining serious thoughts of the works of God and redeeming love, for attending religious worship without distraction, for promoting spirituality and heavenly-mindedness, for holding communion with God through Jesus Christ, and for loosing their hearts from the world, and preparing for death and heaven. Alas! many, instead of such exercises, do dedicate this holy day to profanity; and, in place of serving God the Author of it, they serve the devil and their lusts upon it, by gaming, drinking, swearing, uncleanness, filthy speeches, jesting upon sacred things, and reproaching the devout worshippers of God! And so they go faster to hell upon the Lord's day, than upon any other day of the week.

We likewise bewail and testify against the stational and relational sins which abound in the land, among parents and children, masters and servants, husbands and wives, magistrates and subjects, ministers and people; superiors, inferiors, and equals. Alas! many superiors are guilty of contempt of their inferiors, of proud and imperious carriage towards them, of oppressing them, or ruling them with rigour, of discouraging them from what is good, and encouraging them to what is evil. Many inferiors are guilty of despising their superiors, envying their situation, disobedience to their just commands and counsels, and not imitating their good example; and particularly many children are thus dreadfully guilty with respect to their godly parents. And, among equals, there is little brotherly love, mutual esteem, and good offices to be seen; but, instead thereof, very much appears of hatred, anger, malice, envy, evil-speaking, reproaching and backbiting, and also of tempting and encouraging one another to sin. Ah! many parents forget their engagements at baptism, and neglect to

instruct and pray for their children, to admonish and reprove them when needful, and either do not correct them at all, or do it unduly, provoking them to wrath. Oh! many heads of families neglect family-religion, prayer, praises, and catechising of children and servants, and requiring an account of the sermons they hear, or, at best, they perform family prayer and other duties in a cold and formal manner. Oh how many have no more care of the souls of their families than if they had none! They seek only their own things, pursuing the business of a present animal life, and not the things of Jesus Christ, or what concerns their spiritual or eternal life! And many who have formerly come good length, and kept good order in their families, have sadly declined, lost their wonted liveliness and spirituality in God's service, and let their duties dwindle away into a dead formality, contenting themselves with external performances, ordinances, and communions, without any communion with God in them.

We must also regret the untenderness and looseness of the walk and conduct of some in the ministry, whereby not a few are tempted to abhor the offerings of the Lord; and a Gallio like indifferency in others about the public interest of Christ, if it go well with their own private affairs. And few, alas! are lamenting after a departing God, and searching into, or mourning for, the causes as they ought, or wrestling for a returning God, and a returning glory.— Many preachers are running unsent, and using means to thrust themselves into the vineyard, not waiting for God's call, nor regarding the prayers or inclinations of his people, and who in their sermons generally confine themselves to subjects of natural religion and moral virtue, and neglect the doctrines of Christ and the Spirit, the peculiar glories of Christianity, and do not preach the absolute freeness of grace through Christ as the spring of a sinner's justification and salvation. Likewise, not a few ministers and Christians want love and a due forbearance to others who differ from them in some lesser matters, entertain harsh thoughts and break out into uncharitable censures and severe reflections one against another, to the hindrance of that sweet fellowship and social prayer which they should have together, and to the taking them off, in a great measure, from the vitals and essentials of religion, and from pure ordinances, which God continues still to own.

We lament the malicious and revengeful thoughts of many, and the frequent sallies of their ungoverned passions, which sometimes break out into provoking language and acts of violence, and even into bloodshed and murders, and often the law is not duly execute against murderers.

We testify against the prevailing sins of tippling, drunkenness, gluttony, chambering, wantonness, fornication, adultery, unnatural lusts, and all sorts of uncleanness, wanton gestures, obscene talk, immodest apparel, lascivious songs and dancings, lottery games, balls, assemblies, and stage-plays, which, however fashionable they may be, we look upon as unbecoming the gravity, seriousness, faith and hope of true Christians, who profess to place all their happiness in the enjoyment of God, and to be careful to abstain from all appearance of evil, and wait for the coming of their Lord and Saviour from heaven.

Likewise, we bear witness against the prevailing evils of stealing, robbing, extortion, defrauding, prodigality, simony, bribery, running of goods, mens using unlawful occupations, living above their incomes, undertaking vexatious law suits, pleading for causes manifestly unjust: Lying, slandering, spreading evil reports, aggravating smaller faults, rash censuring, supporting false witnesses, backbiting, scolding, scoffing, misconstructing the actions, words, or intentions of others. Mens discontent with their lot and condition in the world, envying or grieving at the prosperity or credit of their neighbours; being glad at their adversity, miscarriage, or disgrace, coveting or entertaining inordinate motions and affections to those things which belong to their neighbours.

Moreover, we bewail and testify against all the foresaid sins, evils, and defections of the land, as being highly aggravated in the sight of God, being committed against clear light, the Spirit's strivings, manifold warnings, alluring mercies, solemn covenants, and wonderful deliverances, against great pains taken by God upon the land to reclaim and reform them, such as reproofs, challenges, exhortations, expostulations, invitations, promises, threatnings, and lesser judgments. And these our sins and defections have been long continued in, until very many are become secure, senseless, and hardened in them, nay, even bold and impudent, so far as to avow and justify them, to despise admonitions, and mock at reproofs. Likewise they are turned very universal: all ranks and degrees of persons are involved in the guilt of them, rich and poor, great and small, nobility, gentry, magistrates, ministers, commons, &c. Alas! our nobility and persons of distinction, who once appeared with zeal for God's truths, and for advancing reformation, are sadly degenerated, and generally corrupted, either with erroneous principles, or vicious practices. Our commons, many of them are destroyed with ignorance, profanity, or earthly mindedness. Our professors of religion, alas! carnality and formality prevail among them, and lively piety is like to dwindle away. Oh how desperate doth our case appear when under such terrible aggravations of guilt! How ripe do we seem to be for desolating strokes, and sweeping judgments! What cause have we to look out for them every day, and to fear and tremble before a holy, just, and provoked God! according to these awful texts of Scripture, 2 Chron xxxvi 15, 16. Isa xxii 12 &c. Jer. vi 15. viii. 12 xi. 10, 11 xxii 7, 8, 9. Amos viii 2, 3. &c. Micah iii 11, 12. Hos xiii 5, 6, 7. which is very applicable to our case.

But is there no hope in Israel concerning this thing? "Is there not balm in Gilead?" "Is there not a Physician there?" Is there not virtue in Christ's blood for the most desperate cases that churches can be in? Oh if ministers and people were applying to him by faith, there would be hope. Should we not then plead with our mother to consider her defections from God, and to be deeply humbled and mourn for them, and to turn from them to the Lord by true repentance and reformation, and to pray and plead his promises of mercy through Jesus Christ, such as that in Jer. iii 22. "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings!" We have very lately had a surprising evidence of the Lord's willingness to return and heal us; what a wonderful step has he made towards it, by pouring out his Spirit upon several congregations of the land! O what encouragement doth this give the whole land to apply to him for mercy, and to set about reformation! particularly to our General Assemblies and all inferior judicatories, to go on and meet a merciful returning God, who has no delight in our ruin, and that in the way of faith, humiliation, and prayer, essaying sincerely to do all in

their power to remove the grounds of the Lord's controversy, redress grievances, amend what is wrong, and take every stumbling-block out of the way of serious well meaning people, which is improven as an occasion of our lamentable divisions. For these ends, let us humbly plead with our Mother.

I. In as much as the church is, and ought to be, the pillar and ground of the truth, and her judicatories are bound to assert, maintain, and defend every one of God's truths when attacked by adversaries, to transmit them in their purity to posterity, and to give their testimony and approbation to them for upholding them against those teachers who would overturn them, and seeing all the members of the judicatories in this church have subscribed our Confession of Faith, and profess to adhere to the truths therein, we humbly plead that they may shew more concern for the support of these truths than has been done of late years. It is to be regretted that not only the Episcopal clergy, but several ministers of this church, have taught and vented errors, and recommended erroneous books, and some of them have been arraigned before the General Assembly, as Professor Simson, Professor Campbell and Dr Wishart, and though we are far from thinking that this church hath adopted or homologated any of their errors, yet many well wishers of the church are of opinion they were not sufficiently animadverted upon, but too easily dismissed, which may give encouragements to others to spread error. And therefore we beg leave to plead that the General Assembly would in the most proper manner testify their abhorrence of these errors whereof the foresaid persons were accused, and these Popish errors which the Episcopal clergy are introducing, and other errors which are propagated through the island, and give warning to all the ministers and members of this church to guard against them, and study to prevent the infection of them, and particularly these errors which strike against the doctrine of the glorious Trinity, and the oneness of the Godhead, or against the supreme Deity of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, or against the doctrines of free grace, in our justification and salvation, and of the glory of God being the chief spring and motive of virtue and religion. And also, that the Assembly would declare, that it is not sufficient to assoilzie any man processed for error, that he profess his adherence to our Confession of Faith, or explain his words into a sense consistent with it, but that he expressly renounce those errors which are charged upon him from his words, according to the plain and obvious sense of them.

II. We would also plead, that though the precious doctrines of the supremacy and headship of our Lord Jesus Christ over his church, and the church's intrinsic power derived from him, are well asserted in our Confession of Faith, Larger Catechism, Form of Church government, approven by Assembly 1645, Form of Process 1707, and other public deeds of this church, agreeably to the holy Scriptures, yet, in regard some things have been done both of old and of late which appear not so agreeable to these excellent principles, that the Assembly would declare their detestation of every thing, whether in sentiment or practice, that is inconsistent with Christ's Headship, and the church's intrinsic power, asserted in our Confession of Faith, particularly chap. xxx. sect 1, 2. in these words: "The Lord Jesus Christ, as King and Head of his church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate. To these officers the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed," &c.

III. We must likewise plead with our Mother, to cleave closely to our reformation principles, and carry always towards the grievance of patronage as a sinful usurpation upon the church of God, as the church hath frequently declared both of old and of late. And although we know there have been laudable endeavours used by this church to be freed from this usurpation, such as the commission's address in the year 1712, approved by the next Assembly, the memorial of Assembly 1715, the commission's sending minister's to London, in 1717, to seek relief from it, and also the commission 1734, and again the Assembly 1735, sending commissioners with addresses for repealing the patronage act; and when all these endeavours proved unsuccessful, the Assembly 1736 did, by their solemn and deliberate resolution printed to the world, give it as their judgment that it was still most just and fit, upon the first favourable occasion, to apply for redress of this grievance; and did record their weighty grounds and reasons for it; and also the said Assembly 1736, act 14. did assert our principles against intrusions, and homologate our standards and former good acts of Assembly relative thereto. Yet we cannot but lament, that, notwithstanding all these deeds, there are many ministers and preachers who still encourage and strengthen the usurpation of patronage, and chuse settlements by presentations rather than by gospel calls for which the law still leaves an open door. And the judicatories connive at this their unaccountable practice, and even obtrude severals of them upon reluctant congregations, capable and willing to make a right choice for themselves, which has occasioned a dismal scattering of the flock of Christ, and miserable animosities, disorders, and distractions in many places of the land, to the great hindrance of the gospel. For remedying whereof, it is humbly proposed, 1. That the General Assembly would declare, that Presbyteries having free access to moderate in calls to vacant parishes, and congregations having freedom to chuse their ministers, is a part of the discipline and government of this church, which by the Formula 1711, all ministers and preachers are bound to support and maintain, and to do nothing directly or indirectly to the prejudice thereof, as it is there worded. 2. That the Assembly would discharge all ministers and preachers to take measures to obtrude themselves or others upon congregations against their will, by presentations or any other way, and to declare if any, by his accepting of or adhering to a presentation, shall stand in the way of a Presbytery's free moderation, or a parish's free election, he shall be looked upon as a deserter of the principles of this church, and treated as guilty of contravening his solemn engagements by the said Formula and otherwise. 3. That the Assembly would inforce the 14th act of Assembly 1736, against intrusions, and take care in all settlements, and in all acts which may be framed concerning them, to maintain our principles, and the just rights of Christian congregations; and expressly discharge all inferior judicatories to plant any parish contrary to the mind of the eldership and Christian people, with certification, seeing there is no ground to expect that the great ends of a gospel ministry can be obtained in such forced settlements. 4. That the Assembly would enjoin all judicatories and ministers to have a due regard to all the members of Christ's flock, and to all serious praying Christians, and not to despise those of them who are poor and mean in the world, but to esteem and put honour upon them, and seek an interest in their prayers, and have a regard to their

inclinations in planting parishes: and in all decisions about settlements and cases wherein the glory of God and good of souls are highly concerned, to guard against the fear of man, which brings a snare. And to beware of all such lax managements, or untender steps, as may drive good men from judicatories or the communion of the church. 5. That the Assembly take care that all concerned in calling of ministers have freedom to act, without any compulsion or undue influence. 6. That the Assembly order, that congregations who have been aggrieved by the settlement of ministers without their consent, shall be treated with compassion and lenity; and to fall upon methods to remove such ministers from them, when parishes cannot be brought to submit to them. 7. That the Assembly appoint, that all appeals from the sentences of synods be only to the General Assembly; and, if there be any of them which the Assembly cannot overtake, that they be referred to the commission, to be judged by them at meeting immediately after the Assembly, when their diets are numerous; it not being agreeable to Presbyterian principles and parity, that a great number of ministers should be subjected to the authority and judgement of a lesser. 8. That presbyteries be strictly enjoined to be most careful and conscientious in licensing men to preach the gospel, and in observing the many good acts of Assembly thereanent; and that both presbyteries and synods shall enquire, not only into their literature, but also into their sense and savour of true godliness, and into their acquaintance with the true gospel-scheme of justification, and the way of making use of Christ, and living by faith upon him, and with the work of the Spirit upon their souls, and experimental religion; and also enquire into their sentiments concerning patronage and other grievances of the church: And that presbyteries recommend none to synods or other presbyteries to be entered upon trials, but such as they can safely attest in terms of these acts and rules. 9. That the Assembly declare, that as it is the duty of ministers, so they are still at full freedom, to testify in a becoming manner, and upon proper grounds, against the prevailing corruptions of the times, and even against what is wrong in the acts and proceedings of church judicatories. 10. That presbyteries be injoined to be strictly conscientious in attesting ruling elders who are to sit in Assemblies or commissions, and particularly that they be qualified in terms of the 9th act of Assembly 1722, as their attestation is appointed to bear; and that every presbytery shall cause read the said act every time before they either chuse or attest any elder. 11. That the Assembly make more narrow enquiry into the right and warrant which colleges and royal burghs have to chuse ministers or elders to sit in the General Assembly.

IV. We humbly plead that national fasts and thanksgivings may be more frequently appointed, when God in his providence calls unto them; and that no occasion be given to any to say that the church has resigned her power into the hands of the magistrate. And seeing at this time there is a manifest growth of infidelity, error and impiety; of defections, gross sins and abominations; of contempt of God, perjuries, and unnecessary multiplying of oaths; of woful divisions, breaches, and want of brotherly love and Christian charity; besides grieving of the Holy Spirit, and manifold spiritual plagues every where abounding; and also the terrible judgments of the sword and plague raging in other nations, which may very soon reach us; all which are visible tokens of the Lord's anger and indignation gone out against us, and call us loudly to mourning and humiliation before the Lord: Wherefore we think it our duty to plead with humility, that the General Assembly would lay these things to heart, and appoint a solemn national fast to be religiously observed because of them: and that they would be more particular than heretofore, in enumerating the grounds and causes of the said fast, namely, Our own and our forefathers sins and defections, by covenant breaking, and treacherous dealing with God, and the fearful indignities done to our solemn covenants in the late times, taken notice of by the Assembly 1701; the blasphemous advancing the magistrate's supremacy over the house of God; the imposing and taking of sinful oaths, especially the self-contradictory *Test;* the shedding the blood of God's servants and people for not complying with the evil courses of these times; the *Erastian* encroachments made upon the Headship of Christ, and the rights and privyleges of his church; the encouragement which is given to all manner of errors; our backslidings from reformation principles, the intrusions made upon congregations, and the scattering of the Lord's flock; the abounding of all manner of profanity and immorality, Atheism and blasphemy, especially in our armies and fleets, which, alas! are so great and avowed in them, that, instead of serving as a hedge and defence to us, their sins may provoke the Lord to bring desolating strokes both on them and us. These, and many other sins, evils and defections, before mentioned and witnessed against in this *Testimony,* (to which we refer) may very fitly be brought in among the causes of a national fast, seeing they greatly abound in the land; and especially that sin which may be reckoned the source of all the rest, namely, the "undervaluing of redeeming love, and slighting of the Lord Jesus Christ" offered to us in the gospel, and our woful misimprovement of the means of grace, and walking unanswerably to them.

V. As we think ourselves bound thus to plead with our Mother, to do away her sins and provocations, and put a stop to all her defections; so we think it our duty to plead with her to deliberate upon, and take the most proper and effectual methods for reviving the power of godliness, and the practice of gospel-holiness; and particularly that our General Assemblies, when they meet, would set apart diets for these ends, and would also recommend it warmly to synods, presbyteries, kirk-sessions, and private Christians, to consult together for promoting religion and godliness in the bounds where they live, and to have their set times of meeting for spiritual conference, fasting, prayer and wrestling, for the down-pouring of the Spirit upon the whole church and land, for awakening, convincing, converting and reforming a secure and sinful people; and at these meetings to quicken, excite and exhort one another to all religious duties and Christian offices, looking earnestly to the Lord for his Spirit's influence and special blessing upon all these means and endeavours, and continuing still in the use of means, waiting for a more plentiful effusion of the Spirit, until at length the whole land arrive at the happy frame and disposition of our forefathers, when they with one consent renewed covenant with God, and dedicated themselves and their posterity unto the Lord. And that they recommend it especially to the ministers, to be exemplary and actively instrumental in such religious projects and designs among their people; and even to travail in birth till Christ be formed in their souls; and carefully to observe the directions of the 7th act of Assembly 1736, concerning the preaching of Christ and regene-

ration to them, and pressing morality in a gospel-strain, and in their ministrations to make a difference betwixt the precious and the vile, between humble, praying, circumspect Christians, and formal professors; to honour them that fear the Lord, though they be poor; to speak well of them, support their characters against enemies and scoffers; and carry with them greater familiarity to them than others.

O how pleasant and desirable a sight would it be, to see ministers, elders, and Christians, joining in such noble designs and endeavours! What a promising token for good would it be, if all the ministers and members of this church were setting about wrestling and prayer for the Lord's returning unto us by his Spirit, and endeavouring a personal and general reformation of all that is wrong among us, and in this way studying to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, with all lowliness, meekness and long-suffering, forbearing one another in love! These things, if gone into, we hope would tend to the glory of God, the honour and welfare of this church, the credit of the holy ministry, the edification and comfort of the Lord's people, and the healing of our present miserable rents and breaches.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IT is fit the Reader should know, that the preceding *Testimony* was signed and sent to the press before the Assembly 1744, otherwise some occurrences, which have made some noise since that time, had been noticed in it, some of which I shall mention in a *Postscript* after the Adherence and subscriptions subjoined to this Testimony.

Likewise it is proper to acquaint the Reader (lest he be surprised with the paucity of the subscribers) that there were not very many who had opportunity to see and peruse the Testimony before it was published; and a great part of those who did see it, though they agreed to the scope and substance of it, in regard it contained their sentiments, yet they thought not proper to subscribe it upon some prudential considerations, which (with all submission) I cannot say have the same weight with me as with them. Yet at the same time I am bound, in justice, to own, that sundry of these are persons whom I highly value, and reckon to be real friends of truth and reformation as well as others. Wherefore, when I found things turn out in this manner, and not as I expected, I desisted from asking more subscriptions to this *Testimony*, which (as told in the *Preface* and in the *Adherence*) was not designed to be the badge of a party, or a term of communion. But if any now, upon seeing and considering this *Testimony* when published, with the reasons for it, shall incline to join with it, and send their subscriptions to the Printer, with such form of Adherence, Exceptions or Amendments, as they think proper, they shall be taken in, and justice done them in a second Edition, if it be called for.

As for those who have willingly offered their subscriptions to this Essay, I could not warrantably suppress them, though few, without their own consent. God may countenance the honest mints of a small number when he think fit. Wherefore I shall annex them here, with the form of *Adherence* which they agreed unto

ADHERENCE.

WE, whose names are underwritten, having seen and considered the above Paper, called, *A Fair and Impartial Testimony*, &c. do hereby declare, That we think the scope and intention of it good, and that it doth express the sentiments of many ministers, elders, and Christian people of the church of *Scotland*, concerning the principles, wrestlings, and attainments of the said church, and concerning the defections, corruptions, and evils therein mentioned. And in regard the said testimony seems to be drawn up with impartiality, plainness, and uprightness of design, not to be the badge of a party, or a term of communion, but a banner for truth, a prompter to reformation, and the means of healing breaches: we humbly judge it needful and seasonable in this day of *Backsliding* and *Division*; hoping it may be useful for maintaining and preserving truth, purity and godliness in the present age, and for transmitting the same to posterity; and that it will either be some check to the progress of corruption, or a standing witness against it. Wherefore we join with the said *Testimony* in witnessing for the truths, and against the evils therein specified, and in pleading with our *Mother* to exert herself to stop *Defection*, and essay *Reformation*. And have subscribed these presents,

Jo. Willison, M.A. Minister at *Dundee*.
Jo. Gillies, M.A. Minister at *Carraldstone*.
Jo. Row, M.A. Minister at *Navar* and *Lethnot*.
Ja. Small, M.A. Minister at *Carmylie*.
Dav. Blair, M.A. Minister at *Brechin*.
Geo. Aitken, M.A. Minister at *Montrose*.
Geo. Lyon, M.A. Minister at *Longforgan*.
Geo. Mair, M.A. Minister at *Murroes*.
George Peter, Elder.
Gideon Rutherford, Elder.

POSTSCRIPT.

THE reason why some late occurrences are not in the *Testimony* was given before. Wherefore I must now add a word relating to some of them. And, 1st, concerning Mr Leechman's sermon on prayer, first published last year, which was quarrelled by the presbytery of Glasgow, and brought before the synod, and afterwards to the Assembly, this year 1744. Had Mr Leechman written what he saith in that sermon by way of a letter to a Deist or an enemy to prayer, in order to prove the reasonableness and advantages

of prayer, it might have passed without observation: But for a preacher of Christ to deliver such a sermon to a Christian audience, that perhaps never heard him before, and might never hear him again, and to publish it too, in this form, to the whole world, is to me very surprising and offensive. For when he proposes to teach his Christian hearers and readers the nature of prayer, he presents God as the object of it merely as our Creator, without any relation to *Jesus Christ* the only Mediator betwixt God and man: He never speaks of God as upon a throne of grace, nor of the merit, satisfaction, or intercession of Christ, through which prayer can only be offered acceptably to God, more than the old Heathens; nor speaks he of the influence or assistance of the *Holy Spirit*, by which the duty is to be performed. The disposition of mind which he chiefly recommends to his hearers, for acceptance with God, is an assured trust and confidence in the mercy and goodness of their Creator, without once telling them through all the sermon (which is long) of the channel through which God's mercy and goodness doth flow to men, that he is a "consuming fire" to sinners out of Christ. Nay, without noticing the Scripture account of the conveyance of Divine mercy, he asserts that those who pray, trusting in their Creator's mercy, shall be heard and accepted See sermon, (2d edit.) P. 7, 8, 10, 42. I know it is said, that the preacher, notwithstanding these defects, is orthodox; and that he made sound declarations for the truth before the judicatories. But, in my humble opinion, let his after declarations, when in hazard of censure, be never so sound, yet the foresaid omissions in a printed sermon are so very culpable, and such a bad example to students of divinity in one that is their teacher, that the sermon ought to have been disapproven, the preacher admonished, all preachers warned against such a Christless way of preaching, and a warm recommendation given them to observe the 7th act of Assembly 1736, concerning Evangelical preaching; Nay, the presbytery of Glasgow deserved thanks for the pains they had taken to enquire into that sermon in obedience to the said act of Assembly, which injoins all preachers to have a special regard and eye to Christ in all their sermons, and presbyteries to see that they do it. Oh how worthless, lifeless, sapless and fruitless, must all our preachings and prayers be, if precious Christ be left out of them! Mr Leechman's sermon is one instance, among many, to shew how too well grounded those fears are, which are expressed in the *Testimony*, that the said act of Assembly is but little regarded, and that the numbers are increasing of those who preach moral duties without relation to Christ, through whose strength all our duties are to be performed, and through whose righteousness they must be accepted. And, alas! it seems to portend little good to this poor church, when men so little versant in the Christian mediatory scheme, or so unaccustomed to evangelical preaching and teaching, are made professors of divinity, and entrusted with the education of young men for the holy ministry. Neither doth it bode well, when men, as soon as they acquire some title to a Professor's chair, by the choice of a patron, or of laicks of any sort, do straightway demit their pastoral charge, and push on their own translation to the chair, without any call or concurrence from the church. As that was not the practice of former times, so it looks too like the disallowed practice of those *Prophets* who *ran* before they were sent, Jer. xxiii. 21. A running, alas! that greatly abounds in this day! May the Lord in mercy put a stop to it!

Another thing I must here notice: there is something dropt in the *Testimony*, in favours of the 7th act of Assembly 1722, relating to the *Marrow*, &c. which act I see is heavily charged by the Associate Presbytery in their act concerning the doctrine of grace, which I had not occasion to read before the *Testimony* was sent to the press. I have now again read over the Assembly's act, and upon second thoughts I shall not say it is so well worded as could be wished, or that the word *causality* is fit to be used in asserting the necessity of *holiness* to salvation: but I truly believe the meaning of Assembly 1722 was sound, and their intention good, viz. to disapprove every opinion or expression that tended any way to slacken our obligation to the study of holiness; and the brethren have not just ground for their harsh censure of that Assembly, because of their saying, in explaining the necessity of holiness for obtaining everlasting happiness, that "it is to be meant only of obtaining the enjoyment and possession of happiness, and not of the right and title to it;" and that "it is dangerous to assert that holy obedience is not a federal or conditional mean, nor has any kind of causality in order to the obtaining of glory, as it seems to exclude all usefulness and influence of holy obedience, in order of means towards the possession of heaven." This last clause of the Assembly's words doth plainly limit the sense in which they disapprove the foresaid assertion, viz. in so far as they seem to exclude the usefulness of holiness in order of means to salvation. Yet the brethren, without noticing that explanatory clause, do in their act concerning the doctrine of grace, published this year, declare that the Assembly 1722, by their said 7th act, have opened a wide door to Arminian and Socinian errors to overflow the church and land. It is surprising that this heavy charge against that Assembly has lain dormant for 22 years, until the most part of that Assembly are in their graves; and that they did not openly complain of it at passing the act, but submitted and lived quietly in the communion of the church for many years hereafter. It is uncharitable to charge that Assembly with holding opinions contrary to the *doctrine of grace*, when, in the very act they attack, the Assembly professes a close adherence to our standards with respect to the doctrine of grace. And, from their own words, we have all reason to conclude they really did so, and that they held that "Believers have complete salvation and happiness, both as to the title to it and possession of it, only through Christ and his purchase; and that their holiness here, which is a part of their begun salvation, is also a part of Christ's purchase, as well as eternal glory; seeing it is Christ that recovers the lost image of God to us, and restores that which he took not away." And that they held, "that no believer hath any thing in himself, or of his own doing, to rest upon or glory in; but that he owes all to Christ, who has obtained the whole of our salvation, and every part and degree of it, by his blood and merit." That they held all this, is evident from several places of the said act of Assembly 1722, wherein they assert, according to our standards, that, "God in the covenant of grace freely offers to a sinner life and salvation by Jesus Christ, and promises and gives his holy Spirit to all the elect, to make them able and willing to believe and give holy obedience. Also they assert, That God justifies us freely, not for any thing wrought

in us or done by us, but for Christ's sake alone: not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing, or any other evangelical obedience, to us as our righteousness: but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto us only. That our repentance doth not make any satisfaction for sin, nor is any cause of the pardon thereof. That our best works cannot any way merit eternal life: that it is a precious gospel truth, that believers are free from the law as it is a covenant of works, so as thereby they are neither justified nor condemned," &c.

From these and several other expressions of Assembly 1722, we may justly conclude, that their meaning in the expressions quarrelled was sound, and that they intended no hurt to the doctrine of grace: that they did not mean that a believer's holiness hath any causal influence or virtue to purchase heaven; but that it is necessary in order of means (as they speak) towards the possession of it; in regard that God requires holiness in every believer, as the means of preparing and making him meet for possessing heaven. So that the Assembly's sense is plainly this, that as Christ's righteousness is necessary in the way of merit, and purchase for obtaining the believer's right and title to heaven, so holiness in a believer (which also Christ hath purchased) is necessary in the way of preparation and meetness for qualifying him for the possession of heaven. Now, we see, it is God himself that makes it so necessary, by fixing an inseparable connexion betwixt holiness and happiness, declaring, Heb. xii. 14. that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Wherefore, that our brethren after all this should pass such a severe censure against the Assembly's doctrine, as opening a wide door for Arminian and Socinian errors, is very unjust, and unbecoming the duty of children to their mother. And it is yet more so, for them to assert (as they do in the same place, p. 41. without any proof for it) that Arminian and Socinian errors have actually overflown this church like a flood; whereas they may see a late act of Assembly, as well as older acts, condemning all Arminian and Socinian errors, viz. act 7th, Assembly 1736. Had they charged some members of the church with such errors, the fault had been less; but to assert that a flood of Arminian and Socinian errors do overflow the church herself, as if all were covered with them, is a charge most terrible and shocking! I scarce have any words to answer to it, except to regret that any of the reverend and dear brethren, whom I must still regard, should allow themselves to go on in such a *Latitudinarian* way of speaking and calumniating their brethren. Some may think to excuse themselves, that it is from zeal for a good cause, and a design to promote the interest of Christ, that they speak so reproachfully of other ministers: but let such remember what Job said to his three friends when they took the same course, Job xiii. 7. "Will you speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for him?" After all, however ill-grounded this charge be, yet, seeing it comes from a body of men within the land, the church is called to take some course to vindicate herself and her doctrine, though it were no more but to maintain her credit among foreign churches. Surely such a bold charge from our brethren, with other considerations, should at length rouse us, and prevail with the General Assembly to fall in with the desire of many ministers and presbyteries, to give a testimony against these errors which abound in the land, to declare their abhorrence of them, and to give warning to all the ministers, preachers, and members of this church, to guard carefully against them, and against every appearance, or approach of error.

There is not room here to notice any other thing in the brethren's act concerning the doctrine of grace, in which though there be many precious truths, yet there are also some assertions too loose, unguarded, and even bordering too near the doctrine called Antinomian; which should be carefully avoided, as well as that called Neonomian. But, notwithstanding of all these uncharitable sallies, unguarded assertions, and extravagant heights, which our brethrens desire to support their interest against the established church may drive them to at present; there is ground to expect, that, after calm and cool thinking, they will not approve themselves in these things, but will come at length to a more charitable temper, and shew regard to others whom they see to be sound in the faith, and zealous for the doctrine of grace, as well as themselves. And considering our brethrens great resolution, and their zeal for the purity of doctrine, I would fain hope God will yet honour them to be useful for maintaining his truths, and make them a witnessing remnant for Calvinist principles, and the doctrine of grace, against all kinds of Pelagian and Arminian errors, which this backsliding age seem too much inclined to fall in with. Upon which account, I still wish well to them.

There is also joined with the foresaid *act*, another *act for renewing the covenants* national and solemn league, with a *new covenant* of the brethrens framing, in which some things might be noticed: not that I quarrel the duty itself; No: I approve of covenanting work, whether it be national, presbyterial, or congregational, when rightly managed and gone about; and I pray earnestly for a covenanting frame and disposition to the whole land. I likewise own, there are several excellent things in the brethrens covenant, which we are all bound to by the word of God and our national engagements; and also in their *Confession of sins*, there are many evils enumerate, which all ranks among us ought to be deeply humbled for before the Lord: but, alas! they have marred their *Confession*, by throwing into it several things which either are doubtful, or else plain mistakes or falsehoods, and yet all these must be confessed and condemned as sins and evils, as if they were the most plain and undoubted facts, and that by a solemn oath: For their Confession of sins (which is very long) is adopted and sworn to in their covenant. Yea, the Associate Brethren have carried this matter to a prodigious height, by making an act, dated at Edinburgh, February 14th, 1744, wherein they agree and determine, that the swearing the foresaid covenant shall be *the term of ministerial communion* with them, and likewise *the term of Christian communion* to the people, with respect to their partaking of the seals of God's covenant. A surprising act indeed! This new oath and covenant of theirs is called in it, not *a term*, but *the term* of Christian communion, as if it were the only qualification for admission required, and as if it answered for the want of others; and indeed there is not another qualification besides swearing this covenant, mentioned in their act. Now, by this new act, let a man be never so well qualified according to the terms Christ hath determined in his word, yet, if he have not freedom to go in to this *term* of the brethrens making, he must be excluded both from ministerial and Christian communion, *that is*, he must neither be owned as a minister of Christ, nor allowed any of the Childrens bread, so far as their authority can go—

Wherefore I cannot but testify against this act, as framing new terms and conditions of access to the benefits of Christ's purchase, for which the framers have no warrant in God's word; and therefore it must be a manifest usurpation and incroachment upon the Headship of the King of Zion, and an infringement upon that precious article of our Creed, *the Communion of Saints:* which is too much for any judicatory or power on earth to adventure upon. Though the foresaid oath were in things indifferent or lawful, yet it were unwarrantable to impose it as a term of communion, but much more when it is in things sinful, doubtful, or false.

Quest. How do you make it appear that the brethrens new oath and covenant (which they make *the term* of communion) is in itself sinful?

Ans. Because by this oath they adopt and approve a *Confession of sins* prefixed to it, and swear by *the great name of the Lord our God,* with their right hand lifted up to the Lord, that they shall testify against the evils named in that confession, sundry of which are false in fact, calumnious, unjust, and uncharitable; and yet, by the foresaid solemn oath, the takers own them to be real, just, and true: As for instance, they swear that the General Assembly dismissed Professor Simson without any censure or express testimony against his errors, p. 104. which is false. Also, they swear that the taking the oath of abjuration is a national sin, p. 103. which they cannot make out. They swear that Assembly 1736 adopted Professor Campbell's error against self-love, p. 106. which is false. They swear that Assembly 1738 condemned the brethren's testimony in bulk, p. 107. which is not fact. They swear that Assembly 1739 condemned their *Declinature,* as containing nothing but groundless prejudices, p. 107. which is not fact. They swear that the kind reception of Mr Whitefield hath increased the sins of the land, and is a denying any particular form of church-government as being of Divine institution, p. 109. which is false. They swear that a scheme is now laid for uniting parties of all denominations in church-communion, in a way destructive of any testimony for Christ's declarative glory, p. 110. which they can never make appear They swear that the blessed work in the West of Scotland is a delusion, p 110. though it hath been demonstrate to have the plain Scripture tokens of a glorious work of the Spirit of God. They also by their oath condemn all the old persecuted Presbyterian ministers, who accepted of the liberty of preaching the gospel, under king James's toleration, as involving the land in heinous guilt. Which is a most rash and uncharitable censure of these worthies, who were honoured to be great sufferers for truth, were men of eminent piety and tenderness of conscience, were signally owned of God in their ministry during that liberty, and never saw cause to repent of their accepting of it to their dying hour. And now, after these glorified saints and sufferers have for many years been triumphing before the throne of the Lamb, a heavy blot and slur must be cast upon their memory by a solemn oath; and they, who have not freedom to join in that calumnious oath, must be denied Christian communion: This indeed seems to be an act exceeding hard and tyrannical. Alas! there are thousands who are appointed to swear this oath, and the things above-mentioned, besides many other things in it, who cannot say they know any thing of the truth of them from their own proper knowledge, but only have them by hearsay, or by information from others: and yet they must swear to the truth of them as fully as if they had been eye or ear-witnesses of them, or had read all the histories concerning them. Now, what is this but to make people swear rashly or inconsiderately, or upon implicit faith? which is contrary to the Bible, that requires us to "swear in truth, judgment, and righteousness," Jer. iv. 2. and also contrary to our Confession of Faith, which declareth, chap. 22. "That whosoever taketh an oath, must avouch nothing therein, but what he is fully persuaded is the truth." O that God in mercy would open the eyes of those who impose this oath, and those who are drawn in to intend to take it, that they may bethink themselves, repent and proceed no further! For "because of swearing the land mourneth" already, and there is no need to add to the grounds of this mourning.

Likewise, in the foresaid oath and covenant, there are some things ambiguous, obscure, and doubtful, which great numbers of the takers know not the meaning of, and so cannot swear them "in judgment and righteousness;" as, for instance, when they abjure *Independency and Latitudinarian Tenets,* these are words very general, dark, and dubious, to which the imposers may affix any meaning they think proper. Now, seeing it is commonly granted that the words of an oath ought to be very clear and plain, and these which are dubious may be refused, what a cruel thing must it be to excommunicate all these sincere Christians and tender consciences who may scruple to swear either to or against what they know not! I am sure there are many valuable ministers of Jesus Christ and precious sons of Zion, whom Christ doth honour and admit to near communion with himself, who will not adventure to swear such an oath; and will our brethren, notwithstanding, take it on them to reject them as earthen pitchers, and refuse all communion with them? Oh, where have they their Masters warrant to act so, or to exclude his redeemed ones from his table, and the food he hath provided for them, for refusing an oath of their framing, containing so many things false, uncharitable, and dark? when in the mean time these *excluded persons* appear evidently to be the *Friends of Christ,* whom he himself invites most heartily, saying to them, Cant v 1. "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved"

I acknowledge that our brethren appear and declare for many things valuable and excellent, for which I wish there were a true universal zeal throughout the land, but, when they mix so many other things choking with these in their *Testimonies* and *Covenants,* how can they expect that people of tender consciences should swallow them? Nay, by this way they give occasion to many to slight and speak evil of the precious things they stand up for My reverend brethren may believe (if they please) that I write not these things with any ill-will against them, but out of love to them and others, to prevent more sin in the land, and to bring them, if possible, to a more moderate, charitable, and Christ-like temper, that they may be willing to break down these partition walls they are setting up between themselves and others of Christ's ministers and people. O how lamentable a thing is it, that orthodox and zealous preachers of Christ should be carried away to such extravagant heights, by the intemperate zeal and headstrong humours of others who join with them! that they should go about in this manner to divide and distract the flock of Christ, and to rend and tear the members of his body one from another; yea, and to rear up partition walls in the

midst of his church, so high, that these upon one side cannot get over them to hold communion with the other! Is this good service to the Lord Jesus Christ! Is this the way to promote his cause and interest in the world? Is this the way to heal breaches and promote union among the true friends and lovers of Christ, which he makes the duty of all faithful gospel ministers? Is not our glorious Master "the Prince of peace?" Hath he not said, "Blessed are the peace-makers?" Was it not he that prayed for the union and peace of his church? Was it not he that recommended peace to us, and enjoined us to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem?" Let none mistake me, as if I were for peace on any terms; for they may see by the foregoing *Testimony* I am for *truth* as well as *peace*, and desire thro' grace to be zealous for both.

Some, who have seen this *Testimony*, object, That it is not impartial with respect to Mr Whitefield's success while he was in Scotland. The plain truth is, several things were said relative to it. where he is mentioned, which were dropped to gratify some of the subscribers, who were not then satisfied as to the facts narrated. But, since that time, I am well informed of the lasting good effects of his ministry upon not a few in and about Edinburgh and elsewhere, who once were careless and profane, but now are wonderfully changed and reformed, and still living as becometh Christians, persevering in the ways of the Lord; though at the same time I know no reason to make him the instrument of that extraordinary work at Cambuslang, Kilsyth, and other places, but to ascribe it, under God, to the ministry of their worthy pastors, whom God made instrumental both to begin and carry on that work a good time before Mr Whitefield came to preach at any of these places. But seeing God honoured Mr Whitefield's ministry in other nations and countries (though ordained a minister of the church of England) and also had opened his eyes so far, as to become Calvinist and sound in the doctrine of grace, and to witness against several corruptions of the English church, for which he was persecuted and under process; and seeing he had conformed to us in doctrine and worship, professed to lye open to instruction as to our constitution and government, and was come at length to assert openly "Christ to be the King and Head of his church, and that the church of Scotland was the best constitute national church in the world;" and also had wrote and said some other things that gave ground to hope that his eyes might be opened to see the evil of Prelacy, and in the mean time he was most indefatigable in preaching Christ to sinners, and remarkably owned of God in his ministry: To have refused a kind reception to a stranger and persecuted man, in such circumstances, when he came among us, had neither been charitable nor generous. Now. for the brethren to make this reception such a sin, that none can be admitted to baptism or the Lord's Supper without condemning it by a solemn oath, is most surprising; especially considering they were the first themselves who recommended him to the people of Scotland, and that in very strong terms! Surely it becomes us to be silent, and adore the sovereignty of the great God, in employing whom he will to promote his interest and kingdom in the world. If God think fit to make use of Mr Whitefield, or other Methodists, to turn sinners from their evil ways, to seek after a Saviour, and God through him, we should not oppose it, but *let them alone, lest haply we be found fighting against God.* We must not limit an Agent, that is infinitely wise and sovereign, in his glory, from what churches and societies he pleases, and sometimes glorifies his free grace the more by bringing them from those airths it could have been least expected. And frequently God doth honour and employ some to awaken, convince, convert, and reclaim sinners from their evil ways, who yet remain unenlightened all their days as to several points of truth themselves: witness Luther and many of our reformers.—To confine an infinitely sovereign Lord to our ways and means of working in advancing his kingdom, is a sin most grieving and provoking unto God. He makes it one of his greatest quarrels with his professing people in the wilderness, that "they tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel," Psal. lxxviii. 41. It is fit then that we lay our hands upon our mouths, and adore him that "doth according to his will, in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: And none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what dost thou?" Dan. iv. 35.

I doubt not but some may quarrel me and this *Testimony*, for making too free with the Associate Brethren: but they may see I have been as plain and free with others, and even with the established church, relating to things I judge wrong; and this seemed to be necessary to render the *Testimony* the more impartial. But, after all, when I look inward, and view the sins of my own heart, and the sad corruption of my nature, besides outward defects, I have reason to blush and be ashamed to take notice of the sins and failings of others; and even to ly in the dust, and cry, *Unclean, unclean;* and with much self-abhorrence to look towards the blood of Jesus, that cleanseth us from all sin. May the holy Spirit apply it to me and the whole land!

I shall now conclude with my earnest wishes and prayers, that the Lord may excite a praying remnant, to wrestle and be importunate with him for sparing mercy to these guilty nations; and that he would revive a covenanted work of reformation through Britain and Ireland, and the dominions thereto belonging, from which these lands have wofully departed: and uphold and encourage all who breathe after reformation, and the coming of Christ's kingdom in the world, and even countenance more and more those instruments who, according to the light given them, labour with earnestness to awaken perishing sinners from their lost and natural estate, to flee to a crucified Jesus for safety from sin and wrath, and, wherein any of them remain unenlightened, that the Lord would send out his light and truth to lead them, and graciously deliver them from all mistakes errors, and corruptions whatsoever: That what they see not the *Father of lights* may teach them, that so they may be honoured more and more to bring multitudes from following sinful courses to the ways of true religion and gospel-holiness; and from resting on their own righteousness, or a form of godliness, to come and embrace him who is the *Lord our righteousness,* and follow him whithersoever he goeth."

And particularly, "That the Lord would come and revive his work in Scotland, that once was famous through all the churches and esteemed one of the most bright and shining *Candlesticks* of Christ in the world, but now under a lamentable decay of zeal for pure religion and reformation: and that he would cause us remember with godly sorrow from whence we have fallen, repent, and do our first works. That he would pity those who, *Gallio*-like, are indifferent and unconcerned about our defections, and the grounds of the Lord's controversy which he is pleading

with the land, and awaken those who *are at ease in Zion*, in such a time, and would fain sit down, *Issachar*-like, *and couch under the burden*. That he would come suddenly to his temple, even in a national way, and sit as a Refiner and Purifier of silver, and purify the sons of Levi, and cast out buyers and sellers out of his house. That he would in mercy shut that door whereby a corrupt ministry enters into the church, and raise up a faithful, zealous, and reforming ministry thro' the land, and make all ranks among us concerned to attain to the reforming spirits and dispositions of our fathers. Oh! when shall we come their length in reformation!

"That the Lord would help us to bless him for his astonishing kindness to this land, in such a backsliding, withering, and decaying time, in vouchsafing to water several spots of his vineyard here and there with the refreshing rain of his Spirit: And that he would continue, increase, and spread the shower, until the whole garden be watered; that so our dry ground may become a green pasture, and our wilderness blossom as the rose. That in his free mercy he would forgive our great ingratitude for former kindness, preserve us from the errors, power, and cruelty of Papists, and avert those black clouds of wrath which now threaten us; and that, instead of pouring out the vials of indignation on us which we deserve, he would pour out a spirit of repentance and reformation upon all degrees of men, from the highest to the lowest. That amidst the reelings, shakings, backslidings, and divisions of these times, he would preserve pure religion, and support all those who desire to cleave to the Lord Jesus, love him in sincerity, and witness for his truths and ways.—That he would encourage them under all their discouragements, and keep them from being carried down the stream of defection with others. That he would unite the hearts and minds of all that desire honestly to witness against the evils of the day, and help them to temper their zeal with knowledge, wisdom, and meekness; and graciously forgive all those who fail in this respect, rectify their mistakes, and honour them to be instruments of his glory in the land." This is and shall be the earnest prayer of

JO. WILLISON

July 9th, 1741.

This Adherence to this Testimony was signed at Hespieshaw, in Teviotdale, on the 26th of July, 1744, by

THO. HARDIE, Elder

END OF THE ACT AND TESTIMONY.

GOSPEL

GOSPEL HYMNS

IN MEMORY OF

REDEEMING LOVE,

AND OF

CHRIST'S DEATH AND SUFFERINGS.

HYMN I.

A THANK-OFFERING *to the Blessed* TRINITY, *for Redeeming Love.*

1 O Holy, holy, holy Lord,
Jehovah One in Three,
By all the hosts above ador'd,
We'll ever sing to Thee.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.

2 We'll sing salvation to our God
That sits upon the throne;
Salvation also we'll ascribe
Unto the Lamb his Son;
Hallelujah, &c.

3 And likewise to the Holy Ghost,
Who doth with sinners strive,
And them convince of sin and wrath,
That so their souls may live.
Hallelujah, &c.

4 Ye heavenly hosts, Jehovah praise
Them join men of all ranks;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
To Three in One give thanks.
Hallelujah, &c

5 These Three at Jordan did attest
God's wondrous work of love:
The Father speaks, the Spirit lights
On Jesus like a Dove.
Hallelujah, &c.

6 Our heavenly Father we will praise,
Who sent Immanuel
To be our Priest and Sacrifice,
To save from sin and hell.
Hallelujah, &c.

7 From love to men, thou gav'st thy Son
To drink the cup of wrath:
Christ drank, and said I'll cast out none
That come to me by faith.
Hallelujah, &c.

8 What shall I render to my God
For all his gifts to me,
And for his gift unspeakable,
His Son for men to die?
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.

HYMN II.

CHRIST'S *Love and Excellency.*

1 WHAT love is this! that Christ should bear
Man's curse and punishment,
And shed his blood upon the cross,
Till ev'ry drop was spent!

2 Love made him come to save the lost,
Give sight unto the blind,
To loose the captives that are bound,
And ease the grieved mind.

3 His name's *The Lord our righteousness*
There's nothing to me sounds
So sweet as Christ, his name and cross
His love, his blood, and wounds.

4 He is my life, my food, my hope,
My refuge, and my guard,
My guide, my pattern, and my prop,
My free and full reward.

5 My Love, my Lamb, my Ransomer,
My Priest, my Sacrifice,
My Surety, God, my glorious All,
My soul that satisfies.

6 Christ is the master I will serve,
He shall have all my heart.
Away with satan and his lusts,
To them I'll give no part.

7 While I go thro' the wilderness,
By faith I'll lean on thee
My way, my strength, my staff, and rest
My Jesus still shall be.

8 I'll here below of Jesus sing,
And humbly him adore:
Him take as Prophet, Priest, and King,
And praise him evermore.

HYMN III.

The Blood *of* Jesus.

1 BY faith mount Calvary ascend,
Hear there Christ's piercing cries,
See there him bleeding unto death
As our dear sacrifice.
2 Come, let us spread our sins and griefs
At the foot of his cross
If we in Christ believe, his blood
Will purge away our dross.
3 His blood, when sprinkled on our souls,
Will our protection be;
His blood will fright our enemies,
And get us victory.
4 His blood will mollify our hearts,
And bonds of sin will loose,
His blood will quench the fiery darts
Which satan at us throws.
5 His blood will wash our scarlet sins,
And make us white as snow,
His blood will warm our love to God,
And make our graces flow.
6 O Lamb, when thy blood on me drops,
It doth my pardon seal,
It is the balm of Gilead,
That doth my conscience heal.
7 I daily to thy blood resort,
In it I humbly boast,
It raised me from the dreadful pit,
When I was sunk and lost.
8 Of crimson sins thy blood removes
Their guilt and power to damn,
Wrath cannot reach me, since I fled
Unto my bleeding Lamb

HYMN IV.

The Lord's Table

1 A Feast of Love God makes below,
A sign of that above:
To which he calls poor worms to go,
To feast on Jesus' love.
2 Come here, admire Christ's love to us,
That gives his flesh for food;
And drink to us he doth provide,
By pouring out his blood.
3 This blood doth life unto the dead,
Health to the sick impart:
This drink revives the fainting soul
And melts the frozen heart.
4 What folly is't for men to starve,
Or feed on husks like swine;
When Christ calls to a table spread,
To feast on food divine!

5 Unto Christ's table we will go,
There view his love and tears,
With all the sufferings he endur'd
For three and thirty years.
6 In feeding we remember thee
Till thou return again;
We call to mind thy stripes and wounds,
Thy griefs, thy cries, and pain.
7 Our Lord was of a woman born,
A manger was his bed:
He's first a babe, and next a man,
Then on the tree he bled.
8 Th' eternal God became our Lamb,
For us to agonize;
Yea, in our stead, to death he bled,
To be our sacrifice.

HYMN V.

Christ's *Sufferings for us.*

1 OUR God would suffer in our place,
For our sins to atone;
A world of guilt he underlay,
The wine-press trod alone.
2 He would his throne and servants leave,
And honours great above;
For worms a servant he would be,
Amazing is that love!
3 Yea, in the room of sinful worms
My Lord the law obey'd,
And bore its curses on the tree,
When he was crucified.
4 Gethsemane will tell how much
He swate, he bled, and cry'd;
So will mount Calv'ry, and the cross
On which my Saviour dy'd.
5 I view his great soul-agony,
Which caus'd his bloody sweat
His pierced hands and side I hug,
I kiss his bleeding feet.
6 I hear my Jesus' melting voice
Saying, "For you I dy'd,
Think on my pains and agonies
When I was crucified."
7 Of my love then do no more doubt,
Since out of love I dy'd:
Behold my pierced hands and feet,
And view my wounded side.
8 'Tis open: Look and see my heart,
It bleeds and beats with love;
It pants to get you freed from sin,
To dwell with me above.

HYMN VI.

Christ's *Wounds and Blood*

1 CHRIST's bleeding wounds did once atone
For our guilt on the tree;
And now they plead before the throne,
Us from sin's pow'r to free.
2 Thy wounds still in our hearts remain,
Thee bleeding still we view;

Since thou appear'st above as slain,
Thy death is ever new.
5 Allow me, Lord, to pitch my tent
Beside thy streaming wounds,
There many have got rich supplies,
There joy and peace abounds.
4 Pursu'd by justice flaming sword,
To Jesus' wounds I come
For shelter and a hiding-place;
O let me there find room.
5 Under thy righteousness me hide,
In thy wounds make me dwell;
So there my soul shall rest secure,
From all the pow'rs of hell
6 Thy wounds are guilty mens refuge,
To them have thousands fled,
None ever disappointed were,
Their stress who on them laid
7 Thy wounds do for our pardon plead,
They rocky hearts melt down
To heav'n we swim upon thy blood,
And thereby get the crown.
8 No condemnation reach them shall
Who lodge in Jesus' wounds,
They're safe from fears, and in their ears
His name most sweetly sounds.

HYMN VII.

The Wonders of GOD's Free Love.

1 GREAT God, enthron'd above the sky,
How low a step is this,
For worms like us to give thy life,
To buy eternal bliss!
2 What love is this, that God should die
For these his laws that broke!
Himself should answer for our crime
In casting off his yoke!
3 The love and suff'rings matchless were
Of Christ our bleeding God,
When he was bruised for our sins,
And crush'd beneath our load.
4 More than his life he lov'd our race;
Yea, heav'n he did forsake,
To snatch men from the flames of hell,
And them to glory take
Thy love and grace, dear Lamb of God,
Shall be my lasting theme
I'll ever bless that victim slain
Without Jerusalem.
6 Thy free grace, Lord, most wonderful,
To me it doth excel;
What cost hast thou bestow'd to save
A brand pluckt out of hell!
7 With warm affection I will bless
My great High Priest above,
Whose heart is made of tenderness,
And bowels melt with love.
8 O may thy love constrain mens hearts
To love and follow thee!
We've heard thy love has melted rocks;
Let all such wonders see.

[NO. XXIV.]

HYMN VIII.

CHRIST's *pleading above*

1 UPON mount Zion's distant top
A Lamb by faith we see
'Tis Jesus, for we know his voice,
He calls, "Come up to me."
2 O Lamb, see pilgrim's trav'ling here,
And our soul-wants supply,
Keep speaking to us by the way,
Till we come up to thee.
3 By faith we have thee bleeding seen,
Rais'd on the cross to die,
By faith we thee now pleading hear,
When lifted up on high.
4 In highest heav'ns the Lamb doth reign,
Yet as our Priest he stands,
And for us pleads his stripes and wounds,
And shews his bleeding hands.
5 As newly slain, he still presents
His bleeding wounds to God,
Which plead his flock may still hold on,
And keep the heav'nly road.
6 In this great Advocate we trust,
Who for our sins was slain;
We on his pow'rful blood depend,
Which cannot plead in vain.
7 Blest souls above, now with the Lamb!
You closly him attend.
Take courage, for we tread their path,
To them we'll soon ascend.
8 Adieu, vain world, with all thy charms,
To our dear Lamb we go,
Who pleads to keep's from sin and harms,
From enemies below.
9 Hosanna to king David's Son,
And to king David's Lord,
King David's root and offspring's one
Who heav'n to men restor'd.

HYMN IX.

HEAVEN *begun on* EARTH.

1 OUR Lamb's God man, in person one,
The great Immanuel
This union strange is God's device
To save our souls from hell.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.
2 The Lamb is worthy for to reign,
Both saints and angels cry,
Let heav'n and earth, with all their hosts,
Adore thy majesty.
Hallelujah, &c.
3 With these to praise we do presume,
As ransom'd by thy blood:
Reign here, and in the world to come,
Thou everlasting God
Hallelujah, &c.
4 We praise thee Son of God, whose pow'r

Did bring about our peace,
We praise thee, Son of man, whose blood
Redeem'd our fallen race.
Hallelujah, &c.
5 Incarnate God, our Lord, our Love,
Our Lamb, our Sacrifice!
We'll thee adore, though hell should roar,
And worldlings thee despise
Hallelujah, &c.
6 Worthy of glory is the Lamb,
Who was at Calv'ry slain
For he gave up himself to death,
To ransom fallen men.
Hallelujah, &c.
Be pow'r and glory ever thine,
Thy name be still ador'd,
Let all the creatures thee proclaim
Their everlasting Lord.
Hallelujah, &c.
8 Let ev'ry nation, land, and tongue,
Thy wondrous love confess,
Cause all men know thy charming name,
"The Lord our Righteousness."
Hallelujah &c
9 Now great Immanuel, to thy name
Be endless glory giv'n
Our broken hymns on earth begun
Them perfect make in heav'n
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.

HYMN X

Heaven's Happiness

II heaven on earth Christ's love to taste,
And feel his pow'rful grace,
Is heav'n begun to dwell in love,
And see his glorious face.
Hallelujah Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.
Lord, in my breast the fire doth burn
Of love which thou hast giv'n
Nothing on earth can quench this flame,
Nothing but Christ in heav'n.
Hallelujah &c
Men here would know the things below;
But I determin'd am
Christ crucified alone to know,
My sacrificed Lamb.
Hallelujah, &c
The sweetest days we have on earth
Are in thy service spent
The comforts I enjoy in these
Do yield me most content.
Hallelujah &c
Communion Sabbaths here are sweet,
But them we soon do spend·
In heav'n the Sabbath sweeter is,
Which never hath an end.
Hallelujah, &c
There Hallelujahs to the Lamb
No period will know.
No willows there to hang our harps,
As oft we find below.
Hallelujah, &c.
7 O happy these who shall ascend
Where they still Sabbath keep,
Where in the heav'nly work of praise
They slumber not nor sleep!
Hallelujah, &c.
There to the Lamb that once was dead
But now doth live again,
With joy and wonder do they sing
He's saints eternal gain.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.

HYMN XI.

The Lord *our* Righteousness.

1 WE from our free-will and our works
No help at all can draw,
For our free will and nat'ral powers
Are haters of God's law.
2 The stream which from Christ's pierced side
In blood and water flow'd,
Must justify and cleanse our souls,
Ere we can live with God
3 Lord, all my doings and my works
Can ne'er with God prevail
Both hand they, for sin, deserve
To be thrown down to hell.
4 My righteousness is filthy rags,
I humbly must confess
But, Lord, I plead my Saviour's name,
'The Lord our Righteousness'
5 Tho' I could weep a flood of tears,
I'd lay no stress thereon.
Christ's blood must wash me and my tears,
Or else I am undone.
6 Christ bears the burden of our sins,
And of our duties too
His blood must cleanse our pray'rs and praise,
And all that we can do.
7 Christ, who's our Righteousness, perfumes
Our duties unto God
Weak mints, thro' Christ, he doth accept,
They're sprinkled with his blood.
8 Christ's works and wounds alone I trust,
His life and death I bless:
I'll ever sing his precious name,
'The Lord our Righteousness.'

HYMN XII.

The Gospel-Passover.

1 IN this our Gospel-Passover,
God sets before our eyes
The substance of the ancient types,
God's Lamb our sacrifice.
2 Here view his body broke, and blood
Down streaming from his heart,

To save our souls: and thus our Lamb
Fulfill'd the Saviour's part.
3 Here divine Wisdom doth provide
A free soul-strengthening feast;
And freely bids each hungry soul,
O come, and be a guest.
4 Here things of sense, but there's far more
Than hallow'd bread and wine;
Lo! there is here immortal cheer,
And streams of life divine.
5 Here's for our souls Christ's body broke,
To feed and make them grow;
Here's running streams of divine blood,
To make us white as snow.
6 Lord, grant thy presence with thy guests,
Thy peace to them afford;
No music can delight our hearts
Like thy forgiving word.
7 Grant faith to eat the bread of life
Which God sent down from heav'n,
And also faith to drink the blood
For our redemption giv'n.
8 Awake, repentance, faith, and love,
Come, feast on Christ, and sing:
Rouze up, my pow'rs and graces all,
Attend this mighty King.
9 View here the wounds and dying pangs
Of our dear bleeding Lord,
Whose head, and side, and heart, were pierc'd;
Whose hands and feet were bor'd."

N. B. *The twelve preceding hymns are all done in common metre; the ten following hymns are composed in different measures, to suit some pleasant tunes, which many have learned, and delight in.*

HYMN XIII.

The COMMUNION SABBATH.

1 FATHER, this day we'll sing:
From love thou gav'st thy Son,
To buy salvation to our souls,
When sin had us undone.
2 We'll bless thy Son, who came
To bear our guilt and shame,
And thy just law, which we had broke,
Fulfilled in our name.
3 We bless thy Sp'rit, who guides
Men in the heav'nly road:
Come, heav'nly Dove, our Saviour's love
Shed in our hearts abroad.
4 Our crucified Lord
Was laid among the dead:
But soon the grave its prey restor'd;
He rose for us to plead.
5 To-day, Christ left the dead,
And satan's empire fell:
'This is the day the Lord hath made,'
We'll triumph over hell.
6 We'll shew his death, who bled
To save our sinful race,
And in the supper to us comes
With messages of grace.
7 We magnify thy love
For such a taste below,
And that thou mak'st to saints above
Far nobler blessings flow.
8 We'll haste to Christ above;
We'll then need signs no more.
We'll see his face, and know his love;
We'll feast, and him adore.
9 To Father, Son, and Sp'rit,
JEHOVAH, One in Three,
Sing HALLELUJAHS; for 'tis meet
Thus God to glorify.

HYMN XIV.

The Wonder of REDEEMING LOVE.

1 DEAR Father, we thee bless,
Thy wondrous love adore,
In giving us thine only Son,
What couldst thou give us more?
2 Behold how God commends
His love to men undone!
That he might spare his enemies,
He would not spare his Son.
3 What saw the Lamb in man,
That could his pity move,
To draw the rebel from hell's gates
With cords and bands of love!
4 A love that was not quench'd
By death or deepest wound,
Nor by deep streams of wrath and blood,
By floods it was not drown'd!
5 A glorious crown he left
A thorny crown to wear!
And on his bruised wounded back
A heavy cross wou'd bear!
6 Mens sins, each was a thorn,
A whip, a nail, a spear!
By them thy blessed flesh was torn,
Let men view sin with fear!
7 Yet garments dy'd with blood,
The thorns thy head that tare,
Endear thee more to thine, than robes
And gems which monarchs wear.
8 Our slain Lamb now appears
Before God's awful throne;
There offers up our praise and pray'rs
He takes them from his Son.
9 Let saints and angels join
The dear love to proclaim
Of him that sits upon the throne,
And of the worthy Lamb.

HYMN XV.

The LAMB *Slain.*

1 HOW moving is the sight I see!
My God nail'd bleeding to a tree!

Let countless myriads of men
With pierc'd hearts cry, *the Lamb is slain.*
2 My dearest Lamb, thy blood was spilt
For sinful man's imputed guilt.
Hard is the heart that feels no pain
For sin, for which *the Lamb is slain.*
3 Let men thy dying love proclaim,
Which caus'd thy blood for men to stream:
Fix in their hearts still to remain
This glorious truth, *the Lamb is slain.*
4 Our sinking state thou didst bemoan,
Yea, all our sins and curse took on,
To save us from eternal pain
My dearest Lord, *the Lamb is slain.*
5 To us the gospel sweetly sounds,
We flee for safety to thy wounds,
Yea, these to us do glory gain,
To open heav'n, *the Lamb is slain.*
6 Resolv'd I'll ly before thy throne,
And say, I never will be gone
Till I shall peace with God obtain,
That peace for which *the Lamb is slain.*
7 Doth not thy blood for sinners plead,
And for great en'mies intercede?
Still hopes of life I will maintain,
While God proclaims, *the Lamb is slain.*
8 Thy blood I will on sin revenge,
Help me from sin my soul to cleanse,
Thy wounds from sin shall still restrain,
Since for my sin *the Lamb is slain.*

HYMN XVI.

Jesus *his Name fragrant.*

1 CHRIST Jesus is the Lamb that's slain,
To save the very worst of men
No name like Jesus sounds to me,
For Jesus brings salvation free.
2 Jesus his name doth sinners tell,
His works to save from sin and hell:
All sweetness centers in his name,
My naming it makes love to flame.
3 When sunk are names of greatest worth,
" His name's like ointment poured forth,"
It spreads a fragrant scent around,
And brings refreshing with its sound.
4 Jesus his name charms heart and ear,
Makes me content his cross to bear.
His name doth chear my fainting soul,
And makes my wounded spirit whole.
5 His name to me is a strong tow'r,
It saves me from the wrathful show'r:
His name with comforts do abound
To souls with sorrows almost drown'd.
6 Jesus his name doth sweetly sound,
It rings salvation all around,
It doth the heavy-laden keep
From sinking downward in the deep.
7 When in our place dear Jesus stood,
With all his garments roll'd in blood,
To faith a lovely sight is he
All guilty men to Jesus flee.
8 O Jesus, glorious is thy name;
May all the nations hear thy fame!
Most sweet thy name will ever sound
Above, where praises have no bound.

HYMN XVII.

The crucified Jesus.

1 CHRIST crucified shall be the song
Which will employ my heart and tongue:
This song supports men in distress,
And cheers their hearts in wilderness.
All songs but this I'll lay aside;
My Lord my Love is crucify'd.
2 Up Calv'ry mount I'll climb by faith,
And see my Saviour vanquish death,
I'll wond'ring stand, and view the blood
He shed when in my place he stood
From love he stretch'd his arms and dy'd,
My Lord, my Love is crucified.
3 To me his bonds do freedom buy,
And bring to glorious liberty;
The cruel scoffs he bore from foes
To me obtain divine applause.
Of Christ I'll sing let men deride;
My Lord, my Love is crucify'd
4 The strokes he got on back and face
Raze out the marks of my disgrace,
The thorny crown which he endur'd,
A crown of life for me procur'd.
Let still this song with me abide,
My Lord, my Love is crucify'd.
5 On's back he bore the bloody tree,
Push'd forward by the soldiery;
Pity'd by none, by all blasphem'd,
Insulted, hated, and condemn'd
In all he wondrous love display'd,
My Lord, my Love is crucify'd
6 His disciples were fled and gone,
The wine press he must tread alone:
He's pierc'd in head, in hands, and feet,
Till streams of blood each other meet.
Why should I think of ought beside?
My Lord, my Love is crucify'd.

HYMN XVIII.

Know Christ *crucified.*

1 CHRIST crucify'd is all my bless,
In all my straits I'll him address,
His wounds and blood do make me whole,
Look up, and live, each sin-sick soul,
If ye would have all wants supply'd,
" Know Jesus, and him crucify'd."
2 That bloody sweat of Christ's so free,
Proves a choice cordial unto me,
Those nails which gave him torture vast,
My seat in heav'n shall make fast
Let hearts that would be fix'd and stay'd,
" Know Jesus, and him crucify'd."

3 Christ suffer'd naked, me to clothe
With righteousness and glory both;
His parching thirst, and cup of gall,
In bitter griefs me comfort shall.
Let souls that would be satisfy'd,
"Know Jesus, and him crucify'd."
4 Christ's five wide wounds do bid me come
To lodge in them for there is room:
His loud and agonizing cry
Heav'ns gates will open when I die
If you would see them open'd wide,
"Know Jesus and him crucify'd."
5 Christ's open side my cave shall be,
To which from foes my soul shall flee,
The water which from it did flow
Shall quench my thirst while here below.
Would you in this dear refuge hide?
"Know Jesus, and him crucify'd."

HYMN XIX

Gratitude for REDEEMING LOVE.

1 IMMANUEL's fame I'll spread abroad,
And loudly praise my bleeding God,
For these love-wonders now I see,
I'll praise thee through eternity
Lord make me meet with saints above
To sing thy everlasting love
2 The *Word made flesh, the Lamb once slain,*
Astonish angels as well's men,
This shew God's love in such degree
As it can never fathom'd be.
Lord, make me meet with saints above
To sing thy everlasting love.
3 Why, Lord, didst thou such pain endure?
He saith, Thy sinful soul to cure
My crimson blood to you doth say,
Your crimson sins I'll wash away
Amazing love, that God should die
For man that was his enemy!
4 I plac'd myself in sinners room,
Your flesh and frailties did assume;
I for your debt engag'd alone,
And for your sins dy'd to atone
Amazing love, that God should die
For man that was his enemy!
5 O Lamb of God, to men thou'rt good,
How shall I shew my gratitude!
I'll kiss thy feet, and thee adore,
And grieve that I can do no more.
Lord, fit my soul to live with thee,
To sing his praise who dy'd for me.
6 I thank thee, Jesus, my dear Lord,
For all the pains thou hast endur'd:
Cause thou my soul thy love to know,
Who bled to make me white as snow.
Lord, fit my soul to live with thee,
To sing his praise who dy'd for me.

HYMN XX.

The FEAST *of* COMMEMORATION.

1 TO saints assemblies I'll repair,
And vent my heart in praise and pray'r
The day Christ rose, I'll him extol,
And shew his death with heart and soul.
I none desire to know beside
My Jesus, and him crucify'd
2 Christ crucify'd is still my feast,
They Jesus love, who Jesus taste
I'll on his purchase fix mine eyes,
And feast on fruits of paradise
I none desire to know beside
My Jesus, and him crucify'd
3 We take the blest signs in our hands,
And so obey our Lord's commands
Remembring thee, we do attend,
And this we'll do till time shall end.
Thy death to shew, saints will take care,
Until they meet thee in the air
4 Thy blest remembrance yields delight,
But far more sweet will be thy sight
Hence 'tis my daily cry to Thee,
O dearest Jesus, come to me.
I none desire to know beside
My Jesus, and him crucify'd.
5 A sight of Jesus on the cross
Makes all this world appear as dross
Lord, what are earthly things to me,
But clouds that part my soul and thee!
O tune my soul for songs above,
Increase my light, inflame my love.
6 Never did angels taste above
Redeeming grace, and dying love.
Worthy is Christ, our blessed Lamb,
That bore for men the cross and shame.
On God's eternal throne to reign
Since he for us was pierc'd and slain.

HYMN XXI.

Know JESUS *only.*

1 JOIN, ye tribes of ransom'd men,
With hearts and tongues to sing,
Worthy's the Lamb that was slain
To be our Lord and King
Let men's wills unto him bow,
Since out of love for men he dy'd.
Only Jesus will I know,
And Jesus crucify'd.
2 For our sins Christ's blood was spilt,
His soul did torments feel:
If we mourn not for our guilt,
Our hearts are hard as steel.
Lord, cause tears from hearts to flow.
O pity them whose hearts are dry'd.
Only Jesus will I know,
And Jesus crucify'd.

3 Sin I shun, with all its charms,
Since it would me destroy:
Take me, Lord, into thy arms,
Me safe to heav'n convoy;
While I travel here below,
Still keep me near thy pierced side.
Only Jesus will I know,
And Jesus crucify'd.
4 Earth affords not my chief good,
In Christ my bliss doth ly;
Earth's vain dreams mens hearts delude,
Its arts I do defy:
Empty world, I thee let go,
Adieu to all thy pomp and pride.
Only Jesus will I know,
And Jesus crucify'd.
5 Earth I quit for rest above,
Below there's nothing sure:
Christ I make my Lord, my Love,
In him my all's secure.
O let faith still in me grow,
All vanities I'll lay aside.
Only Jesus will I know,
And Jesus crucify'd.

HYMN XXII.

A Saint chuses not to stay behind CHRIST.

1 IN the wine press of God's wrath
My dearest Lamb was crush'd;
There he groan'd and bled to death,
Yea, low was laid in dust:
But he rose, to shew his love;
To plead for us, to heav'n he's gone.
Since my head and heart's above,
Why stay I here to groan?
2 Friend of sinners, King of saints,
Plead for me with thy blood;
While I'm in the land of wants,
Still send me heav'nly food:
My heart plagues do thou remove,
Of them to thee I make my moan.
Since my head and heart's above,
Why stay I here to groan?
3 Into Jesus' hands I fall,
By faith I thee embrace:
King of glory, hear me call,
And heal me by thy grace;
Let thy Spirit in me move,
To fix my faith on Christ alone.
Since my head and heart's above,
Why stay I here to groan?
4 Lord, thou say'st, I quickly come,
Saints for thy coming pray:
While thou stay'st, I'm far from home;
Lord Jesus come away;
On things earthly I'll not rove,
Like Christ among them there is none
Since my head and heart's above,
Why stay I here to groan?

HYMN XXIII.

The Fountain of CHRIST'S *Blood.*

1 WE bless God for this matchless blood,
Which to us freely streams,
And fallen men from sin and hell
Most powerfully redeems.
2 Eternal thanks to God's dear Son,
Who pour'd this streaming flood,
To wash from sin, and to ensure
Our soul's eternal good.
3 Bethseda, Jordan, Siloam's pool,
Are vain, they do no good
For cleansing souls, or purging sins,
As doth this divine blood.
4 Come, leprous souls, to this new pool,
And bathe yourselves therein:
Why should you die, when God provides
This remedy for sin?
5 Unto this open fountain bring
My sinful soul, O God,
And all my spotted garments cleanse
In my Redeemer's blood.
6 Upon this remedy divine
Alone my hopes are built:
This many thousand souls have tried,
It purg'd away their guilt.
7 Give access, Lord, unto thy blood,
And faith to wash, till I
Be purify'd and throughly clean
From all iniquity.
8 Praise for the doctrine of free grace,
Which Jesus' gospel sounds;
Praise for free love, and cleansing blood
That flows from Jesus' wounds.

HYMN XXIV.

CHRIST *our* PASSOVER *Sacrificed for us.*

1 LY at the foot of Jesus' cross,
See what the Lamb endur'd;
Contemplate there his bleeding wounds,
Which life to us procur'd.
2 Sore wounds and bruises, stripes and pain,
With fearful agony,
Did he endure to ransom us
From endless misery.
3 Jesus our passover is slain,
And for us sacrific'd;
The tokens of thy death remain,
Let these by us be priz'd.
4 A feast upon this sacrifice
Thou hast on men bestow'd,
Where we may feed upon thy flesh,
And drink thy precious blood.
5 Thanks to our God, who loved us,
And look'd on sinking men;
And for us found a sacrifice,
The Lamb for sinners slain.
6 A sacrifice that's infinite

Thy justice did demand,
Ere guilty men should be forgiv'n,
Or they in judgment stand.
7 Behold how mercy interpos'd
In this nonplussing case,
And sent the Lamb our passover
To bleed in sinners place!
8 Till we ascend to Christ above,
And fully share thy feast,
We'll sit content beneath thy cross,
And bless thee for a taste.
9 Dear Lamb, shine on our solemn days,
Thy presence makes the feast:
Come, fill our hearts with love, and joy
That cannot be exprest.

HYMN XXV.

Thanksgiving to the Blessed Trinity.

1 EXALTED Father, we thee praise,
And bless thy sacred name;
Thou wast, and art, and evermore
Remainest God the same.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.
2 Father of mercies, God of love,
May thou be still ador'd,
Because thou freely gav'st thy Son
To be our Priest and Lord,
Hallelujah, &c.
3 O Son of God, we thee do bless,
That freely undertook
To be a Ransomer, to save
All who to thee do look.
Hallelujah, &c.
4 Unto the Lamb, our Saviour-God,
Let praises still increase;
For thro' thy precious wounds and blood
Comes all our happiness.
Hallelujah, &c.
5 O Holy Ghost, we thee exalt,
Who dost with sinners strive,
Till they be brought to close with Christ,
And made in him alive.
Hallelujah, &c.
6 We praise thee, O thou promis'd Dove,
Who, as Christ said, art come
To raise our dead souls unto life,
And safely guide us home.
Hallelujah, &c.
7 To purge our guilt, and buy our peace,
God sent his Son to bleed;
His blood procur'd a treasure full
To answer all our need.
Hallelujah, &c
8 Thanks to our heav'nly Father's love,
Who gave the Lamb to men:
The Lamb we praise, and Spirit too,
These Three in One. *Amen.*

HYMN XXVI.

Give thanks to God for a crucified Jesus.

1 BLEST be our Lamb, who undertook
Lost sinners to deliver:
O praise our King, for he is good,
His mercy lasts for ever.
2 No blood, but that of him who's God,
Could take away our sin;
No smaller sacrifice than this
Could heaven for us win.
3 This made the glorious Son of God,
Leave heaven for our good:
Our flesh and frailties he assum'd,
To ransom us with blood.
4 Beneath the vail of human flesh
His Godhead he did hide;
To pay our debt, and purge our guilt,
Our sacrifice he dy'd.
5 God's praise in gospel-hymns we'll sing,
With thankful hearts thee bless;
We will sound forth thy glorious name,
"The Lord our Righteousness."
6 In every place and company
Where it may tend for good,
Christ crucify'd we will extol,
And tell men of his blood.
7 His wounds and merits we'll speak forth,
His steps we will pursue;
From him we'll holy learn to be,
Meek, lowly, just, and true.
8 What love, what service, and what praise,
To our God do we owe,
Who left his glorious throne above,
To die for us below!
9 Till we the vail of flesh put off,
Accept our weaker songs;
And, when we reach the mansions bright,
We'll praise with better tongues.

HYMN XXVII.

The Communion-Feast.

1 HOW greatly should the love of God
All our affections move!
He foes forgives, and next invites
Them to a feast of love.
2 The feast's prepar'd, we nothing want
But Christ the Lord our guest:
Thy presence grant to hungry souls,
And we'll begin the feast.
3 Thy presence would supply each want
On a communion day:
Communion with thyself us grant,
Thy grace and pow'r display.
4 O make us witnesses to shew
The virtue of thy blood,
That it gives peace, and makes us cry,
"My King, my Lord, and God."

5 Under thy cross, with great delight,
Lord, make us down to sit;
For weary travellers to rest
Let's find this shade most fit.
6 Let's here possess thy love, and wounds
In our hearts make abode:
No music hath such charming sounds
As these two words, MY GOD.
7 Pardon of sin, and peace thro' blood,
Do make a glorious feast:
This food is entertainment sweet,
Which angels ne'er did taste.
8 Yet of this royal costly cheer
Poor sinful men partakė;
It was for Adam's race alone
God did this banquet make.
9 Communion sweet is thro' the Lamb;
To him be glory giv'n
By all that dwell upon the earth,
And all the hosts of heav'n.

HYMN XXVIII.

The free GOSPEL CALL.

1 COME, guilty souls, and flee away
Like doves to Jesus' wounds:
Your lot falls in the gospel-day,
Wherein free grace abounds.
2 How joyful is the sound you hear;
To you men Christ doth call,
Come to me with your loads of sin,
And I will ease you all.
3 I do not say, "Depart from me
Into eternal fire;"
But kindly bid you to my wounds,
Where troubled souls retire.
4 Come to the balm, behold the Lamb,
Which for your sins was slain;
Come flocking to my healing blood,
Which eases souls of pain.
5 No more resist my pressing calls,
Your souls to me up-give;
O dying men, my voice regard,
And you shall ever live.
6 O rebels to my sceptre bow,
Your weapons cast away;
Come to me in this day of grace,
And make no more delay.
7 For, lo! the flaming sword is drawn,
And shaken o'er your head.
If divine Justice be provok'd,
The blow will strike you dead.
8 Comply then with my Spirit's work,
In your hearts give me room;
In straits you'll find me still a friend,
I'll bring you safely home.

HYMN

HYMN XXIX.

Fitness for the GOSPEL-FEAST.

1 WILL God let worms approach to him,
Heav'n's manna for to taste;
Yea, call a piece of dust and sin
To sit at Jesus' feast?
2 Come, holy, holy, holy Lord,
Who lov'd us, when undone;
Come, thou united mystic Three,
Unite us all in One.
3 Come, Prince of love and peace, with pow'r
Our grudges all remove;
Come, join our hearts, and make us fit
To keep the feast of love.
4 Let charity our hearts possess;
O shed thy love abroad:
And may we Jesus all embrace
As our own Lord and God.
5 Let Jesus' friends with humble faith
His table compass round,
Partake his food, admire his blood,
That springs from every wound.
6 O let the flinty stubborn heart,
Which threat'nings cannot move,
Be broken, melted, and dissolv'd
By Jesus' bleeding love.
7 Let no sin in my heart remain
To give my Lord offence.
Help me to act and live by faith,
And not by corrupt sense.
8 Let worldly clogs all stay behind,
When I to Christ draw nigh;
Let faith's wings now be stretched out,
And to his wounds I'll fly.

HYMN XXX.

CHRIST *the Bread of Life.*

1 CHRIST's flesh and blood, the rarest food
That ever was prepar'd,
Is set before the needy's door;
Yet few it do regard.
2 Shall starving souls slight such a feast,
Made ready at such cost,
And chuse to feast on swinish lusts
Until their souls be lost?
3 Here bread of life, which doth exceed
The manna of the Jews:
Our bread is Christ, substantial food!
Theirs but this substance shews.
4 Their manna came but from the clouds,
Ours comes from heavens high:
Who ate their manna now are dead,
Who ate ours live for ay.
5 "Lord, evermore, give us this bread,"
Give daily new supply;
Give faith to eat, that we may live,
And may not faithless die.

6 With heav'nly manna sent by God
Let hungry souls be fed;
Since richly is thy table stor'd
With this immortal bread.
7 For multitudes there is enough
In Jesus' fulness free,
Ten thousand thousands all at once
This bread can satisfie.
8 Dear Jesus, meet with hungry soul
Let none of them complain
They waited on thee all the day,
And cry'd for bread in vain.
O Bread of Life, we starving come
To thee for to be fed
When some thou fill'st, us pass not by
With soul-food make us glad.

HYMN XXXI

GOD's hiding his face is grievous

1 A BEGGAR, Lord, cries for an alms,
Look on me not in wrath
Thy smiles are better far than life,
Thy frowns are worse than death
2 Dear Lord, I pray thee, now be found
Of souls that pant for thee,
Be not a stranger in our land,
When souls their wants do see.
3 When, Lord, thou hid'st thy face from me,
Like fading flowers I mourn:
I droop, I grieve, I can't look up,
Till thou again return
4 I'll of no other cross complain
Which thou shalt me lay on;
But oh! the hiding of thy face
I cannot think upon.
5 Lord, when thou smil'st, I conquer sin;
I then get ev'ry thought,
And all that's opposite to thee,
Into subjection brought.
6 But when thou hid'st, I lose my strength,
Like Samson when betray'd;
My locks are cut, my heart is faint,
My faith and hope are dead.
7 If clouds remain, I'll wander far
Out of the king's high-way;
If Christ his lost sheep do not seek,
Still farther will I stray.
8 Good Shepherd, seek and bring me home;
Thou art the sinner's friend:
Restore the shinings of thy face,
Let me no more offend.

HYMN XXXII.

The Mourning Penitent.

1 WITH low abasement I reflect
On my original;
I see my nature black and stain'd
By my first parents fall.
2 In sin and guilt I was conceiv'd
Before I first drew breath,
And early was expos'd unto
Both first and second death.
3 My heart and life sin doth corrupt
Yea, makes my heart as stone,
It makes me slight God's remedy
My folly I bemone.
4 How awful is the thund'ring voice
From Sinai's flaming mount,
To criminals who break God's laws
Of crimes here's your account!
5 With trembling this would fill my soul,
And even strike me dead,
Did I not see on Zion mount
The Lamb for sin that bled.
6 A sinner I, thro' Adam's fall,
Have lost my way to bliss
When God a new way doth reveal,
Forbid this way I miss
7 Unto this way I mourning look
No other help I know:
If thou declinest helping me,
O whither shall I go?
8 Thy word saith, I should not despond,
But plead and keep in mind
The blood and bowels of the Lamb,
Who is lost mankind's friend

HYMN XXXIII

The Penitent Sinner [illegible]

IN Jesus' name a penitent
Doth at God's footstool ly:
My sins I do confess and mourn
And for free mercy cry
2 Christ bids me *ask*, and *seek*, and *knock*
And promiseth I'll *find*
Thus I seek pardon and relief,
Lord, ease my grieved mind
3 Christ's blood and merit is alone
The ground on which I plead
With God, that I may mercy find
In this my time of need.
4 The doctrine of free grace I plead,
Which thy dear gospel sounds,
And tender love to penitents
That flows from Jesus' wounds.
5 Since Christ our Surety paid the debt
That souls condemn'd might live,
With honour to thy justice now,
Great sins thou canst forgive.
6 Where should I go with all my sins,
But to Redeeming blood?
Thousands have try'd it, and are wash'd
The fountain's large and good.
7 I plead thy blood, and ancient love,
I humbly own my guilt
Was it not for such straying sheep
The Shepherd's blood was spilt,
8 That trembling woman in distress
To Christ was fear'd to come.

She touch'd his hem; he heal'd her soon,
And sent her joyful home.

HYMN XXXIV.

Thanksgiving to God *the* Father.

1 PRAISE to the Father's love, that gave
His dear and only Son
To be our priest and sacrifice,
For our sins to atone.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.
2 Thou gav'st thy Son and Spirit both
To free us from all fears:
Dissolve our hearts in thankfulness,
Melt down our eyes in tears.
Hallelujah, &c.
3 But drops of tears can ne'er repay
The debt of love we owe:
Our whole selves then we give to thee
There's no more we can do.
Hallelujah, &c.
4 We praise thee, Son, who in our room
Was willing to be slain;
We praise thee, Spirit, who applies
His blood to fallen men.
Hallelujah, &c.
5 Slain beasts for sin could not atone.
Such off'rings had been vain,
Had not the Father giv'n his Lamb
For sinners to be slain.
Hallelujah, &c.
6 This sacrifice, more precious
Than all created things,
To men eternal happiness
In soul and body brings.
Hallelujah, &c.
7 Father, thy love me overwhelms:
What love like thine so free,
That thou hast not withheld thy Son,
Thine only Son, from me!
Hallelujah, &c.
8 When men rejoice in earthly things,
And sing of things of nought,
I'll sing of thy redeeming love,
And wonders thou hast wrought.
Hallelujah, &c.
9 Father, to thee eternally
Our grateful songs we'll raise:
But O! eternity's too short
To shew forth all thy praise.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.

HYMN XXXV.

The amazing Love of Christ.

1 AMAZING love! that made God's Son
So willingly consent
For worms, yea, foes and rebels base,
To bear their punishment.
2 Love made him
And robes of majesty,
And, like a servant, to come down
To bear the cross, and die.
3 Love brought him down for worms to die,
Love laid him in a tomb;
Love brings him down a second time,
To lead his people home.
4 When devils rag'd, he then engag'd
To combat all hell's pow'rs;
He them defy'd, when that he dy'd
To save us from hell's show'rs.
5 When heav'n and hell both on him fell,
Our souls he fast did hold:
His life gave up, the flood to stop,
And bring us to his fold.
6 Love made him on the cross to bleed,
And fall our sacrifice;
Love made the tree him brought to dust
Raise men unto the skies.
7 Christ suffer'd: why? he's pleas'd to see
Poor straying sheep brought home,
And unbelieving souls allur'd
Into his wounds to come.
8 Hence he declares none perish shall
Who in him do believe;
Their sins he'll pardon, and them take
To heav'n with him to live.
9 All things to me are dung and dross,
But Jesus crucify'd;
Under the shadow of his cross
I'll sit down and abide.

HYMN XXXVI.

A Hymn *to the* Holy Ghost

1 LORD, send thy Spirit down to us,
Christ's purchase to apply;
He'll cause us see our fall and help,
And unto Jesus fly.
2 Thou, who at Pentecost didst send
Heav'n's wind to fill the place
Where thy apostles met for pray'r,
Grant us part of that grace.
3 That gladly we, like them, may sound
The wondrous-works of God;
And shew the mighty pow'r and fruits
Of Jesus' precious blood.
4 Come, Holy Ghost, thou heavenly Dove,
Descending from above,
Renew our souls, and fill our hearts
With precious faith and love.
5 We are thy workmanship; but sin
Hath ev'ry thing misplac'd;
Come o'er thy handy-work again;
Thy image is defac'd.
6 Create in us all things anew,
Cause *old things pass away;*
Our corrupt habits quite subdue;
Sin weaken ev'ry day.
7 Let David's house in us grow strong,
But weak the house of Saul;

Let satan's holds and all our lusts
Before God's Spirit fall.
8 O kindly guide poor travellers
Into the paths of peace,
And bring us to our Father's house,
Where sins and sorrows cease

HYMN XXXVII

The Balm of CHRIST's *Blood.*

1 CHRIST's blood, that universal balm
Which thousands long have try'd,
Doth quicken, soften, cleanse, and heal,
Where'er it is apply'd.
This sov'reign blood doth purge out sin,
And doth allay our fears;
It gives us light and strength within,
And dries up hurtful tears
3 By this blood, hell its prey hath lost,
Justice is satisfy'd
Now willing souls may be forgiv'n,
Since Jesus bled and dy'd.
4 No blood like this was ever shed,
For heav'n it makes us meet,
Mens hearts it draws, and pleads their cause
No voice like it's so sweet.
5 Abel's shed blood did vengeance cry
But Christ cry'd, Mercy shew;
Them pity, "Father, and forgive;
"They know not what they do."
6 What love is this, that God should stoop
In human flesh to dwell,
And shed his blood for enemies,
To keep them out of hell!
7 Great love it was for God to bleed
For rebels doom'd to death,
But more to suffer hell, to save
Them from eternal wrath.
8 O let this divine blood of thine
My hard heart overflow
This blessing grant, though earthly gifts
Thou shouldst no more bestow
9 In my faith's arms I take the Lamb,
As offer'd unto me
His precious blood I do apply,
Me from all guilt to free.

HYMN XXXVIII.

Shew forth CHRIST's *Death*

1 SINCE our Redeemer saith, *Do this,*
This we will always *do:*
Till Christ return to us again,
Thus we his death will shew.
2 How sweet and welcome to our souls
Is Christ's dear feast of love!
Tho' it be no more but a taste
Of that great feast above.
3 Thy flesh, Lord, is the sweetest food,
Thy blood is drink divine;
Thy purchas'd fruits are the best fare
On which thou mak'st us dine.
4 Pardon of sin, and peace with God,
Do make a noble feast,
Costly to Christ, tho' free to us
Most sweetly do they taste
5 Here we set forth our suff'ring Lord,
As bleeding unto death,
Likewise the sorrows of his soul
When lying under wrath
6 The nails which pierc'd his hands and feet
Which caused streams of blood;
The thorns which crown'd his blessed head,
And swell'd the crimson flood.
7 Since Christ requires us for to shew
His love to us when lost,
What wounds, and blood, and agonies
To save us it did cost
8 Thus we review thy death for us,
O Lamb, for sinners slain:
We praise thy love, and rest upon
The merit of thy pain.

HYMN XXXIX

The Believer's Work at the Holy Supper

1 I'LL sit beneath Immanuel's cross,
Under these show'rs of blood
On my hard heart cause drops to light
From thy wounds, O my God.
2 My Lord I see nail'd to the tree,
And dying for my sin,
Thy side wide open'd with a spear,
To lodge my soul therein.
3 I kiss the nail-holes in thy hands,
And side the spear did pierce
I shelter here, this cave me hides
When storms blow sharp and fierce
4 My heart doth bleed, my eyes do drop,
When I thy anguish see,
And think these bruises sore and pangs
Were all deserv'd by me.
5 I see my sins prepar'd the cross,
The thorns, the nails, and spear,
Which tore thy flesh they made thy soul
The pains of hell to bear.
6 In thy wounds I sin's ill do see,
In sin I'll not proceed,
No more abuse thy love, nor make
Thy wounds afresh to bleed.
7 I mourn, and hate my cruel sins,
Which pierc'd my Lord to death
These murderers shall find no more
Place in my soul to breathe.
8 Awake, my soul, with all thy pow'rs
Join with the hosts above,
To celebrate forgiving grace,
And praise redeeming love.

HYMN

HYMN XL.

Sweet Fruits of CHRIST'S *Sufferings.*

1 THY gospel, Lord, holds forth thy love
In sweet and melting sounds,
And us a sov'reign balm presents
From Jesus' bleeding wounds.
2 It is thy pain that giveth ease
To my diseased soul;
When I am full of pains and wounds,
Thy stripes do make me whole.
3 Thy cries bring answers to my pray'rs,
Thy wounds are my refuge;
Thy blood doth wash my crimson guilt,
And save from wrath's deluge.
4 Thy cross doth bring me nigh to God,
And doth his wrath appease;
Thy blood brings pardon for my guilt,
And gives my sonscience ease.
5 Thy death hath purchas'd life to me;
Thy grave hides all my sin,
And all the curses of the law
Which yields great peace within.
6 Vast sums of debt for us thou paid
With thy own dear heart's blood,
And calls us to be pure and white,
By washing in this flood.
7 This is our loving Ransomer,
Who our whole curse endur'd;
And, having paid our dreadful debt,
Our rooms in heav'n secur'd.
8 To him that lov'd us unto death
All honour we will give:
He shed his blood our souls to wash
We'll to his glory live.

HYMN XLI.

The Believing Soul's Feast.

1 HERE faith may spy our Saviour's flesh,
Upon the table ly.
Salvation flow in streams of blood,
To drive our sins away
2 Grant, Lord, thy presence at this feast,
And make it a good day.
Give to each guest what thou seest best
Empty send none away.
3 To thee we look for living bread:
We languish and are faint:
If fasting thou shalt us dismiss,
Our souls shall die for want.
4 Thy heav'nly manna, Lord, rain down,
Our spiritual strength repair;
Give food, till we shall get above,
And feast with Jesus there.
5 While in this desart we sojourn,
Send us grace from above;
Our souls refresh, our faith increase,
And warm our hearts with love.
6 Thine ordin[illegible]
Shew us [illegible]
Cause streams of living waters flow
In channels of thy grace.
7 Thy people, Lord, lament for thee:
O comfort them that mourn;
Meet with them as in former days,
To gospel-feasts return.
8 Charge not on us our former sins,
Let all thine anger cease:
Look to the cross on Calvary,
And bid us *go in peace.*

HYMN XLII.

Thanksgiving after a Gospel-Feast.

1 I BLESS God for the food he gave
To me a worm to eat,
And that himself did condescend
To sit with me at meat.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.
2 He made me share immortal cheer,
And sweetly taste his grace;
My hungry soul he doth refresh,
And loose my tongue to praise.
Hallelujah, &c.
3 "What shall I render to my God
For all his gifts to me;"
And for this gift unspeakable,
His Son for me to die?
Hallelujah, &c.
4 He from his fulness did me feast
With riches of his grace;
He took me in his loving arms,
And shew'd his smiling face.
Hallelujah, &c.
5 My heart when faint he did support,
Dispell'd my guilty fears.
He set my feet upon the rock,
And wip'd away my tears.
Hallelujah, &c.
6 His pard'ning voice makes [illegible] sing,
And doth inflame my love;
His spirit lifts my thoughts from earth
Unto the things above.
Hallelujah, &c.
7 I praise thy name, who pity'd me,
Possest my heart as thine,
Restor'd me thy salvation's joy,
Fill'd me with love divine.
Hallelujah, &c.
8 In heav'n thy saints feast on thy love,
Where living streams do flow;
They praise their Head in hymns above,
And we in hymns below.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.

HYMN XLIII.

Suitable Walking after a Gospel-Feast.

1 TO Christ we now devoted are,
By solemn oath we're thine:
Give grace and strength now to obey
And love thy law divine.
2 Since for us thou hast bled and dy'd,
To thee our all we give;
And for our sins hast satisfy'd,
To thee we'll only live.
3 Help us to grow in faith and zeal,
And thrive in every grace;
And let Christ's love constrain us still
To run our Christian race.
4 O let us walk with tenderness,
And with humility:
Lord, break the power of unbelief,
Our heart sins mortify.
5 We'll make them our familiars
Who our dear Lamb do love,
We'll travel in their company,
Who seek the land above.
6 But loose companions we will flee,
Who would lead us astray:
To sinful thoughts and tempting snares
We will no more give way.
7 May I the Lamb now imitate,
And in his footsteps tread,
And still grow in conformity
To my exalted Head.
8 Lord, give more faith, more love and hope,
That I may live to thee,
And, by my conversation, shew
The Lamb hath dy'd for me.
9 Thou meetest them who do rejoice
In thy sweet ways to go,
Who would their days spend to thy praise
While they are here below.

HYMN XLIV.

Revive Primitive Christianity.

1 BLEST Spirit come, with mighty pow'r,
And melt men's hearts in tears;
Thy work revive throughout the lands
In these declining years.
2 Let yet God's ordinance be lov'd,
Christ's dying words thought on;
Let cold and careless souls be mov'd
To honour God's dear Son.
3 When the first saints oft broke thy bread
With love and life divine;
They drank the spirit of their Head,
As well's their sacred wine.
4 Their meek and pure lives did proclaim,
They liv'd and walk'd with God:
To aliens they endear'd the Lamb,
And spread his fame abroad.
5 Their zealous hearts would nothing know
But Jesus crucify'd;
Him they confess'd while here below,
And martyrs for him dy'd.
6 Their love to Jesus was so strong,
All tortures they endur'd:
While they the slain Lamb made their song,
Thus strangers they allur'd.
7 O where's that ancient holy flame
That in their hearts abode,
Which made them witness for the Lamb,
And suffer for their God?
8 O God, send show'rs of grace, and cause
Men's backward wills to yield,
And turn us from a wilderness
Unto a fruitful field.
9 Cause numbers flee to Jesus' wounds,
Convince them there is room;
Rebels subdue, reign in their souls·
O let thy kingdom come.

HYMN XLV.

Revenge the Death of CHRIST *upon Sin.*

QUESTION.

1 O HARMLESS undefiled Lamb,
What caus'd thy wounds and pain?
Thou knew'st no sin, thou did'st no wrong;
What caus'd thee to be slain?

ANSWER.

2 " Of all my wounds and anguish sore,
My pressures and complaints,
And of my racking bloody death,
Your sins were instruments.
3 To you these bitter pains belong'd,
On you they would been laid,
But love to you made me them bear
That God's wrath might be stay'd
4 O monstrous sin, thou murderer!
Can I be reconcil'd
To suffer thee to lodge with me?
No more to this I'll yield.
5 I bitterly bewail my sins,
Which gave my Saviour pain.
I them abhor, and cast to door:
They shall no more remain.
6 I'll sin pursue the Lamb that slew;
All lusts I'll crucify,
By nailing them to Jesus' cross,
Till they expire and die.
7 Subdue my heart, O mighty king,
Let no corruption live:
Kill passion, pride, and all thy foes,
Let none of them survive.
8 Tear up the roots of inbred sin,
And let it rage no more;
All satan's plenishing break down,
And turn it to the door.

HYMN XLVI.

The Complaints of Serious Souls.

1 WHEN doubts and fears oppress my soul,
In Christ's arms let me fall;
For he's my strength and righteousness,
My Surety, and my All.
2 Allow me, Lord, to fall and ly
At thy dear pierced feet,
To spread out my complaints and griefs,
And taste thy mercy sweet.
3 With shame and grief I do bewail
That my heart is not soft,
For all the wounds my sins gave Christ,
Which made him bleed so oft.
4 Alas! I oft turn cold and dead,
And backward to obey;
Yea, slow to praise the Lamb of God,
And negligent to pray.
5 Backsliding hearts thou seest we have,
Which wander and grow cold:
Lord, bring again thy straying sheep
Into thy happy fold.
6 Whatever cross thou lay'st on us,
Give strength to bear the load;
Let it be pain or poverty,
We'll not refuse the rod.
7 But, Lord, we dread inward decays
Of love and holiness;
From these our souls relieve and keep,
And with thy presence bless.
8 My Lord, betwixt my soul and thee
The breaches all make up:
No cold nor dryness let there be;
Withhold this bitter cup.
9 Let Jesus' blood bring mountains down,
And distance all remove:
Make me, like Enoch, walk with God,
And spend my time in love.

N. B. I advertise now (as I did before the 13th Hymn), that the fourteen following Hymns are composed in different Measures. See the reason given before.

HYMN XLVII.

The REPENTING PRODIGAL.

FATHER, behold thy Son,
A wand'ring prodigal,
By sin and folly quite undone,
Now at thy feet doth fall.
2 Asham'd of all my ways,
My wand'rings I confess;
I see great need of Jesus' blood,
And his pure righteousness.
3 Open thine arms to me,
And take the wand'rer home:
By gospel offers I'm assur'd,
Thro' Christ to me there's room.
4 I self-condemned ly,
O hear my humble pray'r:
Thou feed'st the ravens when they cry,
Soul-food for me prepare.
5 Father of mercies hear;
Thy blessing now bestow:
For this I cry, and wrestling ly,
And will not let thee go.
6 O say, "This is my son,
Once dead, but now doth live,
Once lost, but now in Christ is found;
I do him home receive."
7 O great Immanuel,
Accept my new-born cry;
Behold the travail of thy soul,
Which doth thee satisfy.
8 By faith I thee embrace,
Thy blood I do apply:
O send thy Spirit with his grace,
My soul to sanctify.

HYMN XLVIII.

Weak FAITH *not rejected.*

1 I SEE Christ's bleeding side;
Lord, hide me in thy wounds:
Thy sheltering such helpless souls
Unto thy praise redounds.
2 Into thy arms I fall,
In free love me embrace:
In weakness great on thee I call;
O shew thy smiling face.
3 I wait at thy command,
Until the pool shall move,
When thou wilt send thy healing pow'r
To cure me in thy love.
4 Thou know'st my feeble voice,
While I to thee direct:
The gospel method is my choice,
All others I reject.
5 Thou know'st my heart's desire
My doubts and fears dost see.
Thy sounding bowels cause me hear,
And kindly say to me,
6 "Poor soul, of little faith,
O wherefore dost thou doubt?
Whoe'er he be that comes to me,
Him will I not cast out."
7 On thy word I depend,
Thou faithful art and true;
My weak faith strengthen and defend
My unbelief subdue.
8 Teach me to know thy name,
JESUS, and it to bless;
Thy title also to proclaim,
"The Lord our Righteousness."

The Remembrance of CHRIST *in the Supper.*

1 CHRIST in that night he was betray'd,
Took bread, gave thanks, it brake, and said,
"My broken body here you see,
"Take, eat it, and *remember me.*"
2 Thus also he the cup did take;
"Here sealing blood shed for your sake,
"Which doth my test'ment ratifie:
"Let all drink, and *remember me.*"
3 Your pardon, with what's for your good,
Is purchas'd by my dearest blood.
My blood to you makes pardon free;
In drinking, then, *remember me.*
4 For hungry souls here's manna rare,
God sends from heav'n for your fare;
This manna falls now plenteously.
In eating, then, *remember me*
5 Here God sits on a throne of grace,
Where sinful men may see his face·
My blood procures your access free;
In drinking, then, *remember me.*
6 See here the *Tree of Life* with fruit,
And leaves which heal, and strength recruit,
These I shake down, poor soul, to thee
Eat freely, and *remember me.*
7 See Jacob's ladder here set up,
A covenanting God at top:
Climb, and God will transact with thee;
In doing this, *remember me.*
8 Here runs *of Life the river* pure,
Which our soul wounds doth cleanse and cure,
It freely runs to all, you see
By faith drink, and *remember me.*

HYMN L.

Admire the LAMB *slain*

1 COME here, admire, and gaze a while,
Behold Christ pierc'd for sinners vile
Who can this glorious truth explain!
Th' immortal God, *the Lamb is slain.*
2 Look not aside to dung and dross,
But glory only in the cross;
And always in your thoughts retain
These melting words, *the Lamb was slain*
3 Draw near the cross, that bloody tree,
Rich fruit it bears for you and me.
Help, Lord, to know, and still maintain,
The Lamb of God for me was *slain.*
4 Thy suff'rings, Lord, I weep to see,
These stripes and wounds I brought on thee.
From sins of all kinds I'll abstain,
These nails by which *the Lamb is slain.*
5 The cross is now a tree of life
That men relieves from sinking grief,
Yea, life to dead souls doth regain,
Draw life from this, *the Lamb is slain.*
6 No flaming sword doth guard this tree,
Its fruit is to all sinners free
Good news this is to fall'n men;
Come eat and live, *the Lamb is slain.*
7 Dear Lamb, thine everlasting love
Draws men from hell to heav'n above.
Thy love doth us to sing constrain
This heav'nly song, *the Lamb is slain.*
8 The Lamb redeems us by his blood,
And makes us kings and priests to God.
All praise and honour doth pertain
Unto *the Lamb* for sinners *slain.*

HYMN LI.

Trace CHRIST'S *Sufferings*

1 LET's trace Christ's steps, like foll'wers brave,
From the blest feast unto the grave,
Nor leave him when to Calv'ry led,
Like those who him forsook and fled.
2 First to Gethsemane we'll go,
There floods of wrath him overflow;
Both fears and foes beset him round,
Our sins him press down to the ground.
3 There he lies in a bloody sweat,
Which him o'erspread from head to feet;
He's bruis'd, he pours out prayers and cries
With floods of tears from both his eyes.
4 His friends prove false, one him betrays,
Another him with oaths denies.
Men seize and bind him like a thief,
His friends him leave without relief.
4 Amidst his foes he's left alone,
He's buffeted and spit upon,
His head is crown'd with wreaths of thorn,
His body is with scourges torn
6 He's load with scoffs and blasphemies,
Basely insulted, charg'd with lies,
Found innocent, yet doom'd to die,
And bear his cross to Calvary.
7 For us a shameful death he dy'd,
Between two thieves he's crucified
He's nail'd and jeer'd by cruel men,
With ling'ring torments pierc'd and slain
8 His God, his sun, withdrew their light,
Earth, rocks, and men, were in a fright.
Yet he by death subdu'd his foes,
And from the grave in triumph rose.

HYMN LII.

The Soul wondering at REDEEMING LOVE

1 HOW full of wonder is that love,
That made God leave his throne above,
To dwell in clay with men below,
And death for them to undergo!
2 That God, who keeps the key of death,
Should on a cross resign his breath!
To bring us pleasure, should feel pain;
To give us life, he should be slain!

3 Great love! that made Christ groan and die,
Yea, rend the heavens with his cry,
That loud cry, "My God, my God, why
Hast thou forsaken me, to-day!"
4 Our Lamb hell's pains for us would bear;
Let him the crown for ever wear:
Let all who love his worthy name
5 In songs of triumph spread his fame.
Inflame our hearts, refine our tongues,
To praise with heav'nly thoughts and songs·
O let our hearts be tun'd with love,
6 And make us meet for songs above.
Deep in my soul this truth ingrain,
My glorious friend the Lamb is slain.
I'll wond'ring ly, that God should die
7 For man, that was his enemy.
O Holy Ghost, come from above,
Withdraw my heart from worldly love,
That I may think of nought beside,
8 My God, my Saviour crucify'd.
With Simeon, I the Lamb embrace,
And cry, "Lord, let me go in peace;"
Now make me meet with saints above,
To sing thy everlasting love.

HYMN LIII.

The Blessed Fruits of the Cursed Tree.

1 In mournful songs we will record
The pangs and sorrows of our Lord,
The tears and blood he for us spilt,
To make atonement for our guilt.
My Jesus on the cursed tree
Did bow his dying head for me.
2 The dying pangs of our dear Lord
The honour of God's law restor'd:
The death and suff'rings he endur'd
Eternal life for us procur'd.
Our glorious Jesus, by his love,
Hath made the curse a blessing prove.
3 We praise the Lamb, our dearest Lord,
Whose hands and feet for us were bor'd:
It was the cross, that cursed tree,
On which the Prince of Life did die:
Accurs'd it was, yet divine love
Hath made the curse a blessing prove.
4 Each heavy blow, and bloody stripe,
Our sums of debt quite out doth wipe;
Then all our debt was fully paid,
When he on Calv'ry bow'd his head.
That tree of death to us is made
A tree of life with pleasant shade.
5 Behold, Christ's blood his garments dy'd,
When he was bruis'd and crucify'd:
He dy'd upon the cursed tree,
My precious soul from hell to free.
That tree of death to us is made
A tree of life with pleasant shade.
6 Christ bore the curse for wretched men;
To buy us heav'n, our Lamb was slain:
His wounds stand open to receive
All helpless sinners who believe.
My Jesus on the cursed tree
Did bow his dying head for me.

HYMN LIV.

Christ's Blood calling aloud to us.

1 I HEAR my Saviour cry aloud,
O sinner, hasten to my blood;
Each drop of blood cries to thee, Come,
In my pierc'd side yet there yet is room.
Let sinners come, and no more doubt;
For, "him that comes I'll not cast out."
2 My blood shall ransom all from wrath,
Who trust and look to me by faith:
My righteousness is free to all,
Who come to me upon my call.
Let sinners come, and no more doubt;
For "him that comes I'll not cast out."
3 A Saviour you cannot find
In creatures doings who have sinn'd;
Pure righteousness you seek in vain
In any but the Lamb that's slain.
To my wounds let the guilty fly,
For love to you brought me to die.
4 Of works no more let sinners boast;
Your inside view, and cry, we're lost:
Trust in my blood, who for you dy'd.
Look to me and be justify'd.
To my wounds let the guilty fly,
For love to you brought me to die.
5 Blest Lord, I hear thy gracious call,
And gladly at thy feet do fall;
The welcome offers of thy grace
My soul doth heartily embrace:
To Christ I fly, and do confess,
He is "the Lord our righteousness."
6 Dear Lamb, thy voice doth sweetly sound,
I see a fountain in each wound;
The streams which thence do freely flow,
Black souls do wash as white as snow.
I'll shelter take, in all distress,
Under my Saviour's righteousness.

HYMN LV.

Mourn for Sin, that pierced the LAMB.

1 MY soul, weep o'er thy sin and guilt,
For which thy Saviour's blood was spilt;
Mourn for thy pride and unbelief,
For which he dragg'd was like a thief;
He for thy debt his heart's blood paid;
My Lamb, my Love is crucify'd.
2 I see the drops of bloody sweat
Fall from thy forehead to thy feet:
These drops besmear'd thy raiment all,
They move my tears as they do fall:
How heavy are my sins when weigh'd,
My Lamb, my Love is crucify'd.
3 Upon hard hearts let these drops light,
Who are not moved at the sight;
Let hearts which terrors cannot move
Now be dissolv'd by Jesus' love:

Still I must look on sin with pain,
Since for my sins the Lamb was slain
4 My sins did spit in Jesus' face,
They would the Prince of life disgrace,
To shame they sought him to expose,
They nail'd him naked to the cross,
And bleeding, lift up on the tree,
Long hung the Man that died for me
5 My sins thee griev'd, and stabb'd thy heart,
They wounded thee in ev'ry part.
By sin thy blessed flesh was torn.
I view thee whom I pierc'd, and mourn,
Thy bleeding body, pierc'd and tore,
I kiss, and bliss, and thee adore
6 Our griefs and burdens, guilt and shame,
Were all laid on the spotless Lamb
Had he refus'd them, I had been
Quite sunk and lost in guilt and sin,
But justice now is satisfy'd,
My Lamb, my Love is crucify'd

HYMN LVI

The Soul bemoaning its Case to GOD

1 TO God complaints and tears I send,
When shall my sins and groanings end?
By unbelief I faint and fall,
Yet falling I for pity call:
I'm weaker than a bruised reed,
Always from Christ I strength do need
2 I nothing have me to commend,
My stony heart I cannot rend,
By nature I have nothing good
Thou saw'st me in my filth and blood,
Yet then, in love, thou bidst me live,
And for my soul a ransom gave.
3 I'm dull when thee I come before,
I'm lifeless when I should adore
From clogs of sin my soul set free;
Lord, rouze my soul to worship thee,
My drousy frame I do abhor,
Awake me, that I sleep no more
4 A feeble helpless creature I
Do at thy pleasure live or die
O lift the rod, thy wrath remove,
My heart subdue to thee by love,
My sins forgive, and to me turn
Spare me, for sin to weep and mourn.
5 Lord, rule my heart, and in me live,
And let no darling lust survive:
O bring my wand'rings to an end,
That so my thoughts may upward tend.
Thy feeble dust with pity see;
It mints and creeps to win to thee.
6 O Father of my dying Lord,
Fulfil to me his gracious word·
Thy Spirit grant, for which he pray'd,
His influences on me shed.
Nothing but sin I thee can give;
But quicken me, and I shall live.

HYMN LVII

Give Thanks for REDEEMING LOVE

1 FATHER, thy love shines in thy Son,
Thou gav'st him, tho' thou hadst but one
To ransom a rebellious race,
And us translate from sin to grace
O, for his sake, our sins remove,
And we'll exalt redeeming love.
2 Dear Jesus bore the sins of men,
Th' immortal God, the Lamb was slain
Eternal blessings on the Lamb,
Let angels trumpet out his fame,
With angels bright, and saints above
We'll join, and sing his dying love
3 We thee adore, O Christ the Son
Who with thy Father dear art One,
And One the Holy Ghost with thee.
The One Eternal God in Three
O make us meet with saints above
To magnify redeeming love.
4 Thou saw'st that all our pow'r was gone
And to redeem us there was none
If for us thou wouldst not atone,
Eternally we were undone,
Therefore thou left thy throne above,
Veil'd thy perfections all but love
5 For us thou pray'd, for us wast slain,
For us thou lives and reigns again,
For us thy blood did once atone,
And now it pleads before thy throne
To Jesus only we do fly,
And on his sacrifice rely.
6 For us Christ lives to intercede,
For us he doth this moment plead.
" Forgive their thoughts and actions too,
" Father, they know not what they do'
Lord, since our Surety paid the debt,
Our souls from wrath at freedom set.

HYMN LVIII.

CHRIST'S *Incarnation wonderful*

1 JESUS, immortal Son of God,
Thou chose with mortals thy abode,
A virgin's womb thou didst not scorn
Angels are struck to see thee born,
Thee, who the earth's foundation laid,
A little sucking infant made.
2 Him whom the heav'ns cannot contain,
Behold a woman's knees sustain.
Great God, all praise we offer thee,
That thou vouchsaf'st a man to be,
To save lost men from wrath and sin,
That we might heaven enter in.
3 Let all admire that divine love,
Which brought thee from thy throne above,
Our flesh and frailties to assume,
To die, and ly within a tomb,

That strangers, who were far from God,
Might be brought nigh by Jesus' blood.
4 Of him who did salvation bring,
Continually I'll think and sing;
The Lamb shall be my constant theme,
I'll sing his birth, his blood, and name:
The Lamb is worthy that was slain,
On God's eternal throne to reign.
5 Us he did love when enemies;
To save us, on the cross he dies.
'*Tis finish'd*, with loud voice he cry'd,
" You're safe, my friends, for all is paid;
" And, as my blood doth now atone,
" It goes to plead before the throne."
6 No angel's tongue can ever tell
The glory of Immanuel:
O, for his sake, my sins forgive,
And let repenting sinners live;
For me accept Christ's righteousness,
And with more grace me daily bless.

HYMN LIX.

CHRIST *is our Treasure and Bliss.*

1 I'LL not seek my treasure here
In this dry barren land;
Shadows only here appear,
And cares on ev'ry hand:
I would mount above, to taste
The feast thou gives to saints so free.
Lord, come down to me with haste,
Or take me up to thee.
2 Jesus purchas'd all my bliss,
On him my hopes depend,
He himself my treasure is;
Lord, keep me to the end.
Jesus purchas'd me a feast,
When he dy'd on the cursed tree.
Lord, come down to me with haste,
Or take me up to thee.
3 Hide me in thy blessed wounds,
And cleanse me in thy blood;
Glory to thy name redounds
When thou dost sinners good.
Let me have thee for my guest,
Be not a stranger unto me.
Lord, come down to me with haste,
Or take me up to thee.
4 Well thou know'st my sin and shame;
Forgive me, and speak peace:
Jesus, cause me know thy name,
Shew me thy smiling face:
Lord, thy mercy still doth last;
For good a token let me see.
Lord, come down to me with haste,
Or take me up to thee.
5 Now by faith the Lamb we see
With pleasure and delight;
Much increas'd our joy will be
When faith is turn'd to sight:
I desire with Christ to rest,
Where I his face may clearly see.
Lord, come down to me with haste,
Or take me up to thee.

HYMN LX.

CHRIST *interposing for fallen Man.*

1 OF shadows men dream,
But we will proclaim
The Lamb's death and conquests, and sound forth his name.
He saw when we fell,
Our face was to hell;
Our Lamb interposed for men that rebel.
2 Soon did he begin
For us to step in:
" O Father, forgive them, they know not their sin.
" Them do not consume,
" For I the Lamb come
" To satisfy justice in guilty men's room."
3 He was not deny'd,
The Father comply'd:
Our guilt he laid on him, and for it he dy'd.
He's nail'd to the tree,
Us captives to free
Fom sin and hell prison, with God's enemie
4 Our Lamb we'll adore,
Though devils do roar,
Envy us, pursue us, and tempt us so sore:
They rage all in vain,
But cannot detain
One soul as a captive, for whom the Lamb's slain.
5 His lambs Christ doth mind,
To weak ones he's kind;
He'll not dwell in heaven, and leave one behind:
For me he makes room,
And then he will come,
Me safely to carry to my blessed home.
6 Griev'd soul, keep his road,
Pore not on sins load,
Instead of thy Saviour, all cover'd with blood.
Christ saith, Look on me
(For ease) on the tree;
Look straight to thy Surety, and thou shalt be free.
7 When I'm with sin prest,
And fears are increast,
I'll look up to Jesus, who gives sinners rest.
I will look to thee,
Dear Lord, on the tree;
Yea, sing of thy bowels, and bleeding for me.

HYMN LXI.

A Song of Praise, and Address to the Blessed TRINITY.

1 TO God Almighty, One in Three,
Eternal praise be giv'n;
Who us from hell, thro' Christ, set free,
To reign with him in heav'n.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.
2 Unto the Father, and the Son,
And Spirit ever blest,

The undivided Trinity,
Be praises still addrest.
Hallelujah, &c.

3 Father, thou gav'st great proof of love,
To men by sin undone,
When for our ransom thou sent down
Thy dear and only Son.
Hallelujah, &c.

4 When we were sinking to the pit,
How did thy bowels move!
To save us, thou wouldst have him die:
Great proof that God is love!
Hallelujah, &c.

5 The dear Son's love let all men praise,
Who from the Father came
At time appointed, for to be
Our sacrificed Lamb.
Hallelujah, &c

6 Father, to us thy Spirit send,
For which thy Son did pray:
Let him apply Christ's blood and fruits,
And banish sin away.
Hallelujah, &c.

7 May he thine image on us stamp,
And what we lost restore;
And cause us to obey thy will,
With all our mind and pow'r.
Hallelujah, &c.

8 Let saints and angels join in one,
That great love to proclaim
Of him that sits upon the throne,
And of the worthy Lamb.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.

HYMN LXII.

CHRIST'S *Beauty and Loveliness.*

1 SINCE I beheld thy wondrous love
Display'd upon the cross,
The world and all things here below
Do look like dung and dross.

2 The *Fairest of ten thousand,* I
Will make my pleasing theme;
I'll sing his love and constancy,
His beauty and his name.

3 There's nothing sounds so sweet to me
As Christ's Name, Blood, and Cross
Besides the merits of his death,
All things I count for loss.

4 Since Jesus for our sins would die,
Who would not love the Lamb?
Thy person's lovely, and to me
Most sweetly sounds thy name.

5 Thou'rt *white and ruddy* in my eyes,
Fairer than sons of men;
Thou *altogether lovely* art,
The *Chief of thousands ten.*

6 Could men by faith mount up to see
Our shining Saviour dear,
Had they the smallest glimpse of thee,
Creatures would disappear.

7 Who can thy worth and love declare?
Thy pity knows no bounds;
The vilest men thou call'st to flee
Into thy open wounds.

8 I then accept thine offer free,
To save my soul from hell:
Since winds and seas thy word obey,
Should hearts of men rebel!

HYMN LXIII.

Thanks to CHRIST *for his Love and Sufferings.*

1 LET us together meet, and praise
The slaughter'd Lamb of God,
And with joint hearts sing forth his grace,
His Name, his Love, and Blood.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.

2 Into this wilderness he came,
For three and thirty years,
To seek his poor, lost, straying sheep,
With many pray'rs and tears.
Hallelujah, &c.

3 The most despis'd he would not lose,
But after them he sought;
He stopt not till he found them all,
And with a price them bought.
Hallelujah, &c.

4 The price was great; his blood divine
For them must all be shed:
In love, to save from hell and sin,
Christ's veins most freely bled.
Hallelujah, &c.

5 O bless the Lamb, who gave himself
For Adam's sinking crew,
To purchase our redemption,
When hell-fire was our due.
Hallelujah, &c.

6 He took our guilt, and curses due,
Our freedom to obtain:
He lov'd our souls; and, them to save,
The Prince of life was slain.
Hallelujah, &c.

7 To Christ we'll live, to Christ we'll die,
Who was our sacrifice;
He well deserves our life and death,
Who bought's with such a price.
Hallelujah, &c.

8 Let hearts, and tongues, and all unite,
Christ's love and fame to raise;
Let all our actions honour him,
And our whole life be praise.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.

HYMN LXIV.

Let CHRIST'S *Kingdom come*

1 THE coming of thy kingdom, Lord,
Is our heart's great delight.

The thrones and kingdoms of thy foes
 Them conquer in thy might
2 Cause many glory in the Lord,
 And in his streaming blood,
For nothing can mens hearts subdue,
 But that o'erflowing flood.
3 The well which from thy side doth spring
 Keep open to us still,
That we and every thirsty soul
 May come and drink our fill.
4 O let the number be increas'd
 Of them thy wounds that know
And feel the virtue of that blood
 Which from the same did flow
5 Teach men to come to God by thee
 Cause them from sloth arise;
Shew them thy death is, unto God,
 A pleasing sacrifice.
6 Send days of pow'r to bow their wills
 Thine offers to embrace;
Make these, who earthly things admire,
 Admirers of free grace.
O Father of our slaughter'd Lamb,
 Remember men for good;
Be mindful of his prayers and tears,
 And hear his speaking blood.
8 Thy Spirit grant, for which he pray'd,
 Convictions make like darts:
O Father, glorify thy Son,
 And melt ten thousand hearts

HYMN LXV.

The Convinced Soul coming to CHRIST

1 I AM now sensible of guilt;
 Lord, hear the leper's pray'r:
O Jesus Master, if thou wilt,
 Thou canst me cleanse and spare.
Where can a burden'd conscience go,
 But unto Jesus blood?
What can wash out deep stains of guilt,
 But this soul cleansing flood?
When I am made to see my guilt,
 Hide not this blood from me.
If this relief should be conceal'd,
 I'll sink in misery.
4 Such hiding sure comes not of thee,
 Tis I who am to blame
My heart proves false, it shuts thee out,
 I unbelieving am
5 Oh justly vile, unthankful I
 May be shut out by thee;
But Father, look on Jesus' wounds,
 And hear them plead for me.
6 Altho' my sins have swell'd up high,
 And do for vengeance call,
Christ's blood, like to a mighty sea
 Can quickly drown them all.
7 Thou, Son of David, hear my cry,
 Let me receive my sight:
Stand still and call me; pass not by,
 My darkness turn to light.

8 Come, say unto my grieved soul,
 Now sore opprest with fear,
Your sins are freely pardoned;
 Fear not, be of good cheer.

HYMN LXVI.

Sensible Souls crying to GOD, *and pleading* CHRIST's *Blood*

1 LAME souls here at Bethesda's pool
 Wait till the waters move.
Lord, stir the pool, and help us in,
 Our cure comes from above.
2 Christ's blood, which mighty changes works
 Can all our plagues remove;
Let this blood stream into our hearts,
 Them soften by thy love.
3 Thy blood's my balm, my help, my hope.
 To it with guilt I flee
When sin me stings, I mourn, I run
 To plunge me in this sea.
4 When I as dead in sin do ly,
 Lord, hasten to my grave:
Raise me, like Laz'rus, with thy cry,
 From sp'ritual death me save.
5 When my heart's barren, hard, or cold,
 With heav'nly rain me bless;
Rise, shine on me with warming beams
 Thou Sun of righteousness.
6 When sin and satan me delude,
 And make me go astray,
Lead me by faith to Jesus' clefts,
 So I'll regain my way.
7 Make me repent, in Christ believe,
 My carnal heart renew;
Thus make me meet for heav'n above,
 Where saints thy face do view.
8 In me exert thy sov'reign grace,
 And conquer all my pow'rs;
Let Christ's blood draw my heart to him,
 And make it soft, like show'rs.
9 Jesus, I ask, I seek, and knock,
 As thou dost me command
Now let me find; make good thy word,
 For this I waiting stand.

HYMN LXVII.

The HOLY SPIRIT *makes the Gospel feast.*

1 COME, holy Spirit, from above,
 And *on my garden blow*;
Come with the *north* and the *south winds*,
 And *make the spices flow*:
2 That *to his garden* Christ may *come*,
 His pleasant fruits to eat;
And let my soul be honoured
 To sit with him at meat.
3 Ah! now our love is waxed cold,
 Christ's table is despis'd;
To vice and sloth mens souls are sold,
 Our slain Lamb is not priz'd.

4 Cause heaven's dews drops from above
To soften hearts of stone;
Cause men to grieve for slighting Christ,
And all their sins bemoan
5 Lord, send a spark of heav'nly fire,
Our coldness to remove,
To seek thy face with strong desire,
Inflame our hearts with love.
6 O let thy Spirit shew to us,
The Lamb was for us slain
Thus warm our hearts, and thro' thy grace,
We'll not lodge sin again.
7 And, when thou mak'st our hearts to burn,
Preserve this loving flame,
Send new supplies still from above,
To keep alive the flame
8 Thy righteousness and strength, dear Lord,
Continually we need,
O for our daily food us teach
By faith on thee to feed
9 Give new degrees of faith and love,
Send more still from above,
Give more and more, till we perceive
To us thy special love

HYMN LXVIII.

A Gospel walk after a Gospel feast.

ALL glory to the Lamb, our God,
In whom we have believ'd;
The symbols of his body broke
From him we have receiv'd
2 Great King, rule o'er our conquer'd hearts,
Our faculties possess,
Whate'er in them mints to rebel,
That quickly, Lord, suppress
3 Help me to hate sin, and it count
The author of my woe,
And war against it to declare,
As Christ's most deadly foe.
4 Let bleeding love me influence,
God, who is love, to serve,
And constantly his holy laws
To love, and them observe.
5 The narrow way God did command,
He walk'd himself therein
O give me grace to follow him,
Abhorring ev'ry sin.
6 *The love of Christ* my heart *constrains*
To love his members too;
And all that unto him pertain,
Be they despis'd or few,
7 Since for his flock, where'er they dwell,
Christ his heart's blood did shed,
I'll fellowship still hold with all
Who hold it with the Head.
8 In harmony with them I'll join,
Our Jesus' name to raise,
And call the angels to our help,
Redeeming love to praise.
9 Some lively souls in heav'n's road
Go forward cheerfully;
And shall we in thy ways but creep,
Whilst other Christians fly?
10 Kill sin in us, and quite subdue
All that against thee strives,
Write HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD
On all our hearts and lives.

HYMN LXIX.

Address to the HOLY SPIRIT.

1 COME, heav'nly Dove, and be my guide
Quite thro' the wilderness;
Christ is my way, with holiness,
In this me lead to bliss.
2 Do thou possess my yielding heart
With true faith hope, and love,
Renew my soul, and make me long
To dwell with God above.
3 Me perfect make in holiness,
That I may be found meet
In heav'n to live, with Christ and saints,
Where praising work is sweet.
4 Most holy Sp'rit, I do commit
To thee my heart and frame,
Thy workmanship in me maintain,
For honour of thy name.
5 In me pull down all pow'r of sin,
And with me make abode,
And purify my heart within,
A temple meet for God.
6 Come dwell, and witness in my heart,
That I'm a child of God,
This would me feast, and make me sing
Thro' all the heavenly road
7 *Thy Spirit Lord, take not from us,*
Lest from thy paths we slide,
And all our pious purposes
Quite drop and lay aside
8 But Christ, who dy'd, is now alive,
And lives for us to plead
And hence we trust his Sp'rit will stay,
To help us in our need

HYMN LXX

A Penitent returning Backslider.

1 ONCE I my Saviour did enjoy,
Sweet was his love to me
I liv'd, and much convers'd with him,
Then well did we agree
2 While Christ I lov'd, his love I knew,
But when my love wax'd dry,
The clouds turn'd thick, and my heart hard,
And formal was my cry.
3 Alas! I have God's Spirit griev'd,
And caus'd him to withdraw
No wonder clouds thy face do hide,
When I forget thy law.
4 When thy good Spirit is withdrawn,
I lie before the Lord,

Much like a lump of lifeless clay;
Lord, send a quick'ning word.
5 O that it were with me again
As it was in months past!
Thy Spirit I would no more grieve,
Nor thy sweet favours waste.
6 Oh! I'm unworthy of a smile,
I blush with thee to meet
If I may'nt see my Saviour's face,
I'll kiss his pierced feet.
7 Backsliding souls thou bid'st return,
That them thou mayest heal
With tears let me return to thee,
Whose word doth never fail.
8 In mercy turn thy face to me,
And all my clouds dispel;
Thy controversy plead no more,
Thy anger is like hell.
9 My evidences, Lord, clear up,
Let sin them blot no more
Restore my fellowship with thee,
As I have had before.

HYMN LXXI.

View the Sufferings of CHRIST *crucified.*

BEHOLD, the Lamb stands dumb before
His raging murderers,
And while they nail and pierce him thro',
Most patiently he bears.
2 When from each pore his blood did spring,
What pangs felt he within!
Great was the load of wrath divine,
That bruis'd him for our sin.
3 On Calv'ry hill he naked hung,
Pierc'd thro' till he was dead
Thus both to men and angels he
A spectacle was made.
4 View on the cross our suff'ring Lord,
With wounded head and hands,
With pierced side, and bleeding heart,
All red with blood he stands.
5 "Behold, saith he, my agonies,
"I suffer'd for your guilt;
"What crimson streams run from my wounds!
"For you this blood was spilt.
6 "Your sins me griev'd, and stabb'd my heart,
"They pierc'd my hands and feet,
"All this I silently endur'd,
"For heav'n to make you meet."
7 Can I, unmov'd, Christ's groanings hear,
Like to an harden'd Jew?
Can I, without a sigh or tear,
This mournful scene review?
8 Forbid it, Lord! I'll bear a part
When I thine anguish see,
I feel, when I behold thee pierc'd,
And nailed to the tree.
9 Lord, my heart breaks; now thee I see,
Whom I have pierc'd, and mourn
Alas! my sins drove in the nails
By which thy flesh was torn.

HYMN LXXII.

Christ's Wounds and Blood the Support of Burdened Souls

1 IN all my anxious doubts and fears
I flee to Jesus' wounds:
His blood calls penitents to hope,
To mourners peace it sounds.
2 Christ's arms outstretch'd are to embrace
Returning prodigals;
Thy blood doth gush out, for to wash
Them from their foulest falls.
3 To worst of men oft virtues flows
From thy wide bleeding wounds;
Thou mak'st thy grace oft most abound
Where wickedness abounds.
4 Lord, where shall I my anchor cast,
But on the rock alone,
Christ crucify'd immoveable,
The sure foundation-stone?
5 Though earth's foundation be remov'd,
On him my soul relies,
In him my Father is well pleas'd,
Christ's blood him satisfies.
6 Thy gospel tells what thy blood works,
From terror it relieves:
Its virtue many thousands know,
It saves whoe'er believes,
7 O bleeding Lamb, with pity view
These fears which we molest,
Let thy blood wash our crimson sins,
In thy wounds give me rest.
8 When I'm distrest, here will I rest
My heavy laden soul
O hear my groans, and bear my loads,
My sin sick soul make whole.

HYMN LXXIII

CHRIST'S *Free Grace, Love, and Pity, to Men*

1 OUR worthy slaughter'd Lamb thou art,
Our great High Priest indeed,
Most freely on mount Calvary
Thou didst for mankind bleed
2 Thy wounds thou mak'st our hiding-place,
And still thou art our friend;
When wrath pursu'd, thou shed'st thy blood,
That so we might be skreen'd.
3 For vilest men, and blackest hearts,
Thy wounds did freely bleed:
For well thou know'st that of thy blood
Such souls stand most in need.
4 In thee faint hearts do find support,
And troubled minds get peace:
From thee poor hungry souls get food,
And wounded spirits ease.
5 The bruised reed thou never breaks,
But blow it to a flame;
Thou wilt not quench the smoaking flax,
But strengthen dost the same.

6 Had'st thou left saints, sure they had stay'd
With men on earth that dwell:
Thy free grace them distinguished,
Or they that dwelt in hell.
7 To thy free love I flee, O Lamb,
For scarlet sinners slain,
To free me of my loads of guilt,
And ease me of my pain.
8 Thou say'st, believe, and on me rest,
And you shall find relief.
Thy promise sweet I would believe;
Lord, help my unbelief.
9 On thy blood only I rely,
As doth thy gospel call:
The great atonement I receive,
Which saves believers all.

HYMN LXXIV.

The ANGELS' SONG.

1 HOW sweetly did the angels sing
At Christ's nativity!
Let Adam's race take up their hymn,
And praise God chearfully.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.
2 *All glory be to God on high,*
And peace be on the earth:
Henceforth good-will from heav'n to men,
Because of Jesus' birth.
Hallelujah, &c
3 We more than angels ought to praise.
For, tho' they see God's face,
With ransom'd men they have no share
In God's redeeming grace.
Hallelujah, &c
4 Hosanna to king David's Son,
And to king David's Lord,
Our dear God man, our glorious Priest,
Who heav'n to us restor'd.
Hallelujah, &c.
5 Let men and angels praise the Lamb,
Ev'n Jesus Christ our Lord;
Let men his stripes and wounds for them
With thankful hearts record.
Hallelujah, &c.
6 Because he dy'd, God hath him rais'd
And glorify'd on high:
Him all the heav'nly hosts adore,
And praise eternally.
Hallelujah, &c.
7 Christ's rising doth us justify;
And his ascent to God
Doth find us room with saints to sing,
And ever praise his blood.
Hallelujah, &c.
8 We see thee now at God's right hand;
Lord, draw us up to thee,
To triumph ever in thy love,
And all thy glory see.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.

HYMN LXXV.

Address to the FATHER.

1 O HEAVENLY Father, we thee bless,
Who gave the Lamb to men:
The Lamb we bless, who did submit
To be for sinners slain.
2 Thou pity'd worms, and them did spare,
Yet spared not thy Son,
But him did wound, and bruise to death,
For our sins to atone.
3 Father of mercies, thro' Christ's death,
Thou pardon'st enemies,
And send'st thy Spirit to their souls
With faith and rich supplies.
4 *Forgive them Father,* Christ once cry'd,
They know not what they do
Forgive us, Father, we now cry;
Christ's blood cries for us too.
5 O Father, thou dost men pursue
With offers of thy grace,
And, when refus'd, thou oft repeats
Thy gospel terms of peace.
6 With many motives thou hast try'd
Our backward hearts to win:
Thy Sp'rit with patience strives to save
Men from the pow'r of sin.
7 Of thy forbearance and free grace
A monument I am;
And still thou call'st me to embrace
Thy sacrificed Lamb.
8 Great love! that I who spurn'd thy grace!
Thy pow'r and wrath defy'd,
Should mercy have proclaim'd to me,
Thro' thy Son crucify'd.
9 O let not men abuse thy grace,
To sin because thou'rt good:
Fill all our hearts with grief and shame,
That we thy grace withstood.

N.B *The seven following Hymns are composed mainly for young persons.*

HYMN LXXVI

A Song for YOUNG ONES.

1 AWAKE, ye little ones, and sing
The honours of the Lamb:
Let every child prepare a song
To God our Saviour's name.
2 Our glorious Redeemer is
Most worthy to receive
Our thanks and praise continually,
Yea, more than we can give.
3 May his great love sink in our hearts,
And evermore abide;
Since for us children, sinners vile,
The great IMMANUEL dy'd.

4 How hot and flaming was his love,
That made him interpose
His naked breast, to take the stroke
For us who were his foes!
5 May our hearts burn with love to him
Thro' all eternity;
Since out of burning love to us,
Christ on the cross did die.
6 We bless the Lord, who hath to babes
This glorious truth reveal'd,
Salvation thro' Christ crucify'd,
From wiser minds conceal'd.
7 From many is this treasure hid,
But thou hast led our eyes
Unto the pleasant gospel field,
Where this blest treasure lies.
8 By faith and meditation
Here will we walk and dig,
Till we make rich, and ne'er be put
From creatures more to beg.

HYMN LXXVII.

A Song for Children.

1 A LITTLE child, O Lord, I am;
I strength and wisdom want:
I come to thee, who canst them both
In little children plant.
2 A willing child that comes to thee,
Thou say'st, thou'lt not cast out.
Thou bowels hast of God and man,
Why therefore should I doubt?
3 Thy gospel-offers reach to all,
And namely to the young,
Thy words left on record are sweet,
How charming is thy tongue!
4 "O come to me, ye burden'd souls,
"With guilt and fears opprest;
"By faith your burdens on me cast,
"And I will give you rest.
5 "Your willing necks bend to my yoke,
"Yield to my government,
"And imitate my holy life;
"And this you'll ne'er repent.
6 "I'm meek and lowly, learn from me
"A meek and lowly mind;
"And thus your weary restless souls
"Shall rest and quiet find.
7 "My yoke to you shall easy prove,
"My burden also light:
"For wisdom's ways are pleasantness,
"And all her paths are right."
8 Lord, I believe thy faithful words,
Thy offers I embrace;
Thine offices I do accept,
And thank thee for thy grace.

HYMN LXXVIII.

A Song for Young Persons

1 WE mourn that converts are so few:
Cause souls like doves flee home,
Make converts fall like morning dew;
O let thy kingdom come.
2 O Spirit of conviction, strive
With those of tender years,
And cause thy darts pierce all our hearts,
And melt us into tears.
3 Discover sin in its black hue,
That we may it detest;
And let us see God's remedy,
Christ's wounds, wherein to rest.
4 Thou empties first whom thou dost fill,
Cast down whom thou dost raise;
Thou quickens whom the law doth kill,
And glorifies free grace.
5 Lord, make thy light unto me shine,
To shew me what I am;
That I am lost, without the blood
Of Christ the worthy Lamb.
6 Take this rebellious heart of mine,
And bathe it in thy blood:
In it set up thy throne and reign,
Pull down what thee withstood.
7 O comrades dear, bring all your hearts
While young unto the Lamb;
No longer keep him from his right,
Since for our hearts he came.
8 Who else deserves our love but he,
His blood that freely spilt,
To save our souls from justice' sword,
And purge away our guilt?

HYMN LXXIX.

A Song for Children.

1 I READ my Saviour did come down
A little child to be,
And on the cross did shed his blood
For children such as me:
2 That to this fountain all may come,
Their souls to cleanse from sin,
Lord, grant me faith t' apply this blood,
And bathe my soul therein.
3 'Tis little that I know of thee,
My crucified Lord;
Thy spirit send to teach me more
Out of thy blessed word.
4 Lord, in thy word thou calls us all
To come to thee and live:
I come to thee with all my guilt;
My soul cleanse and forgive.
5 My nature change, my heart renew;
No good can I perform;
I'm weak, but yet my Surety's strong;
O help the feeble worm.

6 Lord, in thy strength I'll change my course
O plant grace me within,
And purify my little heart
From ev'ry lust and sin.
7 Thou art my Shepherd; lead me on,
Let me not go astray:
In thy sweet ways cause me to walk,
And thee with love obey.
8 A humble, meek, and loving frame,
Into my heart implant:
Help me by faith on thee to lean
For ev'ry grace I want.

HYMN LXXX.

A Song for Young Ones.

1 THE gospel sound doth reach our ears,
Let young ones all rejoice:
The words are charming we do hear,
'Tis Jesus' melting voice:
2 "Come unto me, incline your ear:
Hear, and your souls shall live:
A covenant I'll make with you,
And all your sins forgive."
3 My streaming blood shall purge away
The guilt of all your sin;
My Spirit's warm enliv'ning beams
Shall life beget within.
4 I'll be your righteousness and strength,
I'll lead you on the way,
Till you arrive in heav'n at length,
And dwell with me for ay.
5 We gladly hear our Saviour's voice,
Which bids us sinners live:
Cause our dry bones begin to stir,
To us thy Spirit give.
6 There's none our souls do trust but thee:
On earth there is not one,
Our panting hearts desire to see
But God in Christ alone.
7 That creatures got our thoughts in youth,
We heartily bemoan:
Now we thee chuse, receive, and love,
To thee we live alone.
8 What shall I render to my God
For all his gifts to me,
And for his gift unspeakable,
The Lamb for us to die?

HYMN LXXXI.

A Song for Young Persons.

1 TO Jesus' hand we do commit
The light and love we have:
Preserve and cherish that in us
Which thy good Spirit gave.
2 New listed soldiers we're to thee,
Our Captain wise and strong:
We're sworn to fight against thy foes;
To thy camp we belong.
3 For us Christ fought; he pull'd us from
Sin, satan, death, and hell:
The battle cost him many wounds;
But lo! it ended well.
4 His garments were all stain'd with blood,
But ne'er did quit the field:
His love hath overcome our souls,
And caus'd our wills to yield.
5 Let soldiers all their Captain praise,
Their General so brave,
Who fought and dy'd, and rose again,
Their precious souls to save.
6 Our Lamb alone hath vanquished
Hell's roaring lions all:
Unto him then let thanks be giv'n
By young ones great and small.
7 O that I knew how to the Lamb
My thankfulness to shew!
Then do his will, and in no ill
Or sin yourself allow.
8 May to the Lamb that once was slain
Be praise and glory giv'n
By all that dwell upon the earth,
And all the hosts of heav'n.

HYMN LXXXII.

A Song for Young Converts.

1 DEAR Lamb, thou hast thy mysteries
Unto us babes reveal'd:
The weak thou takes, and keeps thy truths
From wiser minds conceal'd.
2 The nat'ral man cannot conceive
Things which the Spirit teach:
But us thou makes know and believe
The truths thy servants preach.
3 More blest than many righteous men
Are we in gospel-days:
What things they sought, we find in Christ;
To his free love be praise.
4 With other children in the road
To hell we lately went:
From pity, thou thy Spirit sent,
Our ruin to prevent.
5 To upper worlds we're help'd to go,
With those of heav'nly birth;
While others chuse to stay below,
And seek their bliss on earth.
6 May we each tempting vice avoid,
And no more entertain
Those sins and lusts by which the Lamb
Was crucify'd and slain.
7 If in our youth thou call'st us off
From this uncertain stage,
O give us now of heav'nly bliss
A soul-comforting pledge.
8 If longer thou wilt keep us here,
Be with us all our days;
Fit us to honour thee on earth,
And sing in heav'n thy praise.

HYMN LXXXIII.

Blood and Water from CHRIST'S *Side.*

1 AS our Redeemer undertook,
For us he satisfy'd:
On Calvary he bore our guilt,
There on the cross he dy'd.
2 There we may see from his pierc'd side
The mixed current flow
Of blood and water, for to wash
Black sinners white as snow.
3 It needful was Christ's side and heart
Should pour a double flood.
By water we are purify'd,
And pardon'd by the blood.
4 O pierced Lamb, with pity view
My woful spots and stains;
And with that flood them overflow
Which from all sin doth cleanse.
5 May I get faith to use that blood
That stream'd from thee, my Lord:
No comfort have I in the earth
But what thy wounds afford.
6 Grant saving faith, thee to receive;
My unbelief remove:
May I thy suff'rings all record,
With faith that works by love.
7 Let faith be waxing stronger still,
To count the world but dross,
To hate the most beloved sin,
And nail it to the cross.
8 Author of faith, to thee we look,
For faith we send our cry:
The gift of faith unto us grant,
Our souls without it die.

HYMN LXXXIV.

A Dialogue betwixt Pilgrims

MEN.

1 TELL us, O women sojourners,
Unto what place ye go?
And why you do not seem content
To stay on earth below?

WOMEN.

2 All creatures here we empty find,
They can't supply our wants:
We go to Christ above, our bliss,
To praise him with the saints.

M.

3 Have you not many friends on earth
Who with you sympathize?
Cannot your earthly comforts here
Your hearts to stay entice?

W.

4 We're pilgrims here, earth's not our home;
Which makes us long to be
Where Christ our friend dwells with his saints,
And they him glorifie.

M.

5 Why don't you seek your treasure here,
With others in the land,
Who seem well pleas'd with sensual things,
And something in their hand?

W.

6 Our treasure Christ laid up above,
He dearly bought our bliss;
His blood's the price; nay, Christ himself
Our blessed treasure is.

M.

7 Since Christ your treasure is in heaven,
Your hearts must mount above:
Things earthly will not suit your minds,
You must be where you love.

W.

8 A sight of Jesus' love, and blood
Down streaming from the cross,
Makes all things to us here below
Appear as dung and dross.

M.

9 Let pilgrims here join heav'ns hosts,
And hallelujahs sing
To him that sits upon the throne,
And to the Lamb our King.

W.

10 Hosanna's of the highest strain
To heaven's King be giv'n,
Our Saviour-God, who came to men
With news of peace from heav'n.

HYMN LXXXV.

A DIALOGUE.

M.

1 DEAR fellow-pilgrims, we are glad
To find you in the road
That leads to new Jerusalem,
The city of our God.

W.

2 Straight to that city we would go,
But we have little strength:
Ah! in the way we move but slow;
Fain would we come your length.

M.

3 O haste unto that city fair,
The Bridegroom waits for you:
He'll clothe, he'll wed, and feast you there;
Trust him, his word is true.

W.

4 Our faith is weak, our grace is scant,
In God's ways we but creep;
Our sins us clog, and tears we want
For them to mourn and weep.

M.

4 Seek for God's Spirit you to draw,
And cause you run with speed:
By faith Christ's fulness still apply,
There you'll get what you need.

W.

6 Lord, draw us, and thick clouds dispel,
Set heaven in our sight;
Remove our doubts, grant new supplies
Of divine heat and light.

M.

7 Tho' doubts perplex you here below,
No clouds you'll find above,
There in God's light we light shall see,
Where light is match'd with love.

W.

8 Unto that land of light and love
We'll haste, Christ's face to view:
We long to share his heav'nly fruits,
Which still continue new.

M.

9 Hosanna to king David's Son,
And to king David's Lord:
His love proclaim whose side was pierc'd,
Whose hands and feet were bor'd.

W.

10 To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
One God in Persons Three,
Who us salvation brought when lost,
Still praises sing will we.

HYMN LXXXVI.

A Dialogue.

M.

1 COME, waiting virgins, join with us
To praise our glorious King:
In harmony lift up your voice;
Daughters of Zion sing.

W.

2 The invitation we accept
To sing of Zion's King;
To us no earthly business
Can so much pleasure bring.

M.

3 O virgin-souls, the Bridegroom comes
The match to consummate:
Buy oil in time, and trim your lamps;
For him look out and wait.

W.

4 Our lamps we'll trim, and look for Christ;
Let sleep from us be driv'n:
In watching we will join you here,
And join your songs in heav'n.

M.

5 We'll jointly cry, "The creature's vain.
O Lamb, there's none but thee
Among the angels, or the saints,
Our souls can satisfie."

W.

6 Good cause have we all so to cry,
The Lamb appear'd our friend
When wrath for sin did burn like fire
He from the fire us skreen'd.

M.

7 Come, hear Christ's dying cries and groans,
When nailed to the cross,
Come, see him red with blood and wounds,
When bearing wrath for us.

W

8 Our great delight is still to pry
Into Christ's wounds and cross
Compared with this happiness,
All things we count as dross.

M.

9 Sisters, love Christ, be not afraid
Of law's curse, death, or hell
Christ bought your souls, and paid your deb
And you in peace may dwell.

W.

10 Christ also bought your liberty
To be God's sons and heirs;
And you may Abba, Father, cry,
When you send up your pray'rs.

HYMN LXXXVII.

A Dialogue.

M.

1 O WOMEN, what think ye of Christ?
Is he not white and fair?
Can any thing you see on earth
With God's dear Lamb compare?

W.

2 Created things are vanity;
In heav'n or earth there's none
Our panting souls desire to see,
But God in Christ alone.

M.

3 Do you love Christ to serve and praise,
More than the things of sense?
What do you think of wisdom's ways?
What's your experience?

W.

4 Christ's service is an easy yoke:
We feel his burden light;
And sweetly in his ways we run,
When his love's in our sight.

M.

5 Blest they who see Christ's love to them
In his sore agonie;
And in the stripes which he endur'd
Their souls from sin to free.

W.

6 "Cast not away your confidence,"
But trust, and still maintain
The Lamb is our inheritance,
He for our sins was slain.

M.

7 "No condemnation you shall know,
Who in Christ Jesus are:"
His daughters lodge in Jesus' wounds,
And pluck you hence who dare?

W.

8 With him we close, with him we cleave,
Who bled to make us free
From sin and hell, and bought us life
By dying on the tree.

M.

9 Sure nothing, then, which you do ask
Shall to you be deny'd;
When you on scripture-grounds can plead,
The Lamb for you hath dy'd.

W.

10 We trust we've found the Pearl of price,
Which us enriched hath:
In him we'll joy, and him we'll praise,
Both in our life and death.

HYMN LXXXVIII.

A Dialogue.

M.

REJOICE, O women, for the Lamb
Your great High Priest is made:
He wept, he bled, to buy for you
A crown that shall not fade.

W.

2 With sympathy his pains we feel
He suffer'd on the tree,
And all the anguish he endur'd
Our souls from hell to free.

M.

3 What caus'd the flaming sword to strike
And wound his soul so sore,
And put him to such grief and pain?
Was it our sins he bore?

W.

4 We blame not Pilate, nor the Jews,
But we our grief renew
For all our sins in heart and life,
Since they our Saviour slew.

M.

5 Mourning with you, we'll view the Lamb
As stretch'd upon the cross,
Who never ask'd to be reliev'd
Till he aton'd for us.

W.

6 Let's kill sin too, that slew the Lamb;
His laws let us approve:
Conformity we'll seek to him;
His saints our hearts do love.

M.

7 Let's take Christ's blood, sin to subdue,
And wash out ev'ry stain:
Lord, do not turn away thy face
For spots which may remain.

W.

8 Lord, lead us daily to this blood,
To give us peace within;
And, that our peace may lasting be,
Our conscience purge from sin.

M

9 Let's go to praise the Lamb above,
And in his presence dwell,
Who hath redeem'd us by his blood
From all the pow'rs of hell.

W.

10 We'll go and join the angels' song,
To praise the worthy Lamb:
That he is worthy of all pow'r
We'll evermore proclaim.

HYMN LXXXIX.

True Britons *Thanksgiving for their Deliverance from Popery and Slavery.*

1 LET British hearts and tongues bless God,
And in his name rejoice;
All Protestants, come, sing aloud,
And make a joyful noise.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.
2 Praise God for kindness to this isle,
And to our native land,
Who made the battle on us smile,
And sav'd us by his hand.
Hallelujah, &c.
3 In mercy, God preserves our crown
In the reformed line;
French schemes and projects he breaks down,
When hell and Rome combine.
Hallelujah, &c.
4 Papists and masked Protestants
Still new rebellions try,
Pop'ry and slav'ry to advance
'Gainst truth and liberty.
Hallelujah, &c.
5 Rome's friends do plot and fight in vain,
Them Zion's King doth see;
His gospel pure he doth maintain,
And gives us victory.
Hallelujah, &c.

6 To two Prince Williams, under God,
Great Britain stands in debt:
They stopt her foes here and abroad:
Let God the glory get.
Hallelujah, &c
7 He rais'd and blest them: his strong hand
Our laws and rights maintains:
He keeps his gospel in the land,
Us frees from rack and chains.
Hallelujah, &c.
8 We thank God, we're in Britain born,
And not in France or Spain,
Or nations who the gospel scorn,
And worship pure disdain.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
Hallelujah, Amen.

HYMN XC.

Another.

1 CHRIST sees his church in all her straits,
And hears his people's cries.
The plots of foes, however close,
Are all before his eyes
2 When Antichrist, with all his train,
Raze Zion quite, does cry:
Her mighty King above doth reign,
And all their rage defy
3 Let Britain ne'er forget her God,
Who guards her, and preserves
Religion, laws, and liberties;
Smites not as she deserves.
4 Ah, Lord, our land's provoking sins
Call for a second flood:
A deluge send from Calvary,
To drown them in thy blood.
5 To Britain true repentance give,
On fleets and armies smile;
Change hearts and lives, their sins forgive
Abide still in our isle.
6 About her be a wall of fire,
The glory us among;
Protect us still from Romish ire,
And all who would us wrong.
7 Let reformation from the throne
Spread both 'mong rich and poor
In ev'ry house let God be prais'd,
And sin cast to the door
8 What shall we render to our God
For all his gifts to us?
And for his gift unspeakable,
Christ bleeding on the cross?

HYMN XCI.

Believers' *Food at* Christ's *Table*

1 THE angels bright above
Do not partake this food:
They feast upon their Maker's love,
But not a Saviour's blood.
2 Here Christ his flock doth feed
With food of rarest kinds,
Pardon and peace bought with his blood
Most fit for troubled minds.
3 I'll feed and wash me clean
In streams of Jesus' blood:
Lord, purge my soul from ev'ry stain
In that soul cleansing flood.
4 God's pity I admire:
When wrath 'gainst man did swell,
He sent his Son to bear our sins,
And save our souls from hell.
5 Father, regard thy Son,
Who for us intercedes,
His blood cries louder than our sins,
And for remission pleads.
6 Thou say'st, a feast above
Shall to thy flock be giv'n;
What's wanting at the table here
Shall be made up in heav'n
7 To Christ, when they ascend,
They'll need these signs no more,
They'll feast and share of heav'nly fare
Christ keeps for them in store.
8 Lord, take me to that feast,
Where I shall see thy face,
And evermore feed and adore,
And bless thee for thy grace.

HYMN XCII.

Christ's *Dying Love to be remembered*

1 CHRIST said, when men fell under doom
To do thy will, O God I come,
I freely come, I freely die,
For guilty men to satisfy.
2 Thou Lord, for them who hated thee
Didst shed thy blood abundantly,
Thy soul for sin an off'ring made,
And thus our dreadful debt was paid
3 *That night our Jesus was betray'd,*
He took he bless'd, he brake the bread,
In mem'ry of Christ crucify'd,
He said, *Do this*, then went and dy'd
4 "Do this my friends, till I return
Look on my wounds for sin, and mourn
Yet eat and drink still thankfully,
This feast keep, and remember me."
5 A moving sight, Lord, here I see,
My bleeding Lamb nail'd to the tree
May I, while feeding here, be found
Close prying into ev'ry wound.
6 Here is God's righteousness brought near,
Clothing for naked souls to wear.
This robe, saith Christ, I wrought for thee
Come, put it on, remembring me.
7 Here's refuge, peace, eternal life,
Come share and banish unbelief:
My blood wipes out the deepest stain,
Feed on this truth, *The Lamb is slain.*
8 This truth makes angels fall and cry,
How wond'rous is this mystery!

Ten thousand thousands do the same,
Who minister before the Lamb.

HYMN XCIII.

CHRIST *our* RIGHTEOUSNESS *and the Soul's* ALL.

1 CHRIST feeds his flock, he calls their names,
His bosom bears the tender Lambs:
Look on the weak and bruised reed,
Which from thee strength doth always need.
2 I'm weak and sinful, dearest Lamb;
But come and take me as I am:
O wash me in thy precious blood,
And so present me unto God.
3 The gospel-news my faith sustain:
Which say, for us the Lamb was slain:
To Jesus let the guilty fly,
Who out of love for men would die.
4 "I none desire to know beside
Christ Jesus and him crucify'd."
Accept me in his righteousness,
And in my heart his love increase.
5 My robes are Jesus' righteousness,
My soul is fairest in this dress:
Put on me righteousness divine;
Say, Christ, with all he hath, is mine.
6 Thy visit would revive my soul,
Thy gracious presence makes me whole:
Come down, Lord, shew thyself to me,
Or else take up my soul to thee.
7 When Christ draws nigh, there's none can move,
Nor part my heart from his sweet love:
I then cry, "I'll not let thee go,
Till from thee blessings to me flow."
8 I'll glory only in our Lord,
By whom our nature is restor'd:
On Jesus all my hopes depend.
Lord, love me, keep me to the end.

HYMN XCIV.

CHRIST'S *Wond'rous* LOVE *and* BLOOD.

1 THE heav'ns and earth do brightly shine,
With rays of glorious pow'r divine:
But of our mercies Christ's the spring,
Let men his acts and battles sing;
His wond'rous love that made him die
For man his mortal enemy.
2 Since finite off'rings all were vain,
Of sin to purge away the stain;
Christ said, I come a sacrifice
That justice fully satisfies.
Amazing love, that God should die
For man his mortal enemy!
3 My Lord, amidst his agonies,
His dying groans and bitter cries,
Did pray for us who us'd him so,
"Father, they know not what they do."
Christ's blood did then for us atone,
And now it pleads before the throne.
4 They're blest who know their sins forgiv'n:
In Jesus' wounds they have found heav'n,
With faith I'll view thy blood and cross;
The world compar'd with thee is dross.
I'll praise king David's Son and Lord,
And wish him ev'ry where ador'd.
5 No angel's tongue can ever tell
The glory of Immanuel:
All his love-wonders, and his name,
Eternity cannot proclaim.
Lord, make us meet with saints above,
To sing thy everlasting love.

HYMN XCV.

The Riches and Glory of SAINTS *above*

1 CHRIST's poverty and state so mean
For us great riches did obtain.
Tho' strangers here, and poor in hand,
We journey to the promis'd land:
Christ's riches there are largely giv'n,
All wants shall be made up in heav'n.
2 In heav'n the King unveils his face,
Which makes't a glorious dwelling place
When shall the happy minute come,
I'll change my banishment for home,
And mount and make my blest abode
With my dear Lamb, my Lord and God!
3 Above the saints for ever rest
In Jesus' their Redeemer's breast:
In holiness they're pure and white,
They spotless shine like morning light.
O draw me up, the Lamb to see,
And live with him that dy'd for me.
4 For us our Lord rose from the dead,
And did ascend his blood to plead;
The napkin left, when he did rise,
From tears may wipe the mourners' eyes.
Since he hath got the victory,
Sufficient is his grace for me.
5 Let's wait till Christ our Judge appear,
And cause the dead his voice to hear;
My absolution he'll proclaim,
And 'mong his saints enrol my name;
He'll with his hands put on my crown,
And bid me on his throne sit down.

HYMN XCVI.

The Lord's People Feasting at his Table.

1 JESUS, thy feast we celebrate;
At thy command the bread we eat,
And drink the cup of sacred wine;
To shew thy death thy friends combine;
Do this we will, and so prepare
To meet thee coming in the air.
2 Thy table shews thy love and grace,
And entertains our souls with peace:
Our hearts by right are only thine;
Possess them, Lord, with love divine:

Nail our desires unto the cross;
For all beside thee is but dross.
3 Feed souls, and on their graces shine,
And all their pow'rs possess as thine;
In strength of this meal let us move
Towards the mount of God above;
To feel thy pow'r, to hear thy voice,
To taste thy love is all our choice.
4 Christ made me at his table dine,
He ravish'd me with love divine:
He gave a taste of future bliss;
I said, He's mine, and I am his;
All treasures here thou'rt far before:
Since Christ is mine, I ask no more.
5 My heart and pow'rs invite the King,
My tongue is loos'd his praise to sing;
With me, let all the hosts above
Shew forth the praise of matchless love;
Jesus, possess my heart alone,
And in me let thy will be done.

HYMN XCVII.

The Love and Sacrifice of CHRIST.

1 CHRIST Jesus the Lamb,
To save us he came;
His love to poor sinners is always the same.
2 The love in his breast
Cannot be exprest;
Part of it we'll utter, and wonder at the rest.
3 When no sacrifice
Could for man suffice,
Christ would be incarnate, to pay his soul's price.
4 In sin men did ly,
None pardon could buy;
Love brought the Creator for creatures to die.
5 Man he would be made,
His blood all would shed,
Even ly in the grave, that all might be paid.
6 All off'rings were vain
But Christ for us slain;
This sacrifice only our peace can obtain.
7 His dear Son God gave
To ly in a grave,
And wade thro' hell's sorrows, lost sinners to save.
8 Christ's death makes us gaze!
Who can this love praise!
It doth the bright angels and saints all amaze.
9 Christ for us was dead,
Now lives as our Head;
For us in the heav'ns his blood he doth plead.
10 Exalted he stands,
Shews his bleeding hands:
Christ, having paid justice, our freedom demands.
11 Salvation he brings,
Which in our ears rings,
To make us more happy than great earthly kings.
12 Christ's blood we hear call
All sorts great and small;
His wounds do persuade us in his arms to fall.

HYMN

HYMN XCVIII.

CHRIST'S *Love makes him Die, Rise, Ascend, and Return.*

1 LOVE did condescend
Our Lord down to send
To be our peace-maker, the strife for to end.
2 Christ wept did and cry,
And for our sins die;
Love brought him from heav'n, in grave for to lie
3 Love made him awake,
To heaven go back;
Love will make him return again for our sake.
4 Above Christ makes room
For saints when they come;
First here he prepares them, then brings them all home.
5 Some time he now stays,
Yet he'll the dead raise,
And convene his people to shew forth his praise.
6 O when shall time end,
That I may ascend
Eternity wholly in praises to spend!
7 The love of the Lamb
To sinners doth flame:
Tho' sin do defile me, take me as I am.
8 Thy blood me can cleanse
From my foulest stains;
Of sin it can purge out the very remains.
9 Things small to me seem
Which here men esteem:
Christ only I want, me from sin to redeem.
10 Let all him believe,
Who can sin forgive,
And all from its bondage their souls can relieve.
11 Christ all men will try,
Our Judge comes away;
His flock he will gather in that solemn day.
12 Their names he doth mind,
To weak ones he's kind;
He'll not go to heav'n, and leave one behind.

HYMN XCIX.

Faith Struggling with Unbelief.

1 CHRIST doth save men in his love,
From death's sting, sin, and hell;
Them he fits to sing above,
And in his presence dwell.
From our fears, Lord, us relieve;
To penitents thy word speaks life:
Thy sure promise I believe;
"Lord, help my unbelief."
2 Let my lamp be ready trim'd
Against the Bridegroom come;
Let my soul be well prepar'd,
That with him I get room.
All believers thou'lt receive,
And bear up under fear and grief:
Thy sure promise I believe;
"Lord, help my unbelief."
3 Love brought Christ down for to die,

Love laid him in a tomb;
Love caused him ascend on high,
To find his people room.
All thy friends wilt thou revive,
In straits and fears grant them relief:
Thy sure promise I believe;
"Lord, help my unbelief."
4 Cause us to see thy love to us
In thy sore agony,
And in thy wounds on the cross,
When for us thou didst die.
Them thou loves who to thee cleave,
And of all friends thee count the chief
Thy sure promise I believe;
"Lord, help my unbelief."
5 Here 'tis sweet to view thy love,
And see thy face in part;
Far more sweet it is above,
To see thee as thou art.
Thou to meek ones life wilt give,
And them wilt save from sin and strife
Thy sure promise I believe;
"Lord, help my unbelief."

HYMN C.

CHRIST *our Shepherd*. PSAL. xxiii.

1 THE Lord himself my Shepherd is,
That doth me daily feed:
Since he is mine, and I am his,
He will supply my need.
2 To verdant fields he doth me lead
For pasture and for rest,
Where living streams do gently glide;
He feasts me with the best.
3 In love he doth my soul reclaim,
When from him I do stray:
Not for my worth, but for his name,
He guides me in his way.
4 When I go thro' the shades of death,
No evil then I'll fear:
His rod and staff, and heav'nly breath,
Will yield me comfort there.
5 In sight of all my deadly foes
Thou dost my table spread;
My cup with good things overflows,
Fresh oil anoints my head.
6 Goodness and mercy, I believe,
Shall wait me all my days;
And in God's house I'll ever live,
To trumpet forth his praise.

DOXOLOGY. JUDE 24, 25

NOW unto our Redeemer strong;
Who by his mighty arm
Can keep from falling into sin,
And save us from all harm;
Who can present us unto God
Quite faultless and complete,
Before the glory of his face,
With joys exceeding great:
To God our Saviour, only wise,
Be still ascribed, then,
All glory, pow'r, and majesty,
Both now and ay. AMEN.
Let's worship with the heav'nly host
JEHOVAH One in Three;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
To all eternity.

POPERY ANOTHER GOSPEL:

OR,

A DEMONSTRATION

THAT THE

ROMISH RELIGION IS NOT THE GOSPEL THAT CHRIST HATH LEFT HIS CHURCH,

BUT

WHAT ANTICHRIST HATH SINCE DEVISED, TO THE DESTRUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY AND THE SOULS OF MEN

IN

SIX SERMONS,

FROM GAL. I. 8.

PREACHED IN TIME OF THE REBELLION, ANNO 1745,

AND

PUBLISHED TO GIVE WARNING TO ALL PROTESTANTS THROUGH BRITAIN AND IRELAND, OF THE DAMNABLE ERRORS AND CRUELTY OF POPERY, AND OF THE DREADFUL DANGER AND TENDENCY OF THE PRESENT INSURRECTION IN ITS FAVOURS.

WITH

A Preface,

RELATING TO THE JUSTICE OF THE REVOLUTION-PRINCIPLES AND PRESENT ESTABLISHMENT, AND THE UNREASONABLENESS OF JACOBITISM AND DISLOYALTY

BY

THE REVEREND JOHN WILLISON, LATE MINISTER *OF DUNDEE.*

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1817.

TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

WILLIAM, DUKE OF CUMBERLAND,

GENERALISSIMO OF HIS MAJESTY'S FORCES,

ASSERTOR OF THE LIBERTIES OF EUROPE, AND OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE,

CHAMPION OF THE PROTESTANT CAUSE.

In TESTIMONY of the highest Regard for his Royal Person, and the sincerest Gratitude for his heroic EXPEDITION into SCOTLAND, for its relief under great Distress;

And in TOKEN of the most ardent Wishes and Prayers for His Royal Highness's Preservation, safe Conduct, and happy Success, in quelling *Rebellion, Popery,* and *Tyranny;* and in restoring such a blessed Settlement, as shall be for the Security and Enlargement of our Holy Bible Religion; the unshaken Establishment of His Majesty King GEORGE his Throne, and of the Protestant Succession to the Crown in his Royal Family, to latest Ages.

THE FOLLOWING DISCOURSES,

Against POPERY and JACOBITISM, are, with submissive Requests, for Royal Favour and Protection to them, humbly

DEDICATED BY

His Royal Highness's most obedient,

And most humble Servant,

JOHN WILLISON.

POPERY ANOTHER GOSPEL.

PREFACE.

THE British constitution, and its established laws and liberties, are things most valuable, which our ancestors have all along contended for, and sometimes at the expence of blood and treasure. Every body abroad, that knows our constitution, admires it, and envies our distinguished happiness, because of our civil liberties in Britain, where the inhabitants have security to possess, in ease and quiet, the fruits of their own industry, or the inheritances of their fathers or relations, without being subject to the pillage or oppression of arbitrary lords or superiors, or to the exorbitant demands of lawless princes, and where no tax or burden can be laid upon them, but by the advice and consent of such representatives as are nominated and elected by themselves. No wonder then though every true Briton be anxiously concerned, in time of danger, for preserving these liberties to themselves, and for handing them safe down to posterity.

But as the soul is preferable to the body, so our pure Bible-religion, our gospel worship and ordinances with freedom of conscience are of far greater value to us than any secular blessing whatsoever, and consequently worthy of all the blood and treasure we have to expend for their preservation. Now, when both our civil and sacred interests, even all that is dear to us as men and christians, is threatened and attacked at once, as we see it is by the present unnatural rebellion, how can any British Protestant be easy, or look on the danger with an eye of indifference?

There are many excellent papers, published since the commencement of this rebellion, in behalf of our civil rights and privileges struck at thereby: but seeing it belongs to one in my sphere to be chiefly concerned about our religious interests, which appear to be equally in danger, I judged it seasonable to essay in some Sermons to demonstrate the verity, purity, and scripture-foundation of the Protestant reformed religion, which we profess, and also the absurdity, blasphemy, idolatry, treachery, cruelty, and antichristian foundation of the Popish religion, which these nations are threatened with, and that in order to confirm Protestants, and quicken their zeal to maintain their holy religion against the attempts of Rome and her abettors, and to use all lawful and warrantable means, both spiritual and temporal, for that end.

The Books already written against Popery are both innumerable and unanswerable, but, many of them being large and scholastic, I have abridged the controversy in a few sermons in plain language, for the advantage of those who may not have time or capacity to read or comprehend larger volumes; and these I have published for undeceiving the simple, into whom Jacobite Protestants would fain instil more favourable notions of Popery than what is just, in order to pave the way for their setting up a Popish King over them. It is necessary then to countermine them, by setting Popery in a true light, that Protestants may keep up their abhorrence of it. For, where their abhorrence of Popery doth decrease, their Jacobitism is fair to increase. Oh, if Scots Protestants had maintained the zeal of their fathers against Popery, Jacobitism had not spread so in the land, nor had the present rebellion found such encouragement as it hath done. Our fathers still looked upon Popery as the religion and device of antichrist, and not as the institution of Jesus Christ. And if Jacobite Protestants would allow themselves to think calmly, without partiality or biass, upon the Popish tenets, they would soon drop their favourable thoughts of Popery, and be obliged to own, that Popery is not christianity, but antichristianity, and the establishment of it would prove the establishment of irreligion and vice, and the rooting out of both christianity and morality, the difference between the Protestant and Popish religion being the same that is between light and darkness, between certain truths and gross absurdities, between spiritual worship and gross idolatry, between heavenly benevolence and diabolical cruelty, between Jesus Christ the light of the world, and satan the prince of darkness: and that therefore it is most just to hate Popery, that mystery of iniquity, and carefully to avoid it, and whatever hath a tendency to introduce it among us. "But (say they) Papists hold the essentials of christianity, why then should we keep at such a distance from them?" To which I answer, they hold other principles which do subvert these essentials which they profess, and therefore we should avoid them as we do these who have the plague. A man that hath the plague hath the essentials of a man, and yet we flee from him, because he hath the plague. Alas! Papists are overrun with a most infectious plague of damnable error and idolatry, as is evident from the following sermons, and therefore God calls us to separate from them.

How astonishing is it then, that any who own themselves protestants should take up arms against a protestant king, and shed protestant blood, for introducing a popish government, and for overturning a protestant administration, under which, subjects of all sorts have enjoyed the greatest liberty for fifty-eight years, and where, in lieu of it, they must expect nothing but popery, tyranny, and slavery! And shall Scots protestants be so absurd and infatuated! Is not this to make Scotland a reproach and disgrace to protestants! yea, a hissing and astonishment to all the protestant world! Is there any protestant nation, or body of protestants upon the face of the earth, that would go with Jacobite Protestants, and fight under the banner of antichrist, against the religion of Jesus Christ their Saviour, which they profess! Oh, it were better that these who are Papists in heart, would throw off the mask, honestly declare what they are, and no more disgrace the Protestant name.

"But (say they) the king we fight for, is wiser than to meddle with our religion, nay, he hath promised, and would

come under the most solemn obligations, to maintain the Protestant religion among us."

Ans. So indeed did his supposed father, as sundry Popish princes have done, but soon forgot these obligations afterwards. It is the greatest folly for Protestants to trust these whose religion teaches and avows the breaking of faith to heretics.

"But (say they) the king we would have, is now made wiser by dear-bought experience than others, and would not be imposed on by the Pope or Papists to ruin himself, by seeking to alter our religion, or to establish Popery: for, having seen his father's wrong steps, and the fatal consequences of them to him and his posterity, he would be careful to avoid them, for securing his throne in time to come."

Ans. If he is a thorough Papist, as doubtless he is, he must look on all these wrong steps of his father as good works, and the consequences to him not unhappy, but full of merit, and to be desired by every good Catholic; why? he must believe that these have exalted him to sit among the most powerful and glorious saints in heaven, and these who are entitled to worship and adoration by all below.— And why should not one of his principles be ambitious to follow his steps, and obtain his high honours in heaven, as he is now ambitious to obtain his fading crown on earth?

Again, were Jacobites so numerous and powerful in the land, as to raise the Pretender to the throne; what would he have to fear from such subjects? What should hinder him from establishing Popery, when they give their king an uncontroulable power above the laws? It is their declared principle, that there is an absolute and unlimited power in the king, and he is answerable to none for what he doth, but to God Almighty. Whereas an absolute power or unlimited authority over rational creatures, is one of the prerogatives peculiar to the great Sovereign of heaven and earth; and for any mortal to usurp or claim it, is high treason against him who is the King eternal, immortal, &c.— And would not these professed principles of subjects give great encouragement to a Romish bigot to dispense with the laws in favours of the Protestant religion, and declare himself for Popery; especially, seeing he must believe Protestants to be the pests of human society, and that he is bound in conscience to extirpate the Protestant religion under the pain of damnation, and to obey his spiritual sovereign the Pope in what concerns the Catholic cause; who he believes can absolve him from all oaths, promises, or engagements, that may be prejudicial to it?

No doubt but some Popish princes may be wise and considerate, generous and good-natured, as well as Protestant princes; but, wherever the interest of their religion comes to be concerned, their sanguinary zeal for it comes to be too strong for their good nature and humanity, and frequently an over-match for their reason and interest too; so that Protestants can never trust them. They may promise what they will, but they cannot perform what they will; their consciences being in another man's keeping, to whom they stand solemnly engaged, as their infallible guide in religious matters: they may be permitted to swear what they please, but they must not be allowed to keep their oaths, if heresy be concerned; for, in that case, the Pope, the guide of their consciences, will declare it a good work and highly meritorious to break them, and absolve them from all oaths and obligations whatsoever. For it is a thing notorious, that Papists reckon it a mortal sin to favour heresy, or preserve the Protestant religion, when they have power and opportunity to destroy it: and how can a prince that is a bigotted Papist think of dying under the guilt of such a mortal sin?

When Jacobites are driven from all their other pretexts, they flee to their strong hold of a hereditary right by birth and blood, which they say is divine and indefeasible; concerning which, I would intreat them to consider a few things.

1. I would remind them, that the house of Stewart came to the throne, not by hereditary right, but by the choice and consent of the parliament and people; seeing it is well known that Baliol and his heirs, whom they rejected, did descend from the eldest daughter of the royal family, and so had the hereditary right according to our law; and not Bruce, from whom the Stewarts are sprung, who descended from the younger sister: but the Scotch nation judged that Baliol, by his unworthy behaviour, did justly forfeit the crown, and Bruce was far more deserving of it. Our ancestors then were of the same mind with our fathers at the late happy revolution, that *salus populi est suprema lex;* and that princes were made for the good of nations, and not nations for the honour and glory of princes; and that the hereditary right of princes was alterable, and not indefeasible.

2. Supposing the Stewarts had descended from the eldest daughter, as they did not, it would not prove their right to the crown to be divine or indefeasible; for, we read often of God's passing by the eldest in families, and pitching upon the younger to govern, as in the case of Judah, Saul, David, &c. Likewise, under the New Testament times, our Lord Jesus Christ was far from judging this hereditary right essential to a lawful government; for we find him, Matt. xxii. 21. instructing the Jews to be obedient unto Cæsar, or the Roman emperor, to whom the Jewish nation had subjected themselves. Now Tiberius Cæsar, then upon the throne, to whom he would have them continue obedient, was not the next in blood to Augustus, whom he succeeded in the empire, but a man of another family, son of Tiberius Nero, whose wife only Augustus had married, and out of favour named him in his will to succeed him, though he had a grandson of his own then alive, and a great-grandson too. Now, if Augustus his nearest heirs in blood had a right divine and indefeasible, no mortal could have set them aside by his mere arbitrary will; neither would Christ have taught obedience to Tiberius who had not this birth claim, saying, *Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's.* Jacobites, according to their principles, must hold Tiberius to have been an usurper; yet Christ approves his title (as being owned and submitted to by the nation) so far as to injoin tribute and obedience to him. Likewise the apostle Paul, after Christ's example, doth injoin obedience and tribute to the succeeding emperors, Rom. xiii. who had no more title to the empire by birth than Tiberius had.

From all which instances, it is manifest, that an hereditary right to government is not of divine appointment, but only the ordinance and appointment of men, for the general good of mankind; and, being such, why may it not be altered by men when they find it ceases to be for their good, as sometimes it doth? So our ancestors found it in the days of Baliol and James VII. For to maintain that this hereditary right is unalterable in any case, is inconsistent with reason and the light of nature, as well as with the word of God; and would overthrow the right of the house of Stewart as well as others. How absurd is it to say, that any man

and his heirs, have a divine and indefeasible right to rule over and dispose of nations with their lives and fortunes incontroulably, as they have of disposing of their cattle or other goods! This were to degrade rational creatures into the rank of brutes. Yea, it would amount to blasphemy, to maintain that a man hath such a right from God, a right that cannot be set aside on any account, not for the most outrageous tyranny, barbarity, or cruel oppression of body or conscience, and that God allows poor mankind no remedy in any such case, but that they must patiently subject themselves to be trode down, butchered, and destroyed by one of their fellow-creatures at his pleasure! For this were to make Almighty God, who is the merciful parent of mankind, the patron of cruel oppression and tyranny, which he abhors and declares against in the strongest terms.

Lastly, Let Jacobites remember, that our sovereign king George II. hath undeniably an hereditary right to our crown in the Protestant line, his house being the only Protestant family in the world of the royal line of Stewart. And seeing, by our fundamental laws and settlement, every man that is a Papist is declared incapable to inherit the crown of these realms, it being found by the grand council and wisdom of these nations, after the freest and maturest deliberation, that a king of Popish principles is incompatible with their safety and welfare; all Popish heirs whatsoever are to be held as naturally dead, and so they are in the sense of the law. Wherefore, in consequence of this fundamental law, the illustrious house of Hanover hath plainly in course, as well as by the free choice of these nations, all the hereditary right and title to the throne that any legal prince can have. And, according to the said settlement, king Geo. I. succeeded peaceably to the crown, and was universally submitted to by these nations upon his coming to us.

Well then, if it be lawful for nations of their own free choice to secure their religion, their liberties, laws, and properties from utter ruin and subversion, by excluding Papists from the throne; and if it be lawful for them to confer their government where they think these choice and valuable blessings will be best secured; there cannot be a better title to a crown in the world than our present king hath.—Why? It is the deliberate gift of a whole nation, unasked, unsought for by him, or any of his ancestors. For, the crown was most freely and voluntarily offered to, and settled upon, Princess Sophia of Hanover and her heirs, continuing Protestants, about fifteen years before that settlement took place; and, during that interval, the title of that illustrious house was frequently confirmed by many acts and oaths.—Princess Sophia was declared successor, as next of kin in the Protestant line, being grand-daughter to king James VI. and that in pursuance of former acts and laws designed to be fundamental and unalterable, which excluded all Papists from succeeding. Now, our present gracious sovereign being grandson of the said Princess Sophia, her title is naturally and legally conveyed to him. It was plainly upon the principles of necessity and self-preservation that these Protestant kingdoms proceeded to exclude Papists from the succession to their crown, and to secure to themselves, as much as may be, a king of their own religion, and whose principles are consistent with their safety and happiness; and what reasonable man can blame them for so doing?

From what is said, it doth evidently appear how groundless and unreasonable the present rebellion is; and doth yet more appear, when it is considered, that no man had the least hardship or oppression to complain of from the present king or his administration, and none could say that he had ever made any infringement upon the laws or liberties of the subject: nay, the rebels themselves, while peaceable, had the same free access to all encouragements and privileges with the king's best subjects. And, seeing they had not the least shadow of provocation for it, it must be horridly wicked, and impious in them to rise up to spoil and murder these who desire to live quietly in the land under a Protestant government to which they are sworn, and can have no freedom to consent to a change, suffer what they will for it.

Again, I desire all to consider, should the rebels succeed in their design, how dreadful the consequences must be; our Protestant king must be deposed and murdered, and so must all his family, if they do not flee. And the consequence of this must be, that no Protestant prince must ever rule these nations again, but a succession of Popish princes must be established for ever. And again, the consequence of that must be, the rooting out of the Protestant religion in these kingdoms for ever, and settling Popery for ever in its stead, together with French tyranny and arbitrary power. And what would probably follow on this, but the extirpating of the Protestant religion in all our settlements and colonies abroad, yea, in all places of the earth? For I look upon Britain as the main fence, under God, of the Protestant religion through the world, and its strongest bulwark against Rome and her allies.

I do not mention these things merely to amuse or frighten people without cause; for these consequences seem to be most natural and unavoidable, and must follow natively, if free agents be permitted to act freely, and natural causes to produce their natural effects. So that they must certainly happen, if God, by a wonderful power, do not interpose to hinder them; and I know not what ground we have still to expect miracles. Again, let us take a view of the mischiefs, the robbery and plunder, the murders and massacres, which the rebels must needs be guilty of before they can possibly reach their end, seeing they have the king and parliament and whole wealth of the three nations against them. We may reasonably suppose them to come that length, as to burn or pillage many towns, villages, and single houses; nay, to rob, abuse, wound, and murder many thousands of innocent people; why? merely because they adhere to the established government, and do not assist them in their rebellion. Possibly, when they entered upon it at first, they might have no intention of such cruelties; but, if they persevere in their present course, their necessities and circumstances will unavoidably bring them to them at length.—They may promise the restoring of our peace and privileges upon the event of their success; but what ground can we have to expect the security of our properties from men of arbitrary principles, liberty to tender consciences from Papists, or men of a persecuting spirit, protection to our trade from the tools of those who are the rivals of our trade, or safety to the Protestant religion from a Romish bigot educated at Rome by the Pope, to whom he is so dear, that he has appointed prayers, and the sacrament to be exposed, for his success in Scotland?

But though we have no ground to trust the promises of Papists and their abettors, yet let us still trust in a gracious God for deliverance from their power: for seeing God, by his wonder-working hand, hath brought about a reformation from Popery and idolatry, and settled the true christian religion in Britain, Ireland, and other nations, we have reason

to hope that God will not give us up to our enemies, however sharp a scourge he make them to us, in regard the preservation of true religion through the world seems very much to depend upon the safety of Britain. We have ground to believe, it is not the scheme of providence to suffer the Protestant religion wholly to sink; especially considering how wonderfully God hath interposed for it against the designs of Rome in many instances, and hath promised to destroy Babylon at length It would fill a volume to give a history of the miraculous revolutions, preservations, deliverances, and interpositions of divine providence in behalf of the Protestant religion in Britain, within these 200 years past, particularly in the years 1547, 1558, 1560, 1588, 1605, 1688, 1690, 1692, 1695, 1708 1714, 1715, 1716, 1743, 1745. The seasonable interpositions for Britain and the Protestant religion in these years, do shew how much they are the peculiar and constant care of providence. Now, what so reasonable account can be given for such a numerous set of deliverances, but that God has thought fit to make this island a fence and bulwark against Rome and her wicked attemps to subvert true religion and christianity? For she has employed her worldly ecclesiastic power these 1200 years to spread idolatry, delusion, corruption, impiety, war, and destruction among the nations. Blessed be God, that hath so eminently honoured Britain in times past to stop her career, and doth still preserve this island for that end notwithstanding of our heinous sins and provocations. He even saves us for his name's sake. And his interpositions for us against the designs and attempts of Rome have frequently been by ways and means very surprising and unexpected by us, *not by our sword or our bow, but by his own right hand, arm, and countenance* — How remarkably hath he appeared for us sometimes, by striking terror into the hearts of our enemies, even in the time of their greatest herceness and boasting, and made them haste to flee away! He hath made the name of a single person a terror to them, as he did the name of Gideon to the Midianites, Judges vii 20 when the whole host fled at their hearing him and his three hundred men blow their trumpets, and cry, *The sword of the Lord and of Gideon* — Now he who hath so delivered us formerly, is still the almighty and faithful God, and therefore we trust in him that he will yet deliver us, 2 Cor. i. 10.

At the same time I acknowledge, that the present awful dispensations of God to the land are very humbling, and have a loud voice to men of all degrees and stations among us, calling us to consider our ways, repent of our sins, abandon the prevailing vices of the age, and set about a thorough reformation. But seeing this subject is so excellently well managed in a late pamphlet, intituled, Britain's Remembrancer, or the Danger not over, London printed, and reprinted at Edinburgh, and sold there by Messrs Lumisden and Robertson, I shall add no more upon it, save earnestly to recommend the said pamphlet to every body's serious perusal and consideration. the Author hath indeed remarkably served his generation by it.

What I have said in this preface of the British constitution and revolution-settlement, brings to my mind some positions about government, that are supported not only by the light of nature and strongest reason, but also by the judgment of the most eminent lawyers and civilians; which I humbly recommend to the consideration of these who plead for the indefeasible hereditary right of princes, and for unlimited monarchy and arbitrary power.

1. God Almighty hath left nations the liberty of setting up such models of government as best please themselves.

2. Magistrates were ordained for the good of nations, and not nations for the honour and glory of magistrates.

3. The right and power of magistrates, in every country is that which the laws of the country make it to be.

4. These laws are to be religiously observed; and the oaths which are taken, having the force of a contract between Magistrates and people, cannot be violated without danger of dissolving the whole fabric.

5. As none can say they receive their kingdoms immediately from God, the best right that any can challenge to their crowns is, that they and their ancestors received them by the consent of willing nations.

6 If this be not acknowledged, there is no king in the world that has any title to that crown he wears, nor can plead it, unless he could deduce his pedigree from the eldest son of Noah, and shew that the succession had still continued in the eldest of the eldest line, and had been so brought down to him.

There is one thing more that I would say to the reader of the following sermons; that as I had not room, so I thought it not needful to burden them with long quotations from the Council of Trent, the Council of Constance, Lateran Council, Bellarmine's writings, the Rhemists, and others, which most evidently verify the Protestants charge against Popery; yet I think I have been so cautious in my assertions, that Papists will not readily accuse me of misrepresenting Popery. But, if any should do it, let the reader peruse what many Protestant authors have quoted from their councils and writings; such as Tillotson, Stillingfleet, Wake, Tennison, Owen, Poole, Baxter, &c. And particularly consult Doolittle's Sermon on the Novelty of Popery, Clarkson's Practical Divinity of the Papists, a Roman Catechism, licensed by authority, and printed at London, anno 1686 And every one of these will shew, I have not given a wrong account of the Romish religion

SERMON I.

Upon Gal. i 8.

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed, or *be* under *an* Anathema.

THE apostle here is reproving the Galatians for unstedfastness in the faith, and being so apt to be seduced by error, and into that which he calls another gospel, as it led them to another way of justification and salvation than Jesus Christ had laid down in his gospel, and was preached and written to them by his apostles. But, to fortify them against false teachers, the apostle, with great assurance, asserts the truth and reality of the gospel he and other ministers of Christ had preached unto them. And he is so fully persuaded of the divinity of the gospel way of salvation by faith in Christ Jesus, that he pronounces an Anathema upon these who would preach any other gospel: and to shew them that this sentence did not proceed from pas-

sion or intemperate zeal, but from divine inspiration he repeats it in the next verse, *Let them be accursed* Also observe how strong he puts the case in the text, *Though we or an angel, &c.* as if he had said, " Were it even possible that an apostle working miracles, or a bright shining angel from heaven, should forge or preach a new gospel to you, his gospel is to be judged an imposture and himself accursed, for corrupting and falsifying the pure religion of Jesus Christ "

DOCT *These who teach another gospel or religion than Christ hath taught and left to the world, are exposed to the dreadful curse of God.*

Here I propose to do these three things 1 Enquire what is meant by this curse 2 Who they are that teach another gospel, and are exposed to it 3 To apply this doctrine to some who are particularly guilty

I By the curse denounced in the text, is meant the just sentence of God's sin revenging justice, which burns most fiercely against sin, and not only denounceth but inflicts terrible wrath and vengeance, in the judgments which he pours out upon those who rebel against his holy revealed will, and particularly these who contemn his gospel-way of salvation laid down in his word

II Who are these that teach another gospel? *Ans* They are such as pervert the good tidings which Christ publisheth, or alter the method of salvation revealed by him in his gospel or written word, by opening a different way of justification and salvation to fallen mankind than what is there laid down Such were the false teachers among the Galatians, here reproved, who taught justification not to be by faith but by the works of the law this the apostle calls another gospel, which exposes its teachers to God's heavy curse Why? Because hereby they would pervert the very design of Christ's gospel, and make it serve quite contrary purposes to what he intended by it Christ's design was to advance God's glory in man's salvation and to humble the lost creature before him, to make self nothing, and free grace all Now, these Galatian teachers, who would have justification to be by works forged a gospel of their own, which served to exalt self and to disparage the free grace of God in saving sinners through Christ which is directly contrary to the design of the true gospel of Christ Again, there was another thing these teachers did inculcate upon christians, as necessary, that they should submit to the old yoke of ceremonies, though now abrogated by Christ's coming this being against the gospel of Christ the apostle warns them against it, as another gospel *Stand fast,* saith he, *in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage,* Gal. v 1

But I hasten to the third head I proposed, being the main thing I intend.

III. *The application of the doctrine*

My text and doctrine speak both reproof and terror to the church of Rome, as much as to the false teachers in Galatia, in regard they teach another gospel in the two respects above mentioned, as well as they, and so are equally exposed to the apostle's Anathema Why? The Romanists teach another way of justification than by faith in Jesus Christ, to wit, by their own works and merits Likewise, they lay upon christians a yoke of uninstituted ceremonies and superstitious inventions, upon which they lay great stress for acceptance with God, whereby they forge a new gospel for exalting self, and disparaging free grace, contrary to the design of the gospel of Christ Now, whoever they be that do this, be they apostles, be they angels be they Popes or pretenders to infallibility, the Spirit of God denounces an Anathema against them Let Papists then dread the efficacy of this curse, who, in their new gospel, forbid what Christ requires, and require what he forbids, of which afterwards Were their eyes but opened, it might greatly affect them to see the church of Rome and her council of Trent, who are so very liberal of Anathemas and curses upon others I say to see themselves here anathematized with a vengeance, by one whose authority, they must confess is superior to theirs Surely this one Anathema of the Spirit of God is more dreadful than all the *bruta fulmina* of Rome and her infallible Bishops

Now, that it may more convincingly appear that Popery is here anathematized I intend to demonstrate at some length from the holy scriptures (the only rule of faith and practice in religious matters) that Popery is another gospel another scheme of salvation than what Christ doth in his gospel lay down yea that Popery is not christianity, but antichristianity, a religion devised by Antichrist, exceeding dangerous and damnable to the souls of men And this subject I judge proper to insist on at this time, that I may exonerate myself, and give warning to all my hearers and to all my fellow-protestants in Britain and Ireland could my word reach them of the evils and danger of Popery when these nations are threatened with it, more than they have been at any time since the revolution in 1688 That Popery then is another gospel appears by the following arguments

First Arg That religion which teacheth many doctrines as matters of faith and duties as matters of practice for which there is no foundation or warrant in the word of God nay, many of them expressly contrary to it is evidently another gospel than that of the Lord Jesus Christ which draws on the dreadful Anathema in the text but Popery is such a religion, therefore it is another gospel &c

The whole counsel of God relating to things necessary for God's glory and man's salvation is contained in the Bible, as is evident both from the text and from John xx 30, 20. 2 Tim iii 15 16 2 Pet i 19

But the church of Rome teach many doctrines and practices which have no scripture foundation (as many learned Popish divines are forced to acknowledge) such as " The sacrifice of the mass half communion seven sacraments, worshipping of saints and images purgatory prayers for the dead indulgences and dispensations from the Pope, penance, auricular confession public service and prayers in an unknown tongue, that it is necessary to salvation that all be subject to the Bishop of Rome, and that they believe that church to be the mother and mistress of all churches " For all these and other doctrines they have no authority from scripture, Christ never taught them

Nay, many of their doctrines are expressly contrary to what Christ hath taught They teach the making, worshipping, and bowing down to graven images contrary to Exod xx 4, 5 Worshipping angels saints, relicks, the cross, bread, &c contrary to Exod xx 3 Mat iv 10 Col ii 18 Human merits, and works of supererogation contrary to Luke xvii 10. Rom vi 23 Tit iii 5 Other mediators and intercessors betwixt God and man, besides Christ the

one mediator; contrary to 1 Tim. ii. 5. Rom. viii. 34. The doctrine of transubstantiation, contrary to 1 Cor. xi. 26, 27, 28. Acts iii. 21. Mat. xxvi. 29. John xvii. 11. The sacrifice of the mass, contrary to Christ's one sacrifice, and his once offering it; asserted, Heb. vii. 27. and ix. 28. and x. 12, 14. Their taking the cup from the people, contrary to Mat. xxvi. 27. 1 Cor. xi. 28. Their purgatory, and mens satisfying for their own sins, contrary to 1 John i. 17. Rev. xiv. 13. Their public service and prayers in an unknown tongue, contrary to 1 Cor. xiv. 16, 26. Their prohibiting meats and priests marriage, contrary to 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2, &c. Heb. xiii. 4. Their exempting the clergy from the jurisdiction of the magistrate, contrary to Rom. xiii. 1. Their adding to the scriptures, contrary to Prov. xxx. 6. Rev. xxii. 18. Their forbidding people to read them, contrary to John v. 39. Col. iii. 16 Rev. i. 3. Their teaching that men may be perfect without sin, contrary to 1 John i. 8. Eccl. vii. 20. From all which we see that Popery is both unscriptural and antiscriptural, and consequently another gospel than Christ's, and under the Anathema of the text.

Second Arg. That Religion which prescribes other terms and conditions of Salvation than Christ hath appointed, or a great many devices of men as necessary means of grace, for obtaining pardon and acceptance with God, without warrant from Jesus Christ, is another gospel than his, and under the Anathema in the text: But Popery is such a religion; therefore Popery is another gospel, &c.

The Spirit of God teacheth us, that Jesus Christ only is the way to the Father, that he is the King and head of his church, that he hath the keys and all power in his hand, that he opens and shuts heaven at his pleasure, prescribes the terms which none may add unto, out of blind zeal, or pretence of good intention. See John xiv. 6. Mat. xxviii. 18. Rev. iii. 7. Deut. xii. 32. Mat. xv. 9. Isa. xxix. 13. 1 Pet. i. 18. Heb. xiii. 21. 1 Sam. xv. 22, 23.

But the Church of *Rome* require terms of remission of sin, never prescribed by Christ; such as, particular confession, that is, these who would obtain pardon of their sins, must confess them all in the priest's ear, even every evil thought or design (a political contrivance of Rome.) So that tho' a man truly repent, confess his sins to God, and forsake them; yet he cannot be forgiven, unless he confess them to the Priest. This Christ never required. Again, they allow salvation to none but these who are subject to the Pope, and the Church of Rome. All this is another gospel than that of Jesus Christ; for he teacheth that all these who truly repent and believe in him shall be saved, without any regard to Rome or her Pope. Likewise, they make many superstitious devices of their own needful to pardon of sin, and acceptance with God; such as, holy water, holy oil, crosses, beads, bells, roses, agnus dei's images, crucifixes, processions, pilgramages, visiting the shrines and sepulchres of saints, kissing and adoring their relicks, burning incense to them, wax candles, hallowed swords, bells, spells of the gospel. &c. Also, they place much religion in vestments, tonsures, gestures, crossings, bowings, kneelings, and governing the motions of the body. Now, the soul being intent upon these outward visible things of mens devising, cannot but be much diverted from the spiritual worship of an invisible God, which Christ in his gospel doth closely press, John iv. 24. Likewise, the bringing a yoke of uninstituted ceremonies and human inventions upon the necks of christians, is inconsistent with the gospel liberty which Christ hath purchased for them, and the apostle exhorts them to maintain, Gal. v. 1. All which evince Popery to be another gospel than Christ's.

Third Arg. That religion which puts corrupt glosses and meanings upon these qualifications and duties which Christ requires in order to salvation, such as faith, repentance, regeneration, prayer, attending ordinances, partaking of sacraments, holiness of heart and life, whereby the way to heaven is made broader than Christ makes it, is another gospel, which draws on the Anathema in the text; but Popery is such a religion; therefore, &c.

Jesus Christ in his gospel teaches us the necessity of the new birth, worshipping God in spirit, keeping of the heart, mortifying sin, denying self, universal holiness, &c. upon which account he saith, *Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there be that find it.* See John iii. 3. and iv. 24. Prov. iv. 23. Mat. xxiii. 26. Mat. v. 29. and xvi. 24. 2 Cor. vii. 1. Mat. vii. 14.

But the church of Rome speak otherwise: the faith which they require is no better than the faith of devils, a bare assent to revealed truths; for so they define justifying faith. The repentance they require doth not necessarily include contrition or godly sorrow for sin; it is enough if there be attrition, that is, such a sorrow for sin as only proceeds from the fear of hell, tho' it be not mixed with love to God, or a sense of ingratitude to him, and of despising his mercy in Christ. Attrition with confession to the priest, joined with the sacrament of penance, and sacerdotal absolution, they reckon sufficient for obtaining pardon of sin and eternal life. Which is a great encouragement to men to spend their days in sin, and expect salvation after all. for, according to Popish doctrine, if a man after the most wicked life, when death approacheth, be but sorry for his sins, only because he is afraid of being damned for them, confess them to the priest, and get his absolution, all is safe. This is not Christ's gospel: for he makes repentance to include a change of the heart and mind, as well as the outward life; and he looks to the sincerity of the heart in all our professions and performances. Christ saith in his gospel, There be few that find life; but the Pope saith in his, There be few that miss it, except these who die suddenly; for the most profligate wretch on earth, if he can have but a few minutes with a priest before his death, his business is done, he dies the death of the righteous, tho' he has lived the life of a profane atheist. The Papists may refuse, as they will, that their Pope is antichrist; but the Bible tells us this doctrine is antichristianity.

The church of Rome, instead of pressing a change of heart and inward holiness upon men, they make them easy, by telling them that the *Opus operatum,* or outward work wrought, is enough; that is, the mere outside of religion, the external performance of duties, and partaking of sacraments, is sufficient to save them. If they get the outward part of baptism, confirmation, the wafer-bread, and sacrament of penance, all is well, tho' sincerity and inward devotion be wanting. This is another gospel, subversive of the whole scheme of christianity; for Christ teacheth us, that God must be worshipped in Spirit, he must have the heart in duty, and bodily exercise profiteth little; that outward actions, without inward affections, are so far from being acceptable to God, that they are hateful to him. The Spirit of God tells us, he is highly offended with these who draw nigh to him with their mouths, when their hearts are far from him. But, say the church of Rome, fear not, if

you move your lips, speak the words, say so many prayers, so many Ave Maria's, Pater nosters, drop so many beads, &c. Tho' you want close attention or inward devotion, that is but a venial sin: whatever defects be about the *Opus operatum*, the ministration and absolution of the priest will supply them all. This is evidently another gospel, and most destructive to the souls of men. But I shall insist more largely upon this Popish corruption in the next argument.

Fourth Arg. That religion which doth corrupt mens morals, and encourage them in the way of sin and vice, or tends to overturn the practical part of christianity, as well as its doctrine, is another gospel than that of our holy Jesus, which draws on the Anathema of the text: but Popery is such a religion; therefore it is another gospel, &c.

Christ's religion is a holy religion: for in his word or gospel he teaches us to mortify sin, and crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts thereof, and to study the practice of true holiness, without which no man can see the Lord; and to have our fruit unto holiness, that we may attain the end, everlasting life. See Rom. viii. 13. Gal. v. 24. 2 Cor. vii. 1. Heb. xii. 14. Rom. vi 22. The gospel or doctrine of grace teaches us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, to have a respect to all God's commandments, to keep them all, without turning aside to the right or left hand. it forbids to be conformed to the bad practices of this world, or to touch the unclean thing. See Tit. ii. 11, 12. Psal. cxix. 6. Deut. v 32. 1 John ii. 3, 4. Rom xii 2. 2 Cor. vi. 17 Although true believers be not under the law as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned, yet Christ having adopted the law into the covenant of grace as a rule of life to them, they are bound to walk according to it in all respects, and to hate every sin, and abstain from it. Christ will not allow nor dispense with any one known sin in his people, Psal. cxix. 4 5, 6, 101, 104, 128. Jam. ii. 10, 11. Rom. xii. 9. 1 Pet. iii 11.

But the church of Rome do many ways indulge sin; encourage men to neglect piety, to break God's law, and thereby corrupt the lives and morals of men. I shall give some few instances, for evincing the truth of this charge.

1. Their teaching the sufficiency of attrition to penitents, and of the *Opus operatum* in religious performances, as I observed in the preceding argument, hath a manifest tendency to ruin practical godliness, and banish inward devotion and vital piety from amongst men.

2. They make the exercise of many of the christian graces and duties unnecessary, by turning God's commands into counsels; such as these, to mortify sin, crucify the world, deny ourselves, take up the cross, &c. These and such like, they say, are only matters of counsel, not of command; and consequently the neglect of them is no sin: which doctrine must be a great stop to the practice of godliness, where it is believed.

3. Though the scriptures plainly teach that every sin in its own nature is mortal, Rom. vi. 23. Gal. iii. 10. yet Papists teach that there are some sins, which they call venial, that do not deserve hell, and need no pardon nor Saviour And, among these venial sins, they reckon many scandalous enormities; such as lying, fornication, cursing, swearing, and even blaspheming the name of God, providing it be not done deliberately, or be not perfectly voluntary. Of such sins Bellarmine saith, *Though all the venial sins in the world were gathered into one, they can never make up one mortal*, and so cannot possibly damn a man; wherefore they judge mens consciences need not be troubled about such sins. Which doctrine doth greatly encourage vice.

4. If a man judge Bible-rules or prohibitions too strict for him, they hold that the Pope can dispense with them (as he hath often done for money) so as to allow fornication, incest, incestuous marriages, and even Sodomy, of which there are many instances. The Pope hath dispensed with oaths and vows to God, with leagues and pactions among men; with the duties between husbands and wives parents and children, &c. He gives dispensations to papists to promise any thing to protestants for deceiving them if in their hearts they stand well affected to Popery and he dispenses with their breaking all such promises and pactions, if it serve his interest.

5. They encourage sin greatly by their doctrine of indulgences. The council of Trent affirm, that the Pope can remit the punishment of sin both here, and in purgatory This power of indulgence or pardon they found upon works of supererogation, that is, the overplus of the satisfaction and merits of Christ and the saints of this treasure the pope keeps the key, and such portions as he pleases to dispense to particular persons, are called indulgences, and and these are obtained by pilgrimages, reciting certain prayers, assisting the Pope, or by money. And these indulgences are committed to certain monks and priests to sell and dispose of for money It was this execrable practice that first awakened Luther to oppose popery he judged it a device of satan, to make sin cheap, and to encourage men in wickedness. And surely, when men can have a plenary indulgence or pardon for so trivial a satisfaction, as standing before the doors of St. Peter's church at Rome when the Pope blesses the people at Easter, it makes sin easy to be committed as pardoned. And what they speak of saints merits, and works of supererogation, is without any scripture-foundation. Also, it is most blasphemous to join the merits of men with the merits and satisfaction of Christ; and to say, that a man on earth can dispose of any part of Christ's merits as he pleases, and that for money; or that he can extend the power of the keys, which Christ gave to his church on earth, to souls in another world, and there to remit punishments inflicted by divine justice! Horrible blasphemy!

6. They encourage wickedness, by teaching that a good end doth sanctify the means, however foul these be. And so all sorts of villany are consecrated by a zeal for their church. Nay, perjury, lying, treason, poisoning, stabbing, rebellion, and all kinds of bloodshed and murder, in that case, are with them not only lawful, but even heroic virtues, and meritorious of salvation They reckon it a good work, and meritorious, to prosecute, kill, and murder these who differ in religion from them, whom they call hereticks, as they think that they serve God and his church by so doing. And they teach, that these who are most active in this bloody work, do merit a high degree of glory in heaven. And, with such doctrine as this, the priests have spirited up the Papists in sundry nations to massacre and destroy Protestants in great numbers: so that the Babylonish whore hath been long drunken with the blood of the saints, and the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; according to what John foresaw, Rev. xvii. 6.

7. They teach the lawfulness of equivocation and mental reservation in swearing oaths, making promises and contracts, in order to deceive these they deal with; and they make use of words with double meanings for that end.

They make it lawful to break the most solemn oaths and contracts, when it is anywise for the interest of their church. And, whatever security a Popish prince give to his Protestant subjects for enjoying their religion or liberties, they teach that they are nowise bound thereby. Nay, their religion requires them to break all oaths and engagements to Protestants; according to the decree of the fourth Lateran council under Pope Innocent III. the decree of Pope Martin V. and that in the nineteenth session of the council of Constance, and the acts of a late Pope Clement XI. tome 2. page 179. All of them agreeing in this, that no faith is to be kept with hereticks, when any thing is stipulated prejudicial to the church of Rome.

These few instances are only a swatch of the corrupt practical divinity of the Papists, and may serve to fill us with detestation of such an antichristian, perfidious and bloody religion as Popery, as being quite another gospel than that of our holy, spotless and undefiled Redeemer.

Object. "If Popery hath corrupted christianity so much both in doctrine and morals, how is it that there are so many moral and devout people among Papists? And how is it that sundry of their divines have written such pious books, recommending and pressing morality and godliness?"

Ans. 1. If some men of the Romish religion be piously disposed, they are not led to it by their principles, which are of a most dangerous nature and tendency, destructive to true christianity, as I have represented them.

2. Many in the communion of the church of Rome have abhorred the corruptions of that church, and have exposed them too, though they had not courage enough to withdraw from it, as they ought to have done.

3. If some of that corrupt church have written or lived like christians, notwithstanding of their antichristian doctrine, there is ground to fear that far greater multitudes have been eternally ruined by it. When men come once to believe, that they may gratify their lusts all their days, and be saved at last by auricular confession, penance and priests absolution; very few will refuse to gratify them. If the observing of the *Opus operatum*, or the outward part of sacraments and religious performances, will procure pardon to the most flagitious liver; many will make mere charms and spells of sacraments, and go to them with hearts full of adultery, and hands reeking with blood. May all of us then seek grace from God to *cleave to that which is good, and to abhor that which is evil!* And may we still abhor that religion which would dishonour God, discredit his word, and encourage impiety and wickedness among men! May we also keep up our zeal against every thing that tends to introduce such an antichristian religion into these lands, and pray fervently to be preserved from it!

SERMON II.

Upon Gal. i. 8.

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

In the preceding sermon, I have adduced four arguments to prove Popery to be another gospel than that of our Lord Jesus Christ. I proceed to add to them, in the next place,

A *Fifth Arg.* That religion which takes people off from the holy scriptures, and casts contempt upon them, is another gospel than Christ's, and under the Anathema of the text: but Popery is such a religion; therefore, &c.

Before I mention the Popish errors relative to the scriptures, it is fit we hear what the Spirit of God saith of the holy scriptures. He teacheth us, that they are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life; and that the observing this rule is the only way to please God here, and to attain salvation hereafter: and therefore he enjoins us to read and study the scriptures, to regulate our faith and practice by them, and to instruct our children in them. See 2 Tim. iii. 16. Eph. ii. 20. Isa. viii. 20. Luke xvi. 29, 31. Rev. xxii. 18, 19. John v. 39. Col. iv. 16. Deut. vi. 7. and xi. 18, 19. He also commends these who read and study the scriptures, and pronounces them blessed, Josh. i. 8. Acts xvii. 11. 2 Tim. iii. 15. Rev. i. 3. He shews us, that they were not written only for ministers, but also for the people; and they are directed to them, for their use, in the vulgar tongue, which they best understood. See John xx. 31. Eph. iii. 4. 1 John i. 4. Rev. i. 11. and ii. 24. yea, to persons of every rank and degree, as kings, subjects, fathers, young men, children, husbands, wives, masters, servants, &c. See Deut. xvii. 18, 19. Josh. i. 8. Rom. xiii. 1, &c. 1 John ii. 13. and v. 13. 1 Pet. ii. 13, &c. Eph. v. 22, &c. and vi. 1, &c.

Yet notwithstanding of what the Spirit of God saith of the holy scriptures, his own dictates, and their usefulness to all sorts of men, and the necessity of their reading and searching them for their souls salvation; the church of Rome do slight, contemn and discredit the scriptures many ways; which being so contrary to the Spirit of Christ, must certainly come from the spirit of antichrist.

1. In order to weaken the authority of the scriptures, which they find so opposite to them, they would fain accuse them of imperfection, obscurity, corruption, &c.

2. They maintain many doctrines not contained in the scriptures, yea, directly contrary to them; as I shewed in the foregoing sermon.

3. They teach that the scriptures are not sufficient to salvation, unless the traditions of the church be joined with them; and these traditions, though inconsistent with the scriptures, they appoint to be received with equal veneration with them. Now, we see, Christ in his word rejects all such traditions, in Matth. xv. 9. *In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*, that is, commandments that require what God doth not require, and forbid what God doth not forbid. Christ will have all his followers to receive his written word, as the great store-house of his truths, containing all things necessary to be believed for salvation.

4. They impose new scriptures on the world, by making books canonical, which the antient church still held as apocryphal, and that upon good ground; for the words of some of the authors testify that they were not inspired by the Spirit of God. See 2 Maccab. xv. 38. where the author makes apology for the weakness and imperfection of his work, which is not like the language of the Holy Ghost.

5. They hide the scriptures from the people, and forbid their reading them in their own language. And though they may indulge some of their people in this matter where the reformation takes place, yet they deal more strictly

elsewhere. They say, people by reading the scriptures may drink in error, and so get more hurt than benefit; wherefore none should read them without licence from the Bishop or inquisitor. Strange doctrine! must we have a licence from men to obey our Lord Jesus, who commands us to read them! must we lay aside the scriptures, because some abuse them! They may as well say, we should lay aside meat and drink, because some destroy their life and health by them! Thus the Papists make themselves guilty of the crime of the Jewish lawyers, for which our Lord denounces a woe against them, to wit, they took away the key of knowledge from the people, Luke xi. 52.

6. They exalt the church of Rome and her Bishop above the scriptures, by making them the infallible judge, to determine the sense of the scriptures, and all controversies about religion: yea, they will have the authority of the scriptures founded upon the church; whereas the church and her authority is founded upon the scriptures. The authority of the scriptures doth not hang upon any church, or the voice of any man, but upon the voice of the Spirit of God that speaketh in them, who hath wisely ordered his own word to be the best expounder of itself, by speaking more clearly in one place, what is more darkly delivered in another.

Sixth Arg. That religion that gives a particular church or Bishop the sovereign dominion over the faith of christians, or such a headship, supremacy, or infallibility, as should oblige all men to give them implicit faith or blind obedience, is another gospel: but Popery is such a religion, therefore, &c.

Protestants maintain, according to God's word, That God alone is Lord of the conscience, which he hath left free from the doctrines and commandments of men, that are anywise contrary to his word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship: that Christ discharged his apostles to assume any such dominion over the faith or consciences of men, which accordingly they disclaimed, and owned their subjection to the scriptures, and allowed their hearers to examine their doctrine if it was agreeable to them. Wherefore no church or Bishop now can teach such doctrines, or give such commandments in matters of faith or worship, as are disagreeable to God's word, neither ought any to believe or obey them, but to maintain that christian liberty which Christ hath obtained for them. See Jam. iv. 12. Acts iv. 19. and v. 29. Matth. xxiii. 8, &c. Luke xxi. 25, &c. 2 Cor. i. 24. Acts xvii. 11. Col. ii. 20. Gal. v. i. Protestants also maintain, That the purest churches and the best men on earth are liable to errors and mistakes, seeing they know but in part, and therefore cannot be our rule; yea, some famous churches have degenerated so far, as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of satan, Matth. xxiii. 9. Gal. ii. 11, &c. 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Rev. xviii. 2. Rom. xi. 20, &c. And none hath any claim to be head of the church, but the Lord Jesus Christ; and the Pope of Rome can in no sense be head thereof, but is that antichrist, that man of sin and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ and all that is called God, and openeth his mouth in blasphemy against God. See Col. i. 18. Eph. i. 22. Matth. xxiii. 8, &c. 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4, 8, 9. Rev. xiii. 6. We see then, that the word of God doth quite overthrow the pretended supremacy and infallibility of the church and Bishop of Rome.

But the church of Rome do maintain, that she is the mother and mistress of all churches; and that it is necessary to salvation for all persons to believe her to be so, and to receive her doctrines upon her sole authority, and to be subject to her Bishop, who is head of the church, and hath supreme power on earth over the whole church; that she with her Bishop have never erred, nor can err; that they are the infallible interpreters of scripture, and judge of controversies. And all this they assert without any ground from scripture, nay, in plain opposition to it.

If any church on earth hath a claim to be the mother of all churches, it is Jerusalem, not Rome; for there the church began, as was foretold, Isa. ii. 3. *Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.* If Rome will be mistress because she was once the imperial city, then Constantinople hath an equal title; for she was so also, and got a decree of the council of Chalcedon in her favour, Can. 28. And pray, doth Rome's being once the imperial city, give her any title to be the judge of the sense of scripture, and of all controversies, and to be infallible too in her judgment, and in all her doctrines and practices? They must shew a better title before Protestants own it. They must shew where infallibility is promised to the church of Rome, more than to the churches of Scotland, England, Holland, Denmark, Sweden, Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, the Greek church, &c. Why may not any of these churches lay claim to the same right of judgment and infallibility with Rome, seeing Rome can plead no promise nor revelation for it more than they? But yet we see, in spite of all reason and good sense, they do and will maintain, the church of Rome is infallible. And indeed it is by this unreasonable and wilful assertion that they fortify themselves in the grossest errors and absurdities, against the most demonstrative arguments of Protestants brought against them. How can any convince the church of Rome or her adherents of mistakes, so long as they believe her infallibility? How can we bring her to remorse for her errors, while she confidently maintains she cannot err? The whole articles of the Romish religion hang upon this one point, their church and Pope's infallibility. Should they let go this one article, Rome presently falls headlong, and her delusions are shamefully exposed to all men.

But, have they nothing to say for this marvellous article? Why, say they, Rome is the seat of the papal or infallible chair, and this keeps the church from erring: for they make the church and Pope all one. However much they speak of the church, all is included in the closet of the Pope's breast; and upon his judgment all things so depend, that whatever he determines must be received without contradiction, as if every officer and member of the church had voted in it: so that the Pope is the same with the church. Now, it is this absurd principle of the church or Pope's infallibility, which is the great foundation and pillar of the Romish faith, that is, the long train of errors gradually received by them for above a thousand years time. No warrant have they from reason or antiquity, more than from scripture, for the infallibility of the Bishops of Rome more than of other Bishops. The best Popish historians confess, that they were far from excelling others in holiness, wisdom or learning; nay, they own that many of them were notoriously wicked, even atheists, blasphemers, hereticks, adulterers, conjurers, necromancers, &c. and some of them so illiterate as scarcely to know the rules of grammar. Now, is it easy to persuade Protestants that men so wicked, so ignorant, were fit to be infallible interpreters of the scriptures, or to be supreme dictators to the universal church? Though this be unanswerable, yet Rome is still so tenacious of her supremacy and infallibility,

that it seems to be an invincible bar in the way of any reformation; for they are so puffed up with the conceit of it, that let Protestants argue never so strongly, they will not acknowledge the least error, nor quit the greatest absurdity, nor make any step to meet or gain them: Protestants must either go in to all their errors, and swallow this infallibility with the rest, otherwise there can be no reconciliation.

Now, the great ground of their claim is, The Bishops of Rome are the apostle Peter's successors; though they cannot make it appear that Peter was Bishop of Rome, or that he ever was there The apostles were not fixed pastors of any city, having the whole world for their charge. And though Peter had lived at Rome, this could not entitle the Bishops there to Peter's apostolical dignity and power, which died with himself. As all the apostles, by their commission, were equal in power and dignity, so Peter never arrogated any power or supremacy over the rest.—He knew his master had expressly discharged this, Luke xxi. 25, 26. Matt. xx. 26, 27. Hence we find him humbly submitting to his brethren, when called to account for his conduct, Acts xi. 2, &c. and obeying their order, when they sent him forth in mission to preach the gospel, Acts viii. 14. And it is evident from Paul's conduct, that he owned no supremacy in Peter above the rest; for he withstood him to the face, when he judged him blameable, Gal. ii. 11. And he saith of himself, that he was in nothing inferior to him or any of the apostles, 2 Cor. xii. 11. None of the apostles then had any primacy above the rest. If any had a claim to it, one would think that John bid fairer for it than Peter, in regard he was the beloved disciple, that leaned on our Lord's breast, and long survived Peter and all the other apostles, and so most fit to be universal pastor. When Peter died, will Papists say, that either Linus, Cletus, or Clemens, the succeeding pastors at Rome, assumed the supremacy over John or other surviving apostles?

The supremacy and infallibility of the Bishops of Rome is a mere usurpation, without any foundation from scripture or antiquity. The primitive fathers, and the whole church, never dreamed of it for six hundred years after Christ; nor did ever any Bishop of Rome claim it, until it was conferred upon Boniface III. by the emperor Phocas, who murdered his master, Mauritius the emperor, and his whole family, and usurped the empire; he exalted Boniface to the dignity of Pope, or universal Bishop, for favouring his usurpation. And this is the best title the Pope hath to his supremacy and infallibility, which indeed is none at all. God has appointed no supreme or infallible judge on earth, for all christians to resort to, beside the holy scriptures. Had he appointed any other, he had told us in his word where to find him; but he is so far from that, that on the contrary he requires every man to judge for himself according to scripture-rules, 1 John iv. 1. 1 Thess. v. 21. Gal. i. 8. It was in obedience to these commands, that protestants at the reformation did search the scriptures and judge for themselves, and thereupon did separate from the antiscriptural and idolatrous church of Rome, as they found God required them to do, 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. Rev. xviii. 4.

Seventh Arg. That religion which errs in the fundamental doctrine of justification (being *articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesiæ)* and overturns the doctrine of free grace in justifying and saving sinners by the obedience and sufferings of Christ in their room, and would ascribe the glory of man's salvation to man himself, *is another gospel,* which falls under the Anathema of the text: but Popery is such a religion; therefore, &c.

Protestants hold, according to the scriptures, that God freely justifies sinners, or pardons and accepts their persons as righteous, not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone, and his obedience and sufferings imputed to them, and rested on by their faith, which faith also is freely given; so that their justification is only of free grace: and there is no place left for glorying or boasting in the creature, or in a man's own works or doings; all our glorying and rejoicing should be in the Lord Jesus only, and in God's free love through him. See Rom. iii. 24, 25, 27, 28. Tit. iii. 5, 7. Eph. i. 7. and ii. 9. 1 Cor. i. 31, 32. Phil. iii. 3. Jer. xxiii. 6.

But this scripture-way of free grace in justifying sinners doth not please the papists; they will needs have man to have something to glorify of in himself, expressly contrary to the will and mind of the Spirit of God: and therefore they will add their own merits and satisfactions to Christ's merits; their own sufferings by penance and in purgatory, to Christ's sufferings; their own daily sacrifice of the mass, to Christ's one sacrifice on the cross; the mediation of saints and angels, to Christ's mediation and intercession. And though they speak of Christ's merits, yet they lay the main stress on the man himself; for they deny the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us for our justification, and assert that a man is justified by his own inherent righteousness, and that his own good works do merit eternal life, and that in a proper sense, not only *de congruo sed de condigno;* that is, not only by virtue of God's covenant and acceptation, but also by reason of the work itself, and its intrinsic worth.

Quest. "Seeing papists speak much of the merits of Christ in obtaining our salvation, how make they Christ's merits and their own consist together?"

Ans. Moderate papists take this way: they say, Christ by his merits procured God's promise to give life and salvation to our merits; in short, that Christ merited a new covenant of works to us, and also new grace and strength to us for to keep it, providing that by our free will we duly improve it. And thus every man is to stand or fall, in obtaining the promised life, according to his fulfilling the the condition of works in the use of the grace given him. So it is not Christ's Surety righteousness that is imputed to us for our justification and salvation; no, it is the man's own inherent righteousness, and his right use of his own free will in improving the grace given him, that merits salvation to himself: and so a man's hope of salvation is properly founded upon his own merits and doings. By this scheme, Christ is spoiled of his glory, and men bring guilt and wrath upon themselves.

Object. *But* (say papists) *we acknowledge Christ's merits in obtaining a new covenant and new promises to us, and in procuring the first grace to us, in order to our justification and salvation.*

Ans. This nothing but a sly way (under pretext of paying a compliment to Christ) to deprive him of the glory of our salvation, and to ascribe it to man: for it is by the right use of his free will, and his performing a righteousness of his own, that he is to merit and purchase life for himself; so that a man may still boast of his own doings. "But (say some papists) it is God that gives us (upon Christ's account) the inherent grace and righteousness whereby we are justified." They may as well say, that God gives us

wherewith we may redeem ourselves; for we are both redeemed and justified by the same price, namely, Christ's Surety-righteousness and blood. As our inherent righteousness cannot redeem us, so neither can it justify or acquit us before God. It is only Christ's perfect righteousness and satisfaction, imputed to us, that can do this. By grace we are justified, and saved through faith, not of ourselves, but of and by him alone who is the Lord our righteousness. It is in him only that all the seed of Israel shall be justified, and in him that they shall glory, Isa. xlv. 25. So that, by the revealed gospel-scheme of salvation, Jesus Christ is immediately made our righteousness by imputation, in the merit whereof only, we can have confidence to appear before God, and expect pardon and salvation from him; according to 1 Cor. i. 30. *He is made to us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.* 2 Cor. v. 21. *He hath made him to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* Col. iii. 11. *Christ is all and in all.*

We see then how dangerously papists err in this cardinal point of justification, which of all others is most important to our salvation; and how carefully we should avoid all popish doctrine in the matter of justification, though even some called protestants should teach it. Popery quite perverts the gospel of Christ, and overturns the covenant of grace, the only way now to be saved, and lays down a way of salvation upon the same terms as it stood in the covenant of works, though this way of access be for ever blocked up by the fall: Yet (say papists) obedience to the commands, and the merit of good works, is the only way to life still; and for this they cite Matt. xix. 17. *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.* But it is plain, that Christ there intends to convince and humble a self-righteous Pharisee, by holding him to the covenant of works to which he leaned, in order to bring him to an affecting view of his impotency to keep it, of his miserable and hopeless case while under it, and of his absolute need of a Surety to fulfil the demands of that covenant in his stead. Thus doth God make the law a schoolmaster to lead sinners to Christ.

Popery then is evidently *another gospel*; and a damnable one it is: For it draws away sinners from the true remedy for sin, to a false one; from the only ground of their justification, the imputed righteousness of Christ, to their own inherent righteousness, which is naught. It takes them from the lowly self-denying way of salvation of Christ's teaching, to the proud self-exalting way of antichrist's devising. Christ will have the creature humbled, but antichrist will have him puffed up. Now, whether shall Christ's word or his enemy's stand? *Let God be true, but every man a liar.* Oh how damnably do Romanists err in the way of justifying and saving sinners! They are guilty of dreadful blasphemy and abominable idolatry, and have no solid way for removing such heinous guilt; nothing but their own merits, filthy rags! Alas! when the disease is deadly, and the remedy naught, what can be looked for but death to follow? God saith, It is only by a covenant of grace and a mediator's righteousness we must be saved. No, say papists, it is by a covenant of works and our own righteousness. Now, if they live and die in such a belief and dependence, they make their salvation impossible. Why? they are *fallen from grace, and Christ shall profit them nothing,* Gal. v. 4. Which awful consideration should make every thinking christian tremble at the remotest approach of Popery.

My friends, let me then exhort you to have your hearts sound, and your minds well instructed in this great article of a sinner's justification, seeing it is of the utmost importance to your salvation; it is highly provoking to God, and dangerous to your souls, to err in this matter.—Oh has God in his wonderful love given the world his dear Son, as their only Surety, to save them when perishing; and will men slight such a glorious gift, and pretend to save themselves? How is it possible they can do it, after God hath declared, there is no salvation in any other, and none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, but that of the blessed Jesus? Will any that names the name of Christ be so foolish as betake himself to another way of salvation than what he hath proclaimed to us in his gospel? Let me beseech you, as ye love your souls, to believe the Lord Jesus, and go not back with papists to a covenant of works for salvation; for your salvation that way is impossible, your damnation inevitable. You have need to guard with great caution and care against such a dangerous and damnable mistake, and the rather that your hearts are all naturally inclined to it.—There is ingrained in every man something of a natural popery; we would all fain stand upon our own legs, and have something of our own to found our hopes of heaven upon: This was the first way of salvation when we were in Adam's loins, and hence all his posterity have a natural hankering after it, and are with great difficulty brought off from going about to establish their own righteousness, and persuaded to submit to the righteousness of God, Rom. x. 3.

But, however backward mens hearts are to it, God will have all the seed of Israel brought to this humble submissive way, and made willing to quit all dependence upon any righteousness of their own, and betake themselves entirely to an imputed righteousness for justification and acceptance with God. This is the way that God hath fixed for saving fallen sinners of Adam's race; and all the elect of God will go into it, yea, rejoice in it, as a noble contrivance for advancing the glory of the Creator, and securing the happiness of the creature. And, seeing God declares himself well pleased with the righteousness and satisfaction of Christ for sinners, it is highly our wisdom to declare ourselves well pleased with it too, and so put honour upon his dear Son; for God will never accept of these who dishonour him, by seeking to join their merits with his, or their polluted duties with his most perfect obedience, as if they would add perfection to Christ's sacrifice and blood which is infinite. What is it else but blasphemy, to charge his sacrifice with lameness, or his satisfaction with deficiency, and to think to make it up by adding something of ours! yet this all do practically, who would mix their own righteousness with Christ's in the point of justification: But this will never do; Christ will either be our whole Saviour, or no Saviour. Blessed be God for Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

SERMON

SERMON III.

On Gal. i. 8.

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel, &c.

BESIDES what I have said to prove Popery another Gospel, let me add, in the next place,

An *Eighth Arg.* That religion which teacheth men to make graven images, to worship and bow down before them, or directs men to worship any other but the one only living and true God, is another gospel than Christ's, and falls under the Anathema of the text: But Popery is such a religion; therefore, &c.

The holy scriptures teach us, that religious worship is only due to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and to him alone; but not to any creature whatsoever, Exod. xx. 3. Matt. iv. 10. John v. 23. 2 Cor. xiii. 24. Rom. i. 25. They teach us, that God is not to be worshipped by images, or under any visible representation: nor in the mediation of any other, but of Christ alone, the one Mediator, Exod. xx. 4. Deut. iv. 15. Rom. i. 23. John xvi. 6. 1 Tim. ii. 5. Col. iii. 17.

But the church of Rome, in direct opposition to God's command, pay religious worship to images, angels, saints, relicks, the cross, Pope, and bread. I shall say a few things of each of them.

I. *Of Image-worship.*

They make images for religious worship, bow down and kneel before them, pray, confess, burn incense to them, &c. And they are so sensible that all this is against the second command, that they leave it out in their catechisms and books of devotion, alledging that the second is only a part or pendicle of the first command; and therefore they call the third command the second, and the fourth the third, and so on. And, because the people had always heard there were ten commands, they, to blind them, would keep up the number, by splitting the tenth into two: and so with them the ninth commandment is, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house;* and the tenth is, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, &c.* A poor blind indeed! Our Lord, not only in the second command, but in several other texts, forbids all idolatry and image-worship, and tells us, that as God is a Spirit, so he must be worshipped in a spiritual manner, and not by images.—The primitive church, for six hundred years after Christ, abhorred image-worship and all appearance of idolatry; and there was nothing of it in the church, until the man of sin brought it in near the end of the seventh century: soon after that, images of all kinds were introduced, as of the blessed Trinity, of angels, the Virgin Mary, apostles, martyrs, saints, &c. all which images men were enjoined by the church of Rome to worship and bow down to. They blasphemously pictured the glorious Trinity: the Father as a reverend old man; the Son as a man on a cross, or as a lamb; and the Holy Ghost as a dove: and these do papists fall down before, contrary to God's express prohibitions. See Deut. iv. 15, 16. *Take ye good heed unto yourselves, for ye saw no manner of similitude in the day the Lord spake unto you in Horeb: Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of any beast, &c.* Since God chose no similitude to appear in, to the people of Israel, they must not presume to make one for him: why? the making of such images or similitudes is highly disparaging and injurious to an infinitely glorious God: *For this* (saith the Spirit of God) *is to change the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image, like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, &c.* Rom. i. 23. It is very remarkable how closely the Papists have imitated the Pagans in this matter, and yet are not ashamed.

"But (say Papists) the Pagans made images of false gods, and worshipped them."

Ans. The making and worshipping images of the true God is forbidden, as well as these of false gods. The Israelites did not design the worship of a false god, when they made the golden calf, Exod. xxxii. 5. Nor did Micah and his mother design it in the graven image they made, Judg. xvii. 3, 17. nor did the ten tribes in worshipping the calves of Dan and Bethel: yet God was highly provoked against the worshippers of those images.

Romanists would excuse themselves, by saying, "They do not worship the images; they only worship God, and pray to him before them."

Ans. The idolatrous Jews had the same excuse for their worshipping before the golden calf, Exod. xxxii. 5. *To-morrow is a feast* (said they) *to Jehovah.* But God discharges us to bow down before an image. See 2 Chron. xxv. 14.

II. *Of Angel-worship.*

As Papists worship the Trinity by images, so they worship angels and saints before images which they make for them, and all this contrary to God's repeated commands, and threatenings. Yea, God doth so much abhor idolatry, that he is jealous of every thing that hath a tendency to it; therefore he dischargeth us so much as to set up an image, Deut. xvi. 22. *Neither shalt thou set thee up any image, which the Lord thy God hateth.* Yet Papists, in spite of all these prohibitions, set up many images, and commit idolatry with them too, in defiance of the authority of the great and dreadful God. But, to skreen themselves a little from the charge of idolatry, they would make a distinction betwixt Latria and Dulia, two Greek words used in scripture for worship. Latria, they say, is the worship they give to God; and Dulia is the worship they give to angels and saints. But it is well known that the vulgar make no distinction between the worship they give to one or other of them, and the learned of them are difficulted to shew wherein the difference lies: nay, we see the scriptures make none, for they use the two words promiscuously for the worship due to God, and condemn the giving either Latria or Dulia to creatures. Look to the original language in Gal. iv. 8. Rom. i. 25.

As for angels, the Papists teach and direct men to worship them, and pray to them, as they undertake the care of our salvation: and as every man (say they) hath a guardian angel, so it is fit that he commit himself more particularly to him. But though we are to honour angels, as they are God's ministers sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation: yet we dare not worship them, seeing our Lord expressly forbids us to worship any but God, Matt. iv. 10. and condemns angel-worship, Col. ii. 18. We see also, angels, when worship hath been of-

fered to them, do reject it with abhorrence, because derogatory to God the only object of worship; which is recorded for our direction, Rev. xix. 10. *See thou do it not; worship God* Yet, in defiance of all these prohibitions, Papists will have men to worship both angels and saints.

III. *Of Saint-worship.*

They worship saints departed, pray to them, offer incense, make confessions and vows to them; and so fond are they of this worship, that they make many more applications to saints than to God, and have many *Ave Maria's* for one *Pater noster*. They even put the Virgin Mary and other saints in Christ's room, by praying to God to hear them for the merits and intercession of the saints. Also they say mass for the honour and memory of saints, as of the blessed Virgin, the apostles, &c. And the council of Trent pronounce an Anathema against them who blame for it. What an impious perverting of the Lord's supper is it, to celebrate that in remembrance of saints, which our Lord instituted in remembrance of himself! Yea, they conclude the service with praying that this their sacrifice of the mass may be accepted and made effectual for the merits and intercession of saints. Oh horrid blasphemy! to plead that the sacrifice of Christ's body and blood (as they make it) may be accepted and made effectual for the merits of saints! But all this blasphemy is the more easily swallowed by the people, that the service is performed in a language they do not understand.

But to what a blasphemous height do they carry their worship to the Virgin Mary! They call her, in their public litanies and prayers, the mother of grace and mercy; the queen, the gate of heaven; the refuge and advocate of sinners, &c. And, in their prayers to her, they have these words, That, by thy intercession and merits, all our works may be directed according to Thine and thy Son's will; where they put her will before our Saviour's will:—yea, they use these blasphemous words, By thy authority as a mother, command thy Son; which cannot but fill christians ears with horror.

"But (say Papists) we only address saints as intercessors to pray for us."

Ans. 1. Even this is unlawful, seeing we have no command, example, or warrant for such addresses in the Bible. but, on the contrary, we are there told, that God only is the object of worship; and we are commanded to call upon God in the day of trouble, not upon saints; when we want wisdom, to ask it of God, and to put our trust in God, and pour out our hearts before him, not before departed saints. See Psal. l. 15. Jam. i. 5. Psal. lxii. 8. It is but a voluntary humility, Col. ii. 18. not required nor accepted of God, to pretend unworthiness to come into his presence, and, as it were, from a sense of this, to go about to employ creatures to be our mediators with God, when God requires us to come immediately to himself. Should a king think fit to command his subjects to come straight to himself with their petitions, and not to any of his courtiers; graciously assuring them that he was delighted with them, always at leisure to hear them, and a thousand times more compassionate than any about him: what would be thought of a man that would despise the king's command and gracious assurance, and would spend his time in addressing this and the other servant to introduce him to the king? Every one would judge him guilty of great folly, as well as contempt of authority.

2. To chuse creatures for our mediators is sinful, because God hath appointed his eternal Son for that office, who is every way fit for it, and infinitely preferable to all others; being one with God: and it must be highly disparaging to this great Mediator, to pass by him, and employ others not authorised for that office. It is in vain for Papists to make a distinction betwixt a Mediator of redemption and intercession; for the scripture makes none, but asserts that he is the one Mediator between God and man, who gave himself to be a ransom for us, 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. and that he only is our intercessor with God, who died and rose again, and sits at the right hand of God, Rom. viii. 34. So that there is no other Mediator that hath right to our addresses, but Jesus Christ alone.

"But (say they) what more idolatry or sin is there in addressing saints departed, than for one to employ his friend in this life to pray for him?"

Ans. 1. It appears from Popish missals and books of devotion that they not only address saints to pray for them, but that they also pray directly to them, to bestow blessings on them both spiritual and temporal.

2. We have both scripture-precepts and examples for addressing living saints to pray for us, but none of these have we for addressing the dead.

3. We know the living hear our requests, but have no ground to think the dead do so, but that they do not, from Isa. lxiii. 16. *Abraham is ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledgeth us not.* Nay, we are assured that it is God's incommunicable prerogative to know the heart, and to know and hear secret prayer, 2 Chron. vi. 30. Matt. vi. 6. and it must be sinful in any to give his glory to another.

4. We do not address the living in such a manner as the Papists do the dead. They kneel, and invoke an absent invisible being, a being in another world, in an adoring posture and disposition, and with the same abstraction of thought as they worship God, and pray to him: which is nothing like our desiring living saints to pray for us.

5. What else is it but a deifying of creatures for men to worship them, as if they could search their hearts, know their most secret desires, hear the petitions of thousands or millions at one time, who may be thousands of miles distant from one another! Should all the world address one saint at once, as possibly the Popish world may do the Virgin Mary, it would require omniscience or ubiquity in the creature to know and hear all their requests. Which plainly shews us, that Papists by their practice make gods of men, and so are guilty of idolatry.

IV. *Of Relick-worship.*

The church of Rome not only worship saints and their images, but they also worship their relicks, that is, the remainders of their bodies, or such things as belonged to them when alive, as an arm, leg, bones, ashes, the chains or instruments by which they suffered. They pretend, that, by the religious veneration of such relicks, many benefits are received, miracles wrought, diseases cured, devils cast out, &c. Although many vile cheats and impostures have been discovered, touching the pretended virtues of Popish relicks, yet they still maintain this idolatrous practice. Nothing have they in the Bible for it, but much against it. Because God knew the Israelites proneness to idolatry, he buried the body of Moses in a place none knew of, Deut. xxxiv. 6. to prevent their worshipping his relicks. And when the devil would have shewed the grave

and body of Moses to the Israelites, for ensnaring them, Michael hindered it; which seems to be the contention spoke of, Jude ver. 9. When the Israelites abused the brazen serpent to idolatry, as being a relick of Moses, and a memorial of the miraculous cures God wrought upon their ancestors by it; good king Hezekiah brake it in pieces, calling it Nehushtan, a piece of brass, 2 Kings xviii. 4.—From which we see, that, though it were true what Papists say of miracles wrought by these relicks, it would not be a good reason for the reverence and worship they give them; nay, that idolatrous worship is rather a good reason (according to Hezekiah's practice) for giving them a decent interment than for enshrining them.

"But (say Papists) we read in scripture, that a dead man was raised to life by touching Elisha's bones; and from Paul's body were brought handkerchiefs and aprons for curing the sick, &c."

Ans. Though God thought fit to work miracles by Elisha's bones and Paul's handkerchiefs, that is no argument for worshipping them; but the worshipping them is a better argument for breaking them all to pieces. The primitive christians worshipped no such relicks.

V. *Of Cross-worship.*

They also worship the material cross, or the figure of that on which Christ was crucified; they ascribe peculiar virtues to it, and pray that God would make the wood of the cross *the stability of faith, an increase of good works, the redemption of souls:* Nay, they pray directly to it, to *increase grace in the godly, and blot out the sins of the guilty.* Likewise, they give to the cross Latria, the same worship they give to God. And since they own it is idolatry to give Latria to any but God, and yet give Latria to the material cross, they must, in this instance, be self-condemned as idolaters. But there is no end of the idolatry, superstition, and will-worship of the Romish church: Some of their own writers have been so sensible of it, that they have acknowledged with regret, that Popish Rome is nothing inferior to Pagan Rome in this matter. Good reason then have we and all true christians, to avoid communion with her, and keep separate from her; as we are plainly called and warned by God to do, 2 Cor. vi. 16, 17. Rev. xviii. 4.

VI. *Of Pope-worship.*

They likewise deify and adore their Pope. They exalt him into Christ's room, and give him divine titles and honours. they call him their Lord and God, *Dominus Deus noster papa, Deus alter in terra, idem est dominium Dei & papæ,* universal head of the church, &c. They give him power to make laws to bind the conscience, and say that christians are bound to give him implicit faith and blind obedience. They are not to examine his laws and prescriptions by the scriptures, as the Bereans did the apostles doctrine; but all must implicitly obey his commands, thou never so contrary to the commands of God; as when he commands the worshipping of images, prohibits the people to read the scriptures, or to take the sacramental cup, refuses marriage to priests, exempts them from the jurisdiction of magistrates, &c. They give the Pope power to dispense with God's laws at pleasure, to forgive sins committed against God, and to remit the punishment he might inflict for them, to open and shut both heaven and hell; and therefore he wears a bundle of keys at his girdle. Hence the Spirit of God calls him *the man of sin, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God;* and saith, he is *full of the names of blasphemy, and opens his mouth in blasphemy against God.* See 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4. Rev. xvii. 3. and xiii. 6.

Just ground have we to separate from the church of Rome as a grossly idolatrous and blasphemous church, rejected and abandoned of God. Far worse is she than the ancient enemies of Christ, the Scribes and Pharisees; for they still held that principle, that none can forgive sin but God only: But the Romanists have given up that principle, and give this power to their Pope. O what daring usurpation must it be for a subject, and one that is a criminal himself, to presume to pardon crimes committed against his almighty sovereign, and to remit the punishment which belongs to him to inflict! How admirable is the patience and long-suffering of the King of heaven and earth, that can bear so long with such insolence and blasphemous indignities from a worm of the earth!

VII. *Of Bread-worship.*

The church of Rome worship the bread in the sacrament, which they call the *Hostia;* though they have no precept nor example in scripture for this adoration, nor was there any such practice in the church for eight hundred years after Christ. It never began until the monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation was brought in, which taught that Christ is corporally present in the bread; a doctrine against both scripture and reason.—How absurd is it to teach, that a poor silly priest hath power when he pleases to make a god, by muttering a few words; and, as soon as he makes it, the people must fall down and worship it; and, when that is done, they must presently eat and devour their god! And yet so violent are Papists for this idolatry, that they would burn and destroy these who will not bow to their breaden god. But though transubstantiation were possible, yet Romanists, according to their own principles, are in continual hazard of idolatry, namely, by giving divine worship to a creature; for they can never be sure that the bread is changed into Christ's body, seeing they grant the change may be hindred by sundry defects; such as, if the bread be not wheat bread, if it be corrupted, if the wine be soured, if there be more water than wine, if the priest err in the words of consecration, of which the people cannot be sure, seeing he utters them with such a low voice that he cannot be heard; or again, if the priest's intention be not right in consecration; or if he be no priest, through some error in his ordination or baptism, or in the ordination or baptism of his authors, even back to the apostles times. For in any of these cases, by their own doctrine which suspends the validity of all sacraments upon the intention of the priest, and other such things, the consecration of the bread is invalid, and no real change is made; and then the worshippers of it must be guilty of idolatry. Now, what an unsafe and unhappy religion must Popery be, that exposes the people so frequently to the danger of idolatry! a sin which God declares to be so abominable and hateful in his sight! Jer. xliv. 4. And hence it is, that the Spirit of God, when he speaks of the idols of the nations, calls them by the name of Abominations; as the abomination of the Moabites, the abomination of the Ammonites, the abomination of the Zidonians, &c. And indeed we have

just ground to speak in the same stile of the abomination of the Papists; for their idolatry is as abominable, as that of the Jews or Pagans of old.

We may hence see, that it was with good reason, and upon just grounds, that our ancestors about two hundred years ago did separate from the church of Rome and her worship. Why? God abhors idolatry, and calls all his people to separate from idolaters, and come out from among them, because the temple of God can have no agreement with idols, 2 Cor. vi. 16, 17. And, in particular, God gives the loudest warnings and plainest calls to separate from Babylon, or idolatrous Rome, Rev. xviii. 4, 5. *Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues; for her sins are reached unto heaven.* Now, what are the sins which bring on her plagues? They are the heaven-daring and God-affronting sins of blasphemy and idolatry mentioned before. And we see how particularly God points forth the gross idolatry of Babylon, and her ensnaring the nations into it with her, as the main sin which provokes the Lord at length to destroy her, Rev. xiv. 8. *Babylon is fallen, because she made all nations drink of the wine of her fornication.* Idolatry is called wine, because it is sweet and palatable to corrupt nature, and soon intoxicates men. And frequently, in scripture, idolatry is called fornication, namely, in a spiritual sense, as it is going a-whoring from God, Hos. ix. 1. And it is oft called adultery, upon the same account, Jer. iii. 8, 9. Ezek. xxiii. 37. Jam. iv. 4. The Lord is a jealous God, and will not suffer his spouse to go a-whoring after other gods, but will have her as a chaste virgin presented to him, and preserved for him; otherwise the marriage-relation cannot subsist, Hosea iii. 3. *Thou shalt abide for me, thou shalt not play the harlot, so will I also be for thee.* Idolatry breaks the marriage-covenant betwixt Christ and his church, as adultery doth it amongst men; and for this sin he sends desolating judgments. It was idolatry that brought desolation upon Israel, and made their land to spue them out. And to this day the Jews are so sensible of the God-provoking nature of this sin, that, when any great judgment or calamity befals them, they say, There is an ounce of the golden calf (they made in the wilderness) given them in it. Likewise, it is for idolatry that Rome will in one hour be made desolate: see Rev. xviii. 3, 19.

As idolatry is a land-desolating and church-destroying sin here, so it is a wrath-kindling and soul-damning sin hereafter. We see God expressly declares all idolaters to be in a damnable state, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. *No idolater shall inherit the kingdom of God,* Rev. xxi. 8. *Idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.* Surely then Romish idolaters have great cause to fear and tremble, because of their gross idolatry, as well as for their blasphemy, and damnable errors in the grand article of our justification before God, which I handled in the preceding sermon. O that God might open their eyes to read and consider what the word of God saith concerning them in the texts above cited, and particularly in Rev. xiv. 9, 10, 11. *They who worship the beast, and receive his mark in their forehead and hand,* (that is, these who thoroughly and openly adhere to the antichristian profession) *they shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, where the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever!* Oh what a sad religion must Popery be, that hath the everlasting wrath of God threatened against it, and these who profess it! Likewise, it is said, Rev. xvii. 8. *They who wonder after the beast, their names are not written in the book of life.* We have also a very awful confirmation of these threatenings against Papists, which would make them reflect with terror upon their errors and delusions, in 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12. where it is expressly asserted, that they who believe the delusions of the man of sin, are given up to be damned. Now, these being the words of the Spirit of God, we cannot alter them, nor take from them. But by them we are called to think seriously of the damnable nature of Popery, and to bless God for our deliverance from it; and also to commiserate their case who are carried away with Romish delusions, and pray earnestly for them, that God may open their eyes, as he was pleased in mercy to do to this land at the reformation; and that he may still preserve us from the return of Romish idolatry and delusions, and from every thing that would open the door unto them. For since God gives it as the strong reason for his people's coming out and separating from the idolatrous church of Rome, because he was to destroy her for her idolatry, and because all who drink of the wine of her fornication, shall also drink of the wine of God's indignation, Rev. xiv. 10. it is highly our wisdom and interest to shun and avoid, with the greatest care, the idolatry and delusions of Rome, and all the snares and methods of these who are concerned to promote her interest, and in their rebellion would appoint a captain to lead back these lands into Egyptian bondage, as in Neh. ix. 17. Still remember the caution of the apostle John, 1 John v. 21. *Little children, keep yourselves from idols;* as if he had said, Shun all idolatrous communion, avoid fellowship with idol-worshippers, their society is infectious and dangerous: since ye have the knowledge of the true God, pay all your religious worship and honour to him, as the sole object of worship and adoration; let no creature partake with him in it. Adore not your God by statues and images, which would share with him in his worship; he discharges all these. Remember, your God is an incomprehensible Spirit, and would reckon himself disgraced by such sordid representations. Hence it is, that he often puts that question to idolaters, Isa. xl. 18. *To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?* Intimating that he looks on it as an intolerable affront to liken the glorious invisible God to a poor despicable creature. May God preserve us from the abominable sin of idolatry! Amen.

SERMON IV.

On GAL. i. 8.

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel, &c.

I STILL proceed in my arguments to prove the Romish religion another gospel than that of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ninth Arg. That religion which makes nature vainly proud, in allowing a man to glory in human works and merits, in puffing him up with a vain conceit of perfection here, and of his ability to do more than God hath required, and even to merit salvation for others, as well as for him-

self; that religion is another gospel than Christ's, and falls under the Anathema of the text: but Popery is such a religion; therefore, &c.

The christian religion, or gospel of Christ, is a self-denying and creature-humbling way of saving sinners; allowing no place for human merit, or for our glorying in any thing, but in our Lord Jesus only, and the free mercy of God in him. Besides what I said before on this head, Arg. 7. concerning justification, I shall here adduce some of the arguments brought by the Spirit of God against the Popish doctrine of merit either for ourselves or for others.

1. The Holy Spirit asserts, that God cannot be made a debtor to man, as the Popish doctrine would make him; for (saith he) to him that worketh or meriteth, the reward is not reckoned of grace, but of debt, Rom. iv. 4. But it is absurd to think it can be of debt, for a man cannot be profitable to God, Job xxii. 2. This our Lord confirms, Luke xvii. 10. *When ye shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which was our duty to do.* Now, how can any man merit by doing what was his bound duty to do? Papists would do well to consider three things about the best human works. 1. We do only what we were bound to do. 2. What good we do, we receive grace from God to do it. 3. The reward which God bestows, infinitely exceeds the worth of our doings. Which three things cut off all pretence of merit in us.

2. The Spirit of God teacheth us, that no man in this life can attain to absolute perfection in keeping God's law, or perfect freedom from sin; and that the best of men fall short of their duty in many things, being only renewed in part, and having the remains of corruption in them, which fight against the spiritual and renewed part: and all this the best saints do acknowledge, and mournfully complain of their imperfections. See Eccl. vii. 20. 1 John i. 8. Jam. iii. 2. Rom. iii. 23. Rom. vii. 18, &c. Gal. v. 17. Job ix. 2, 3. And hence it is, that our best performances are imperfect and defiled with sin, and all our righteousness as filthy rags, Isa. lxiv. 6. And how can such works as these merit eternal life? nay, seeing the divine law requires a perfect righteousness, and denounces a curse against every breach or defect, surely our polluted performances can merit nothing from God but a curse. No man but Jesus Christ, our infinitely perfect Surety, could perform the perfect meritorious righteousness which the law required from us.

3. The Spirit of God intimates to us, that, seeing the covenant of works was broke by our first parents, none of their posterity can have salvation by it; and that God hath revealed another way to justify and save sinners, to wit, freely, by grace, through the redemption of Christ, and by faith in him: and therefore eternal life is now the free gift of God to men through Jesus Christ, who satisfied the law for us; so that no flesh, in this fallen state, can look for justification by the deeds of the law, or his own doings. See, for all this, Psal. cxxx. 3. and cxliii. 2. Eph. ii. 5, 8. Rom. iii. 20, 24. Gal. ii. 16. Rom. vi. 23.

4. The Spirit of God, in order to cut off all dependence on our own works or merits, teacheth us, that justification is only to be had by faith, in opposition to justification by works; in regard faith is the mean or instrument whereby we lay hold upon our Surety's righteousness, and get it imputed to us for our justification before God: and, upon this account, it is called the righteousness of God by faith; and Christ, who performed it, is called the Lord our righteousness, and is said to be made of God unto us righteousness. See Rom. v. 1. Gal. ii. 16. Phil. iii. 9. Jer. xxiii. 6. 1 Cor. i. 30.

5. The Spirit of God teacheth us, that the great scope and design of the gospel-way, contrived by God for saving sinners since the fall, is to exalt and glorify the free grace of God through Jesus Christ, and to humble man before God, and exclude all boasting in himself. But the Popish doctrine of merit doth impiously derogate from God's free grace, and Christ's perfect righteousness and merit; and so would rob God of his glory in the salvation of sinners, and give ground to men to glory in themselves; which is evidently another gospel, and a way that is both contradictory to God's word, and destructive to mens souls. See Rom. iii. 24, 27, 28. Eph. i. 6. Eph ii. 8, 9. 1 Cor. i. 29. Tit. iii. 5.

The Papists maintain, That men by their good works, and satisfactory deeds, may not only attain to perfection in this life, and merit heaven for themselves; but they may supererogate, that is, they may do more than what is required of them, and so have superfluous merits and satisfactions to spare to such as need them. But the scripture-arguments before adduced against human merits, do quite overturn all the popish works of supererogation; for, if a man cannot merit for himself, he can far less merit for others. The best saints in scripture acknowledge the defects and short-comings of their best duties, and, after all they have done, that they are unprofitable servants, and have nothing to plead before God, but the greatness of his mercies, and that their sufferings here are not worthy to be compared to the glory that is to be revealed. See Luke xvii. 10. Jam. iii. 2. Nehem. xiii. 22. Rom. viii. 18. Now, if our doings or sufferings here be not worthy to be compared to the glory of heaven, how can any man have worth, merit or satisfactions to transfer to others? Instead of trusting to such imaginary helps from others, the Spirit of God requires every man to prove his own work, and then he shall have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another; for every man shall bear his own burden. And, he tells us, that every one of us shall give an account of himself to God, Gal. vi. 4, 5. Rom. xiv. 12. So that, at the great day, no man can answer for nor benefit another by his merits: for the wisest virgins will have no oil to spare, to supply others, at that time, Matth. xxv. 9. But, pray, what is the need of mens having recourse to the merits of creatures to help them, when there is an infinite sufficiency in the merits and sufferings of Christ to supply and save all that come to him? Surely this must be nothing but a device of satan or antichrist, to throw disgrace and contempt upon Christ's satisfaction and sacrifice.

Tenth Arg. That religion which adds five new sacraments to the two of Christ's institution, and doth so corrupt and disguise these two that it is hard to know our Lord's institution in them, is another gospel than Christ's, and falls under the Anathema in the text: but Popery is such a religion; therefore, &c.

The Lord Jesus Christ, the only King and head of his church, who hath authority to institute sacraments in it, to be visible signs and seals of the covenant of grace, hath only ordained two sacraments in the gospel, baptism and the Lord's supper. And the Spirit of God forbids men to add to them, saying, *Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.* See Matth. xxviii. 19. 1 Cor. xi. 23. Rom. iv. 11. Prov. xxx. 6. Yet notwithstanding of our Lord's sole legislative power in his church, and his fore-

said authoritative prohibition, the Papists have added five sacraments to Christ's two, namey, confirmation, extreme unction, matrimony, holy orders and penance: but none of these five did our Lord appoint for sacraments, neither hath any of them the constituent parts, the matter and the form, the elements, or words of consecration, which are necessary to make a sacrament. As our Lord did institute only two sacraments, and recorded the same in his word; so the church in the primitive ages received only these two. The Popish number of sacraments was not known in the christian church for eleven hundred years after Christ, nor was it made a matter of faith until about 1500, by the council of Trent.

2. The papists make the uprightness of the priest's intention in consecrating sacraments, to be necessary unto their validity; so that, if this intention be wanting, the sacraments are null. Upon this account, they can have no certainty whether the administrators be either christians or priests, because they know not certainly the intention of these who baptized and ordained them; nor do the people know if they themselves be baptized, nor whether in the Eucharist that which they worship for Christ's body, be any other than bread.

And for the sacrament of baptism, the Papists have so disguised it with their corrupt additions, that it hath quite another face. Why? they have brought in *anointing with oil, signing many times with the cross*, the using of salt, spittle; the Priests blowing on the child's face; exorcism, which is composed of certain conjuring words, actions and signs, for driving out the devil; and a great many childish fantastical ceremonies, not appointed by Christ, but wholly devised and authorised by antichrist. Again, they hold, that men, women or infidels, may baptize in case of necessity, though Christ appointed his ministers only to do it, in Matth. xxviii. 19, 20. where we see the power of teaching and baptizing go together. Also, they maintain, that these who die without baptism cannot be saved, though it may be altogether without their own fault that they want it. This they hold, without having either scripture or reason for it.

I proceed to speak of the Lord's supper, into which they have introduced so many gross corruptions, that it is nothing like our Lord's institution; which further demonstrates the Romish religion to be another gospel.

I. Though Christ at the first institution of the holy supper, and in the consecration and distribution, used the vulgar tongue in which he spoke to his disciples at other times; yet Popish priests use a language which the people do not understand, and utter the words of consecration so low as the people cannot hear them: and they denounce Anathemas against all these who blame them for so doing.

II. At the first institution, our blessed Lord not only communicated himself, but enjoined his disciples to communicate with him; and he accordingly distributed the bread and wine to them at the same time: but Papists do celebrate the sacrament frequently, without any person communicating besides the priest.

III. When the people are allowed to communicate, they give them the bread only, but sacrilegiously deprive them of the cup; contrary to Christ's institution and command, Mat. xxvi. 27. 1 Cor. xi. 28. and contrary to the practice of the antient church for above a thousand years after Christ. Though the Papists acknowledge Christ's plain command, and the church's long practice in this matter; yet the council of Constance, in the year 1414, did, with a *non obstante*, that is, notwithstanding therefore, decree that the people should not receive the cup: and the council of Trent pronounce them accursed who say the people should receive in both kinds. This impious and impudent sacrilege, in plain contempt of Christ's authority, must be grating to every christian ear. And, had not the world at that time been dreadfully blinded and enslaved by antichrist, the people would not so easily have put up with such a wicked mutilation of Christ's blessed institution, which takes from them one help of their faith and comfort, which their Saviour in his love appointed for them. With what hearts can the church of Rome read or hear that word of him who will one day be their judge? Matth. v. 19. *Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.*

IV. They change both the name and the nature of this ordinance. The Bible calls it the Lord's supper, the Papists call it the mass. Also they have changed it from a sacrament into a sacrifice; from a sacrament for commemoration, into a sacrifice for propitiation, in which, they say, the mass-priest offers to God a true and proper sacrifice for the sins of the people; which is no less than a blasphemous usurpation of the office of the Lord Jesus Christ our great high priest, who once offered up himself a true and proper sacrifice upon the cross for his peoples sins, by which one sacrifice God's justice is perfectly satisfied, and the believing soul fully secured, according to Heb. x. 12. *This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.* Observe, he sat down for ever, because he judged his one sacrifice, then once offered by himself, was perfectly sufficient to atone for the sins of his people, and was never to be offered again. Nay (say the Papists) it was not so perfect, but that it must be offered over and over again; and all this contrary to the declaration of the Spirit of God, that his sacrifice on the cross was perfect, and never needed to be repeated, Heb. vii. 27.

This sacrament was instituted for our commemorating Christ's death on the cross, and the wonderful benefits of it; but not for our offering any sacrifice propitiatory to God, seeing Christ did this all at once, and none else can do it again, nor is there any need for it. But, in direct opposition to the Spirit of God, the Papists will have their mass to be offered, not only for thanksgiving to God for Christ's sacrifice on the cross, or in remembrance of it; but they will have it to be a proper propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the living and dead, and of the same virtue with that which Christ offered up on the cross: nay, they say, the same very Christ that was offered on the cross is offered in the mass. But O how vast is the difference betwixt the two! Why? the sacrifice on the cross was the very body born of the virgin, but that offered in the mass is a piece of bread: on the cross the sacrifice had the due proportion of a man, but in the mass it is a thin wafer: On the cross there was shedding of blood, but the mass is an unbloody sacrifice. Upon all which accounts, the popish sacrifice of the mass is justly detested by all Protestants, as being both against scripture and reason, and highly derogatory to the perfection of Christ's priesthood and sacrifice. It is absurd to have a daily repetition of a sacrifice which is perfect, or to have a sacrifice without any suffering, and a propitiation or remission without shedding of blood; for these are all contrary to the apostle's reasoning, Heb. ix. 22, 25, 26, 28. and x. 12, 14. We see then the scripture directly opposite to the Papists, though this indeed is of no weight with them,

who place the church or bishop of Rome above the scriptures; so that they can dispense with them, contradict them, or put senses on them at their pleasure; and, let them do what they will, they are still infallible, inerrable: and this fatal foundation-error must be obstinately maintained, they cannot err. Indeed, if this were once shaken, the whole fabric forthwith tumbles down, even that which they have been rearing up and propping these thousand years past.

V. They fall down before the consecrated bread, and worship it; which is gross idolatry. But I shall not again insist on this corruption, having spoke of it before.

VI. They teach, that the bread and wine, in the Eucharist, are by the priest's consecration transubstantiate, or changed into the true and real body and blood of Christ; the ground they plead for it is Christ's word, 1 Cor. xi. 24. *This is my body, which is broken for you.* But seeing, to take these words in a strict literal sense, would be contrary to other plain scripture-texts, as well as to our reason and senses; they must certainly be taken figuratively, as we still use to take such expressions in other places, *I am the door, the vine, that rock was Christ, &c.* Besides, the apostle Paul, that recites Christ's words, and best knew their meaning, did not take them in the Popish sense; for, after the consecration of the bread, he calls it still bread, yea, three times over, 1 Cor. xi. 26, 27, 28. And Christ called the cup, after consecration, the fruit of the vine, Mat. xxvi. 29. which had not been true, if these elements had been transubstantiate. Nay, the Popish literal sense is not agreeable to the very words they build on. *This is my body which is broken;* for the Papists must own that in the strict literal sense this was not true, seeing his body was not yet broken: and consequently the words must be taken figuratively, namely, that the bread signified his body that was soon to be broken. Our Lord frequently used this figurative way of speaking to his disciples, when he called himself a Door, a Way, a Vine, Bread, &c. And they very well understood that he meant he was represented by these things, and therefore asked him no questions, as they did about other sayings of his which puzzled them. They knew, such figurative expressions were most common especially about sacraments, circumcision being called the covenant, and the Lamb the passover.

Likewise, this doctrine of transubstantiation is confuted by these texts which assert that Christ went bodily to heaven, and is to continue there until his second coming; and that he is to be no more bodily in the world till that time. See Acts iii. 21. John xvii. 11. Moreover, this doctrine is against the plain dictates of reason, by which we are assured, that a human body cannot be in heaven, and on earth, and in many thousand places of the earth at the same time: and also it is inconsistent with the glorified state of Christ's body to be still liable to suffering, as to be pierced, torn, burnt, corrupted, and thrown out to the dunghill. Will any man in his right senses assert, that our glorified Redeemer is yet exposed to such misery and contempt? How absurd is it to say, that Christ's body was lying on the table broken and crumbled down, while his real body was sitting by it, whole and entire, talking to his disciples! that he ate his own body, and drank his own blood! How ridiculous is it to oblige all the world to renounce their senses about these things which are the proper objects of senses! and to make them believe that these things which have the smell, taste, feeling, colour, quantity and weight of bread and wine, are not bread and wine, but the real flesh and blood of a man! This would be to destroy the testimony of the senses altogether, and the witness of miracles to our Saviour's mission! This would be to accuse him of a weak thing, in appealing to mens senses for the truth of his miracles, and of his Messiahship, as he did when John's disciples came to him, Luke vii. 22. *Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard, that the blind see, the lame walk, &c.* Also, it would have been a weak proof of his resurrection, when he appealed to the senses of his doubting disciples for their conviction, Luke xxiv. 39. *Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see.* Neither had there been any strength in the apostle John's reasoning for the truth of christianity, from these things which they had heard with their ears, seen with their eyes, and handled with their hands, as he doth, 1 John i. 1.

From all which we see what real disservice they do to the doctrine of christianity, who labour to establish the doctrine of transubstantiation. They go about to destroy the great evidence of the first witnesses to the christian religion, by overturning all their demonstrative arguments for it, from the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and from the great miracles which he and his apostles wrought for confirming their doctrine: for, if we cannot believe our eyes, ears, or feeling; nor be sure of what we see, hear or handle; all these primitive arguments were good for nothing. Nay, more than that, it could be to no effect to read the Bible, or cite any text to prove any one article of our faith: for how can we make it appear that the words we cite are really there, if we cannot trust our eyes? And how else are the Papists sure that the words are there which they build so much on, *This is my body?* Thus this monstrous doctrine of the Papists doth even destroy itself, as it would also destroy the whole Bible, and foundations of christianity.

It is nowise to the purpose for Papists to alledge that this doctrine is a mystery like that of the Trinity, and not to be examined by our reason or senses: for that of transubstantiation is an object of our senses, which the glorious Trinity and nature of God is not; likewise, the doctrine of the Trinity is plainly and frequently declared in scripture, which the other is not. Nor can they say, it is a contradiction in itself, to assert three persons in one Godhead, more than three lines in one triangle; or an understanding, will, and memory in one soul. Though indeed the three divine persons in one Godhead, is a far more incomprehensible mystery. But, seeing the changing of one corporeal thing into another is a plain object of sense and reason, what cruel monsters must Papists be, who would put all to the most tormenting death who do not believe this absurd and monstrous doctrine of theirs, which hath no foundation in sense or reason, more than in scripture, but is directly contrary to all the three! Yet it is well known, that this of transubstantiation was the burning doctrine in queen Mary's reign, and the very test by which the valiant martyrs were tried and condemned to the fire. May God pity these lands, and preserve them from the return of this absurd, monstrous, and cruel religion, and all its abettors!

Eleventh Arg. That religion which is calculated to hinder the instruction, edification, and comfort of christians in their journey to heaven, is another gospel than that of Jesus Christ, yea, the very reverse of christianity: but Popery is such a religion; therefore, &c.

It is manifest from the word, and from universal experience in all places where true christianity is taught and

practised, that it is the plain scope and design of the gospel and religion of Jesus, to instruct, edify, and comfort his people in their way to eternal happiness. See Matt. xxviii. 20. 1 Cor. xiv. 5, 26. 2 Cor. xii. 19. Eph. iv. 12. Rom. xv. 4.

But it is as manifest that the Romish religion doth tend to obstruct their instruction, edification and comfort, sundry ways, as by locking up the holy scriptures (these fountains of light and comfort) from the people in the Latin tongue, and forbidding them to read them. Also, by their having their prayers, hymns, and public service, in worshipping of God and administering the sacraments, in the Latin tongue, which few do understand. All this is directly contrary to the scriptures, and to the practice of the apostolic and ancient churches for many ages. Pray, for what end was it that God gave the gift of tongues to the apostles and primitive pastors? but that they might instruct and edify the people wherever they travelled, by teaching, preaching, and performing divine worship and service in the vulgar language of every country to which they came. We see also the Spirit of God injoins all his ministers to study and do all things for the peoples edification, 1 Cor. xiv. 26. And, in order to this, he declares it necessary that they should speak to them in a language they understood: *For how* (saith he) *shall he that is unlearned, say* Amen *at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?* 1 Cor. i. 16. *For if I know not the meaning of the voice, he that speaketh shall be a barbarian to me, &c.* 1 Cor. xiv. 11.

Likewise, the Romish religion obstructs the comfort of the people of God, by suspending the validity of sacraments upon the intention of the priest, and the efficacy of the priest's absolution upon the fulness of the penitent's confession. Also, their doctrine about purgatory is very comfortless to the poor, who want money to purchase their deliverance from it. Likewise, they obstruct the comfort of christians, by denying that they can in this life attain the assurance of pardon, or of their being in a state of grace, though the scriptures afford us many instances of such as have attained it, and direct all christians to *give all diligence to make their calling and election sure.* See 1 John iii. 14, 19, 24. 1 John v. 13. Rom. v. 2, 5. 2 Cor. v. 1. 2 Pet i. 10. May the Lord bless his word. Amen.

SERMON V.

On Gal. i. 8.

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel, &c.

AS the errors and deviations of Popery from the scriptures are numerous, so our arguments are manifold to prove it another gospel. Wherefore I proceed to add, in the next place,

A Twelfth Arg. That religion which derogates from the efficacy of Christ's blood to cleanse from all sin, or denies the sufficiency and fulness of Christ's satisfaction and sufferings to atone for and purge away sin, and therefore teacheth the necessity of our personal satisfactions and sufferings for that end, both here and in purgatory hereafter; that religion is another gospel: but Popery is such a religion; therefore, &c.

All Protestants, according to the scriptures, maintain, that there is an infinite sufficiency and fulness in the vicarious obedience and sufferings of Christ, to satisfy divine justice for the sins of an elect world; so that by *one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,* Heb. x. 14. And that the blood of Jesus Christ alone doth cleanse believers from all sin, and that there is no further condemnation to them that believe in him; for God doth fully forgive their iniquities, and he remembers their sins no more. See 1 John i. 7. Rom. viii. 1 Jer. xxxi. 34.

But Papists maintain, that, besides the sufferings of Christ, there is need for the satisfactions and sufferings of believers by penance here, and hereafter in purgatory, if they have not fulfilled due penance, in order to purge away their sins, and prepare them for heaven, where no unclean thing can enter. They say, purgatory is a place of torment in the other world near hell, to which the souls go of these who die in a state of grace, but are not sufficiently purged from their sins here; and there they continue under a tormenting fire, till they have made full satisfaction for their sins, which perhaps may be many hundreds or thousands of years to some. But, they say, the time of punishment may be shortened by the prayers and merits of others, by soul-masses, and by indulgences, which can be obtained by money. These indulgences come originally from the Pope, who hath power of remitting punishments in purgatory: and this power of indulgence is founded upon works of supererogation, that is, the overplus of the satisfactions and merits of Christ and the saints, laid up in a treasure of which the Pope keeps the key, and dispenses portions thereof to particular persons as he pleases. But all this story of purgatory, and of the Pope's power, is without any foundation in scripture, yea, is contrary to it. It is horrid presumption and blasphemy, to go to join the merits of men with the merits of Christ, and to hold that a man on earth hath power to dispose of these merits, and to remit punishments inflicted by divine justice in another world, and to do all this for money.

As for the Popish purgatory, it is nothing but a fiction contrived for secular and sordid purposes; for the scriptures know no such place, nor any purgatory for sin but the blood of Christ, 1 John i. 7. Likewise, we learn from the scriptures, that the souls of all men, when they leave the body at death, are presently fixed in an unalterable state either of happiness or misery; that there is no intermediate place betwixt them, nor any passage from the one to the other. See Luke xvi. 22, 23, 26. Again, it is contrary to scripture, to say that any who die in a state of grace, enter into purgatory or a place of torment: For the Bible declares them *blessed who die in the Lord,* or die in a gracious state, because they enter into rest, and into peace, where they are with Christ, and enjoy his blessed presence. All this is clear from Rev. xiv. 13. Isa. lvii. 2. Phil. i. 23. and from the instance of the thief that repented on the cross; he was with Christ in paradise that very day he died, though he had been a great sinner, and needed purging as much as any. And if the blood of Christ purged him from sin, and fitted him for heaven, all at once, why should Papists seek another purgatory to themselves, when the Bible knows no other? They can never imagine that paradise, or the blessed rest which believers enter into at death, is any thing like their purgatory, which, they say, hath in it a torment-

ing fire little inferior to that of hell, only it is temporary.—No, no; the believers blessed rest after death is a place of happiness, void of all trouble or torment. We see, then, that the Papists purgatory is contrary to the Bible, and highly injurious to the infinite virtue of Christ's blood, and the perfection of his satisfaction, and is a plain denying of the fulness and sufficiency of it; which is another gospel than Christ and his apostles teach us. Again, how scandalously partial and uncharitable is the Pope's way of dispensing his treasure of merits? The wealthier sort may share of it, and redeem their own souls, and the souls of their friends, out of this fiery prison by their money; while the poor must fry in the flame without hope of pardon or relief till the last judgment. Now, if it be in the Pope's power to deliver miserable souls out of this tormenting fire at his pleasure, what a cruel inhumane man must he be, that doth let multitudes of the poor ly howling and broiling in it, and will not bestow heaps of his vast treasure upon them, to ransom them from this scorching oven!

Let me here remark, that it is the Popish doctrine of purgatory that is the foundation of their prayers for the dead. The Papists judge themselves bound to pray for the souls of their friends, that they may be delivered from the dreadful pains of purgatory. Though there be no ground for such prayers in scripture, or in the practice of the first ages, yet it is to be regretted that not a few called Protestants begin to debate for them. But if there be no purgatory, (as I have shewed there is not,) then there is no place for prayers for the dead. It appears from the forecited verses, Luke xvi. 22, 23, 26. that the souls of all men, after their departure from the body, are immediately fixed in a state unalterable. The godly go presently to Abraham's bosom, a place of glorious rest and perfection, Heb. xii. 23. where they need no prayers; the wicked go to a prison, out of which there is no redemption, where no prayer can help them, the sentence against them being irrevocable. Where the tree falleth, there it must ly. So that praying for the dead is a practice unscriptural and unwarrantable.

Thirteenth Arg. That religion which is attended with a spirit of persecution, a spirit which breathes cruelty against fellow-christians or fellow-men, is another gospel, surely not the gospel of Christ, but of antichrist: But Popery is such a religion; therefore, &c.

The christian religion, or gospel of Christ, doth teach us goodness and mercy, meekness, patience and tender-dealing, that so we may resemble our God and Saviour, Luke vi. 36. *Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father in heaven also is merciful.* Eph. iv. 32. *Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.* 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. *Be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves.* Luke ix. 56. *For the Son of man is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save them.* From these and other texts we see what is the spirit and temper of true christianity.

But the spirit of Popery breathes out persecution and violence, oppression, and cruelty. They avowedly plead for propagating religion by force of arms, by blood and slaughter; and so would cut mens throats to save their souls. They lay it down for a principle, that hereticks are to be burnt; and such they judge all Protestants to be: and their practise is most agreeable to their principle. Many instances might be brought of the cruel antichristian spirit of Popery, yea, so many as would fill several volumes. I will mention a few.

Long and cruel was the persecution raised by the Pope against the Waldenses and Albigenses, which began anno 1160, and continued for several centuries. The Pope instigated many kings and princes to destroy them; and a great many thousands of them were most cruelly butchered at many different times, but more especially in the year 1545. Bellarmine confesseth in his writings, that one hundred thousand of them were cut off in one expedition that year.

The Pope excited the emperors, kings, princes, dukes, &c. to take up arms against the Bohemians, for protesting against the church of Rome; intreating by the wounds of Christ, and their own salvation, to extirpate that cursed generation; promising pardon of all their sins to the most wicked persons that killed any of them. Many thousands of them were destroyed by various tortures and cruel deaths, as Clark narrates in his Martyrology.

Dreadful was the cruelty of the Duke de Alva, while he was governor of the Netherlands, under the king of Spain: he boasted that he had in a short time put eighteen thousand in the hand of the hangman for heresy, besides many thousands massacred by his bloody soldiers.

Terrible was the massacre in Paris, anno 1572, contrived by the Pope and court of Rome; above ten thousand Protestants were murdered in Paris in cold blood in one night's time: and, after that, many thousands through France were butchered in the same manner, the news whereof were received at Rome with the greatest expressions of joy.

During the five years of queen Mary's reign in England, notwithstanding of her solemn promises to the men of Suffolk in favours of the Protestant religion, great cruelties were exercised against Protestants by these furious bloody bishops Gardiner and Boner; and many godly and learned bishops, ministers and others, in England, were condemned to the flames, and burnt alive.

Likewise, the gun-powder plot of the Papists, discovered November 5th, 1604, was a fearful instance of their hellish wickedness and cruelty, when they designed to have blown up the king, the prince, and both houses of Parliament all at once, and all to re-establish Popery in these lands.

There were many terrible massacres of Protestants in several towns of Germany, anno 1630, and following years, by the emperor's general, count Tilly and his soldiers, who killed vast numbers of them in cold blood, using the most unheard-of barbarities against all sexes, ages and conditions. So that many have observed, that so great hath the malice and rage of Papists been against the professors of the gospel, that neither Turks nor heathens did ever exceed or equal them: no instances among them can be given like to the inhuman barbarities, or rather devilish cruelties of the Spanish inquisition, which no man of bowels is able to read without horror!

I have neither time nor room to give so much as hints of the bloody persecutions and Popish butcheries of Protestants in Scotland, England, low countries, France, Spain, Italy, Piedmont, Germany, Hungary, Bohemia, Lithuania, Poland, and other places, whereby many hundred thousands have been murdered, tortured, and destroyed in the most barbarous manner; for which see Clark's Martyrology, Fox, Thuanus, and several Popish historians, as well as Protestants.

Yet I cannot altogether pass that terrible massacre in Ireland, when the Papists rose on the 23d day of October, 1641, and murdered in cold blood about one hundred thousand Protestants; the memory whereof is still solemnized on that day every year, in all the churches of Ireland, by act of parliament: and it was reckoned they massacred at least another hundred thousand after the foresaid day, before their cruelty stopt. The priests were the chief instigators in this massacre; for they gave the sacrament to divers Irish, upon condition that they should spare neither man, woman, nor child of the Protestants; assuring them, that it was as lawful to kill a Protestant, as to kill a dog; yea, that it was meritorious to wash their hands in their blood; that the killing of Protestants was a rare preservative against the pains of purgatory, and that the murderers would go straight to heaven when they died. They, among other of their cruelties, caused women kill their own husbands and children, by putting swords in their hands, and thrusting them forward; and thus they caused children kill their parents. They also taught their own children to kill the children of Protestants, and to use barbarities upon dead bodies, &c.

These few instances are sufficient to prove Popery to be plainly antichristianism, and another gospel than that of the meek and merciful Jesus; and that the character of the whore of Babylon is justly applied by Protestants to the church of Rome, which we have in Revelations xvii. 6. *And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.* A horrid spectacle! to see a woman take so much delight in cruelty, as to drink blood! and the blood of Christ's saints! Therefore the apostle John adds there, *And when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration!* Why? As if he had said, I had not wondered so much to see Mahometans, or see Roman Pagan shedding the blood of Christ's saints; but to see the church of Rome, that pretends to be the spouse of Christ, shedding the blood of so many thousands and millions of Christ's most sincere friends and subjects, for no crime or cause whatsoever, but merely for owning the authority of the Lord Jesus, and professing his truths as he hath left them in his word; this sight was most affecting, and matter of amazement to the blessed apostle! And it may also be most amazing to us, that the patience of the righteous Judge of heaven and earth should bear so long with the bloody whore! But he hath a set time for judgment.

Indeed, Protestants in Britain, when observing the smooth and civil behaviour of sundry Papists living among them, may be apt to entertain charitable thoughts of them, that they are not inclined to such cruelty against Protestants: but some Popish writers are so ingenuous as to tell us, that it is want of power, and not of good-will, that makes them spare us. And though some of that communion seem to abhor cruelty, yet their religion binds them to break thro' every engagement of friendship, gratitude, promises, or oaths, to destroy us, when it is in their power; as appears by the decrees of sundry councils and Popes which I cited before. And these decrees Popish princes and states. and all others, are required to obey upon pain of their salvation. And these who do obey are assured by the Pope of all these indulgences and privileges which were granted to the adventurers for the recovery of the Holy Land, namely, to have a full pardon of all their sins here, and a greater measure of glory hereafter. So that Papists, who believe their own principles, must needs be cruel to Protestants.

Fourteenth Arg. That religion which is not instituted and authorized by Jesus Christ, the sole head of the church, but devised and appointed by antichrist his great enemy, must be another gospel, and liable to the Anathema of the text: but Popery is such a religion; therefore, &c.

I have shewed before, that Christ hath left us his religion or gospel in his word, and that we are to look to his word as our only rule of faith, worship, and practice in religious matters, and to reject all human inventions inconsistent therewith.

I have also mentioned the Popish doctrines and practices which Protestants reject as contrary to the rule. And these have been gradually devised and brought in by the church and bishops of Rome, as is evident from the histories and writings of sundry Popish, as well as Protestant authors, who mention the particular times and years when these doctrines and practices were broached and introduced. Now, these being expressly contrary to the revealed will of Christ, and to his honour and glory, cannot be reckoned christianity, but the reverse of it, or antichristianism, devised by antichrist, Christ's grand enemy. It is well known, that the body of sound Protestants hold the Pope and church of Rome to be antichrist, mentioned by the apostle John, 1 John ii. 18. and the man of sin and son of perdition, mentioned by the apostle Paul, 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4. and the seducing spirits, spoken of, 2 Tim. iv. 1. The doctrines and practices confuted in preceding arguments being so plainly antichristian, we may well conclude the broachers and propagators of them to be antichrist, namely, the Pope and his hierarchy. Likewise other scripture-marks of antichrist do well agree to them.

In the first place, let us take a view of the seat of antichrist, or the city where he is to reside and govern. 1. The city is called mystical Babylon, Rev. xvii. 5. Now, Rome may well get that name, because of her resembling old Babylon in her idolatry, and oppressing the true church of God. Sundry Papists hold, that Rome is meant by Babylon in 1 Pet. v. 13. and why not also in other texts?

2. The city is situated upon seven hills, Rev. xvii. 9.—Now, Rome is the only city we read of that is famed for such a situation; the names of the hills being, Palatinus, Aventinus, Quirinalis, Celius, Viminalis, Esquilinus, Capitolinus.

3. It is a city that had seven kings, that is, seven forms of government, before antichrist (called the beast) did reign in it, who is therefore called the eighth. Five of these were fallen before John's time, the sixth was then in being, and the seventh was to come; according to Rev. xvii. 10, 11. All this agrees exactly to Rome with her seven forms of government: 1. Kings. 2. Consuls. 3. Tribunes. 4. Decemviri. 5. Dictators. 6. Emperors Pagan, then in being. 7. Emperors christian, which were to come. And the beast, or antichristian monarch, is the eighth, ver. 11.; and there he is said to be of the seventh, because of his having a mixed power, made up partly of the civil power of the seventh head, and partly of an ecclesiastic power superadded to it. And observe, it is said of the seventh, ver. 10. that he was to continue a short space; why? the Pope soon wrested Rome and Italy from the christian emperor, and usurped his power.

4. The city, or great whore, where antichrist reigns, is said to *sit upon many waters, and to reign over the kings of the earth*, Rev. xvii. 1, 18. and these waters are expounded, ver. 15. to be *multitudes of people, nations and tongues;* which

agrees well to Rome, that hath many nations of different languages depending on her authority; and to the Pope, who hath had a mighty influence upon the kings of Europe, to make war against their neighbours, and to persecute their subjects at his pleasure; and sometimes hath caused them to do penance, resign their crowns, and receive them again as a gift from him, &c.

5. This city is called the *great whore, the mother of harlots, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication*, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. See Rev. xvii. 1, 2, 5.—These characters are most applicable to the church of Rome, because of her apostacy and gross idolatry, by which she hath gone a-whoring from God, and hath wofully ensnared the kings and nations of the world into it with her. I shewed before, why idolatry is called fornication and whoredom, and is compared to wine.

6. This is called the *beast that hath ten horns*, by which are meant *ten kings, which were to receive their power with the beast, and give their power and strength to her*. See Rev. xvii. 12, 13. This suits well with Rome; for, in Pope Leo the tenth's time, there were just ten kings submitting, namely, in Germany, France, England, Scotland, Denmark, Poland, Spain, Navarre, Hungary, Naples. And though these kingdoms have since undergone many alterations, yet still the bounds of the Roman empire keep pretty much about the number of ten kingdoms or sovereign states.

These characters being so plainly applicable to Rome, many Papists do grant that Rome is to be the seat of antichrist; but, to save the Pope, refuse it to be Rome papal that is meant, but Rome pagan, or Rome when she falls off from the Pope to paganism. And they will have it, that antichrist is yet to come, and will continue only three years and an half; and that the two witnesses, Enoch and Elias, will come from heaven to destroy him.

But by what is said, and by the marks following, joined therewith, it is most evident that he is come already, and that the Pope who sits at Rome is the very antichrist described in the word of God.

Consider these things further. 1. The Bible tells us, that antichrist was to rise by a great apostacy or falling away from christianity, which was to come gradually to a great height, 2 Thess. ii. This apostacy is called the mystery of iniquity, v. 7. that began to work in the apostles days, namely, by the antichristian ambition, like that of Diotrephes, then working under ground, and which at length made way for antichrist's open appearance.

2. The great let, which withheld antichrist's coming in the apostles time, is now taken out of the way, 2 Thess. ii. 6, 7. That let was the heathen empire or Roman emperor, and so the primitive christians understood it; which made sundry of the ancients wish for the continuance of the Roman empire, because of the terror they were under of that great adversary his appearing upon the destruction thereof.

3. That the Pope is antichrist, appears from 2 Thess. ii. 4. where he is said *to sit as God in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God*. Now, as God resided in the temple of Jerusalem, and was worshipped there, so the Pope sits in the church at Rome, usurping God's prerogatives, titles, and honours, as I shewed before; and the Papists ascribe divine power to him, to forgive sin, dispense with God's laws, make duty to be sin, and sin to be duty; to open and shut heaven and hell at his pleasure.

4. He is said, 2 Thess. ii. 4. to *exalt himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped*. This the Pope doth sundry ways: 1. He exalts himself above the God of heaven, by annulling his commands, hallowing the very stews, and many gross acts of impiety, and demanding stricter obedience to his own laws than to God's laws: and by pretending to do things which Omnipotence cannot do, such as things sinful, or things which imply contradiction. He can make God of a piece of bread, a whole Christ of a thin wafer; a body without quantity, extension, weight, or colour; the same small body to be in millions of places, in heaven and earth, at the same moment of time. 2. The Pope exalts himself above magistrates who are called gods, by treading on the necks of emperors, kicking off the crowns of kings, deposing them, loosing their subjects from their allegiance, disposing of their dominions and lives, exempting his ecclesiastics from their jurisdiction, even in temporal causes, contrary to God's command, Rom. xiii. 1. And he hath his Janissaries, the Jesuits, still going through the world, promoting plots and conspiracies against Protestant kings and kingdoms. By which ungodly practices, he hath filled the world with blood and confusion, with long and cruel wars, and with the secret murder of princes and others.

5. There is another prophecy, that agrees with that before-mentioned, of a great apostacy under the gospel, which is most applicable to the Pope and his church, 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 3. when men shall receive the doctrine of demons, that is, doctrines which teach the worship of saints and angels, in imitation of the demon worship of the heathens, that is, a middle sort of deities between the supreme God and mortal men, whose office it is to be agents or mediators between the gods above, and men below. Speaking lies in hypocrisy, that is, promoting their errors by lies and forgeries, fabulous legends, and lying miracles; professing honour to Christ, while they undermine his Priesthood, disparage his sacrifice, and corrupt his ordinances. They forbid marriage to some, and encourage nuns vows; which leads to manifold mischiefs, lewdness, and villainy; and all this contrary to the mind of the Spirit of God, Heb. xiii. 4. 1 Cor. ix. 5. 1 Tim. iii. 7. 1 Cor. vii. 2. They command abstinence from certain meats, as from flesh on certain days, without any warrant from God, who on the contrary has freed christians from such yokes under the gospel.

6. The whore is said to be arrayed in scarlet, Rev. xvii. 4. which is literally true of the Pope and his cardinals, who wear hats, robes, stockings, and shoes of scarlet colour, and will not change their livery, though they know how we apply this text.

7. Their merchandize is gold, silver, slaves, and souls of men, Rev. xviii. 12, 13. So the Pope and his clergy trade by enslaving men, redeeming souls out of purgatory for money, opening heaven by pardons for gold and silver; so that none go to hell but the poor who want money, or these who are not willing to part with it.

8. The whore is said to *make the nations drunk with her wine*, Rev. xvii. 2. So the Pope and his clergy do so intoxicate peoples minds with their superstitious doctrines and worship, that let them be guilty of never so many errors and blasphemies, or impose on them what they will, they believe they cannot err; and they are ready to kill and murder all who say the contrary.

9. The whore is said to be drunk with the blood of Christ's martyrs, Rev. xvii. 6. This is true of the Pope and his church with a witness, as I shewed before, &c.

What I have advanced amounts to a plain demonstration, that Popery is another gospel, and the religion of antichrist, and therefore to be abhorred.

I shall touch at a common objection of Papists against the religion of Protestants, from its novelty. *Where was your religion* (say they) *before Luther arose, anno* 1517?

Ans. Our religion and doctrines were there, where theirs never was, namely, in the Bible. And they were also with the universal christian church for five or six hundred years after Christ's ascension, during all which time the Popish doctrines were not heard of. And, even in the most dark and corrupt ages, Christ had his faithful witnesses, long before Luther, to maintain these very truths we profess; such as the Waldenses, Albigenses, the Wicklefites, Hussites, and many others. But let us, in our turn, ask the Papists, *Where was your religion for the first six hundred years after Christ?* Let them shew, if they can, where all that time was the doctrine of transubstantiation: where was the Pope's supremacy or infallibility? Where image-worship, praying in an unknown tongue, communion in one kind? Where was purgatory? Works of supererogation, giving dispensations or pardons, selling indulgences? and many such things. They were not then conceived, nor come forth of antichrist's womb. Christ's church in these more early ages knew them not. No; these things are all Romish corruptions, and Popish innovations, brought into the church since these times. So that the character of novelty doth properly belong to their religion, not to ours. We have true antiquity on our side, the ancient records of the scriptures, and the ancient practice of the apostolic and primitive church, which they have no claim to. May the Lord bless his own word! Amen.

SERMON VI.

On Gal. i. 8.

But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel, &c.

IN the preceding sermons, I have demonstrated that Popery is another gospel than Christ's; that the absurdities of it are so shocking in their nature, so contrary to sound reason, to the light of nature, as well as to the light of scriptures, that it is amazing to think how any thinking man, that hath lived under gospel-light, can have any favourable notion of popery! I say, of such a late invented religion as Popery!

A religion (to sum up what I have said of it in few words) that makes many new articles of faith and practice, both without foundation in scripture, and expressly contrary to scripture.

A religion that prescribes new terms of salvation, new conditions of remission of sin, which Christ doth not require, as confession in the priest's ear, owning the Pope, the church of Rome, &c.

A religion that makes the way to heaven broader than Christ makes it, that requires no other faith to justify men than may be found in devils, namely, an assent to the truth of what God hath revealed: that requires attrition for contrition, the *Opus operatum*, or mere formality in devotion, as sufficient, in penance, in prayers, and partaking of sacraments: that requires idle devices of mens contriving, yea, many childish and fantastical ceremonies in divine service, instead of the spiritual worship of the invisible God; as if God looked more to outward actions than to inward affections; or as if he regarded the tongue and hands more than the heart!

A religion that corrupts mens morals, and opens the door to sin and wickedness, by allowing dispensations, indulgences and pardons, buying and selling of sins, and souls, for money or some outward penance; so that none who have money (however flagitious) need go to hell, or stay long in purgatory! A religion that allows perjury, the breaking the most solemn leagues and oaths, murder, and the most wicked means for promoting the interest of their church; that allows juggling equivocations, and reserved senses, in taking oaths which should end controversies: that tolerates open bawdy-houses, and prefers fornication in many to honourable matrimony; that gently excuses gross breaches of God's law with the name of venials, and dares to affirm that venial sins are no hinderance to our perfection!

A religion so uncharitable, as to deny salvation to all them that are out of their church; and yet so cruel, as to refuse the true means of salvation to those that are in it, such as reading the scriptures, performing of public worship, prayers, and praises, in a known language!

A religion that reproaches the true scriptures of God with obscurity, imperfection, and insufficiency to salvation without their traditions: that makes more canonical scriptures than ever God made, or the ancient church received; and thunders out curses against these who will not add them to God's book, without regarding God's awful threatning, *If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book!*

A religion that exalts a poor sinful man above the holy scriptures, and makes him the infallible interpreter of them and judge of controversies: that gives him absolute power to gloss and controul the scriptures as he pleases; to dispense with God's laws, to make new laws of his own, and new articles of faith binding the conscience, and to impose them upon men upon pain of salvation: that gives him power also to make sin, forgive sin, remit punishment, dispense with duty to God, and duty to man, open and shut heaven and hell at his pleasure!

A religion that errs damnably in the fundamental doctrine of justification: that overturns the doctrine of free grace and sufficiency of Christ's merits, and maintains that there is worth and merit in mens polluted doings for procuring pardon and salvation from God; and so will have men still to be saved by a covenant of works, when God assures us it must only be by a covenant of grace, and that no man's works can justify him before a holy God!

A religion that audaciously contradicts the plainest laws and commands of the great God of heaven and earth: that requires men to bow down to a graven image, when God saith, You shall not: that requires men to worship and pray to diverse creatures, when God saith, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God only:* that requires men to use many mediators, when God said, There is *but one Mediator betwixt God and man, the man Christ Jesus:* that forbids men to read the scriptures, when God commands them to do it: that forbids men to pray in a known tongue, when God requires them to do it: that forbids men to drink of the sacramental cup, when God commands them to drink it: that prohibits certain men to marry, when God declares *marriage is honourable in all:* that forbids them to

be subject to the higher powers, when God requires *every soul to be subject* to them!

A religion that justifies and encourages idolatry, when God declares it to be an abomination to him, and a damnable sin!

A religion which makes nature vainly proud, in making her co-partner with Christ in our salvation, and giving place for boasting in the creature, and glorying in human works and merits; when God's design is to exclude all such boasting, that all our glorying may be in God thro' Jesus Christ!

A religion that puffs up a man with a vain conceit of perfection here, and of his ability to do even more than God requires, and so to merit salvation for others as well as for himself!

A religion that miserably corrupts the two sacraments of Christ's institution, and adds to them five of their own: that sends poor infants to hell, for want of that which they could not live to desire!

A religion that turns the sacrament, which Christ appointed for commemoration, into a sacrifice for propitiation: that overturns the human nature of Christ, by giving it ten thousand places at once, and properly no place; making it a substance without quantity, a body without extension, weight, or colour, which can neither be felt nor seen!

A religion that overturns the testimony of the senses, with respect to things which are the proper objects of sense, and thereby shakes the convincing arguments brought from Christ's resurrection and miracles for the christian religion, and likewise every proof brought from a scripture-text for any divine truth; which even would destroy christianity itself, and transubstantiation with it!

A religion that racks the consciences of men, and robs christians of all sound comfort; while it teacheth, that the assurance of the pardon of our sins is not attainable here; that the virtue of the priest's absolution depends upon the fulness of the penitent's confession; that we cannot be certain if we receive the true sacraments of God, seeing we cannot know the intention of the minister, without which they are no sacraments!

A religion that presumes to mangle Christ's last institution and legacy to his church, and rob his people of the one half of that heavenly provision that their loving Redeemer hath appointed for their refreshment and comfort!

A religion that teacheth men to put confidence in crucifixes, images, beads, roses, Agnus Dei's, hallowed bells, and swords, spells of the gospel and such baubles, and to ascribe divine virtue to them, as much as to Christ and his precious blood!

A religion that allows the greatest absurdities, and the most horrible blasphemies that can be uttered; such as giving God's titles and prerogatives to sinful men, as the Popes of Rome; giving power to men to make the infinite God of a piece of bread, and power to a creature to command the great Jehovah, &c.

A religion that breathes forth nothing but cruelty, blood and slaughter against all these who cannot fall in with its monstrous absurdities and blasphemies!

A religion that depends upon the infallibility of a man at Rome, that, be his personal errors or immoralities never so gross or scandalous, yet in his pontifical chair and decisions he cannot err. Oh! a miserable foundation of Popish faith! and yet they have no better for it! How astonishing is it to see so many nations venturing their salvation upon such a bottom!

I shall now conclude these discourses against Popery with some advices, which, through the divine blessing, may be further useful as preservatives against it.

1. Keep up a thankful sense of the Lord's distinguishing goodness to you in this land, in making the light of reformation to shine these two hundred years past, for discovering the delusions of Popery, and saving you from them. Unthankfulness to God for mercies is a sin that provokes God to deprive an unworthy people of them.—Therefore be thankful to God, that you were born in a land of gospel-light, and not of Popish darkness. Bless God, that you were not educated and taught to worship images, to pray to saints, tell your beads, to believe as the church believes, that is, to give implicit faith and blind obedience to the church of Rome, and to be content to know no more of the Bible than their priests tell you.—Bless God, that you have God's worship in a known tongue, Bibles in your own language; that you are not obliged to hide them, but have liberty to use them, under the protection of Protestant kings and magistrates; and that you are not under the power of Papists, who would take your bodies and Bibles and burn them together, as was sometimes the case in this land, and is so at present in other lands. And might Papists, and these who have risen up in arms to join them, have their will, God knows how soon you might be in the same case again!

O how thankful were the Israelites for the light they had in Goshen, when all Egypt around them was veiled with darkness! Surely your light is far preferable to theirs! (I mean, the light of the holy Bible you are privileged with.) Your light discovers to you who is the only object of worship, in whose name, and by whose mediation you are to worship him, and whose righteousness it is that can justify you. You have true Bible-worship and ordinances, sacraments and sermons dispensed with plainness and power, which Popish nations have not. And what a mercy is it to have pure Bible-religion in the land, without the unhallowed mixtures of antichrist! O then thank God for our glorious reformation from Popery, and for raising up and spiriting our blessed reformers to venture their all to bring clear gospel-light unto you.—And give him thanks for raising up that renowned hero, king William, in 1688, to dispel Popish darkness, when likely to have overspread these lands a-new; and to bless us with a more firm establishment of the Protestant religion, than ever heretofore, by settling the succession to the crown in the Protestant line in the illustrious house now in possession of it. Let us then shew our gratitude to God, by doing all we can for preserving this settlement, and for maintaining our rightful sovereign king George, and his royal issue, in the enjoyment of the crown entailed upon him by the free choice of these three nations, against all these who are now combined against him; especially seeing we are solemnly engaged and sworn to cleave to this royal family, and under its shadow we have long enjoyed the invaluable blessings of pure religion, precious liberty, and excellent laws, without any infringement upon them: and it is visibly our interest so to do, seeing the preservation of the entail in this royal family is the only probable means, under God, for supporting the establishment of our religion, laws, and liberties, against Popery, tyranny, and slavery. Let no Protestant then suffer himself to be

deluded into a coolness for a Protestant cause and government, by the artful speeches and flatteries of Papists, who are irreconcilable enemies both to our holy religion and happy constitution.

II. If you would be kept from seduction into Popish errors, make the scriptures of truth your study; for these are your best defence against Popery. It is the Bible, the holy Bible, that is the religion of Protestants; and a noble foundation it is for our most holy faith. Then read it carefully; and, though the Pope forbids you to do it, no matter, seeing Christ bids you search the scriptures, John v. 39. Why? They are the rule of your faith, the charter of your privileges, the treasure of your comforts, and ground of your eternal hopes. No wonder though Papists be against the scriptures; for the scriptures are plainly against them, as I have evidently shewed. As the Bible knows them not, so antiquity is ignorant of them, and reason also renounces them. And, seeing it is so, their best arguments for their absurd doctrines and ridiculous worship are tyranny and cruelty, swords and stakes, murders and massacres, and the terror of burning and torture.—But, my friends, let scripture-truth be your shield and buckler against such arguments, and then you need not be afraid of the Romish pestilence that walks in darkness, nor of her barbarous destruction that wastes at noon-day.—God himself will be your sanctuary, and the covert of blood your safeguard. It is well known, that scripture-weapons stab Popery to the heart: seek skill then from the Holy Spirit, that framed them, how to manage them; and particularly seek to be well instructed from the word in the great fundamental article of justification by imputed righteousness, and the vanity and sinfulness of trusting to human works and merits. These who learn Christ, and salvation by free grace, from the scriptures, will not be seduced from the truth by the devices of Papists: wherefore still keep in mind to tell seducers, *To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*, Isa. viii. 20.

III. Labour to maintain and keep up the zeal of your worthy ancestors against Popery, and whatever leads to it. Remember what zeal they manifested against it at our reformation, how our nobility, gentry, ministers, citizens, commons, and persons of all ranks, entered into associations and solemn covenants to withstand the errors and delusions of Popery; and many ventured upon great sufferings and cruel deaths before they would embrace them.—And, when they dreaded the returning of them at the Spanish Armada in 1588, there was great fasting, prayer, and humiliation over all the land, besides all necessary outward preparations to defend themselves and their religion against Popish invaders.

How great was the zeal of the bishops in Ireland in the reign of king Charles I. when a legal toleration of Popery in that kingdom was proposed? The Protestant bishops there met, and signed a protestation against it, Nov. 26, 1626, in which are these words: "The religion of Papists is superstitious and idolatrous, and their church apostatical: to give them therefore a toleration is a grievous sin, because it makes ourselves accessory to all the abominations of Popery, and to the perdition of those souls that perish thereby. We therefore beseech the God of truth to make those who are in authority zealous for God's glory, and resolute against all Popery, superstition, and idolatry." This protestation was signed by archbishop Usher and eleven of his brethren. *Neal's Hist. of the Puritans*, vol. ii. p. 185.

Great also was the zeal of our fathers against Popery at our happy revolution, 1688, when both the representatives of England and Scotland fell heartily in with the Prince of Orange's expedition to relieve us from it, in opposition to a Popish king, with a great army, then reigning. What pity is it then that our zeal should cool through length of time! that Scotland, once so zealous, should be said to favour a Popish cause or interest! when it is certain that Popery continues to be the same idolatrous, blasphemous, bloody, and damnable thing it was in our fathers days! O let us abhor Popery (as they did) as it is another gospel, contrary to the gospel of Christ, and subversive of it; in regard it perverts christianity, and makes such corrupt additions to it, that are destructive both of its doctrine and morals. Wherefore, however Papists disguise their abominable errors and practices, let us be resolved, like our fathers, stedfastly to maintain that antichrist is not Christ, Popery is not christianity, superstition and idolatry is not gospel-worship, the mass is not the Lord's Supper, prayer in an unknown tongue is not our reasonable service, persecution with fire and sword is none of the means of grace, killing saints is not doing God service, Popish cruelty is not gospel-charity. To be well fixed in these points will increase our zeal against Popery, and help to recover our fame in the Protestant world.

When Papists magnify the church of Rome as Christ's only church, let us think, how can she be a church of Christ, that persecutes his disciples to death, for obeying their Saviour, and cleaving to that doctrine and worship he hath taught them in his word? How can she be a church of Christ, that teacheth doctrines and practices, whereby his glorious name is highly dishonoured and blasphemed; that exalts a poor sinful man unto the titles, dignities, and incommunicable excellencies of the eternal God? How can she be a church of Christ, that robs him of the glory of our salvation, and ascribes it to themselves, by their doctrine of merit; that practises gross idolatry, the abominable thing which he hates; that gives encouragement to sin and wickedness, by human pardons, indulgences, dispensations, &c.; that teaches the necessity of feeding on man's flesh, and drinking of man's blood, in a corporal manner; which barbarous practice of canibals has been always accounted contrary to the rules of piety and humanity? I shall not again insist upon the monstrous absurdities of this doctrine of theirs, which I shewed to be contrary to reason, sense, and the nature of a body, as well as to scripture; but only observe, that a man must offer plain violence to his reason and senses, before he become a Papist; he must believe and practise many things unreasonable, as well as unscriptural. How irrational is it to pray to the dead who cannot hear us, or pray for the dead who cannot be benefited by us, their sentence being irrevocable? Let all these considerations, my dear friends, serve to quicken and maintain your zeal against Popery, in imitation of your pious fathers, and renowned ancestors, now with God. O never desert the Protestant cause, as, alas, many are now doing.

IV. To maintain your abhorrence of the Romish religion, it is proper to bear in mind the treachery and perfidiousness of it. It even teaches the professors of it to be perfidious in their dealings both with God and man. The Pope gives dispensations to Papists to promise any thing

to Protestants for deceiving them, providing that in their hearts they stand well affected to Popery. It is a maxim allowed by several Popes and councils, as I shewed before, that no faith is to be kept with hereticks. And though some Popish princes may be inclined to keep their faith, yet their religion obliges them to break the most solemn leagues and oaths, in order to destroy hereticks, when it is in their power; and leaves no hope of salvation to these who refuse to do it, when the Pope requires them. Upon which account, Protestant subjects can nowise trust the promises, written declarations, or oaths of Popish princes, for securing their religion or any thing that is valuable; of which we have many proofs, as in the conduct of Q. Mary of England, to the men of Suffolk, Q. Mary of Scotland to her subjects, K. James VII. to his subjects, the promises of the French king to his Protestant subjects, which ended in a massacre of them. Pope Martin V. in his letter to Alexander, Duke of Lithuania, hath these words, *Know that thou sinnest mortally, if thou keep thy oaths with hereticks:* which shews us that Papists must break their oaths, under pain of damnation. Yea, they make the breaking of oaths and leagues not only lawful, but a virtue and necessary duty, where the interest of their church is concerned. Upon these and the like considerations, the wisdom of the British nations has found the inconsistency of a Popish head to a Protestant body; and for the safety of their religion, laws and liberties, they have made it a fundamental law, that no Papist is capable of succeeding to the imperial crown of these realms. This law being most just and equal, it must surely be laudable in these nations to use the most proper means to maintain it against all the subtile plots and open violence of Rome and her abettors.

V. That you may detest Popery the more, keep up the impressions of the barbarity and cruelty of these who profess it towards Protestants and these who differ from them. Never did Turks or Pagans exercise such merciless fury against christians as Papists have done. Long hath the mother of harlots been drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, and loud hath the cry of it been against her, so that the heavy load of this blood will sink her at last as a millstone into the sea, Rev. xviii. 21. I have, in the preceding sermon, spoke something of her bloody cruelty; but, my friends, you can have no right notion of it, unless you read the histories of the French and Bohemian persecutions, and that of the Spanish inquisition, and such books as Clark's Martyrology, which I would think no christian heart is able to do without abundance of tears. Oh, the spirit of Popery is not like the spirit of the gospel; it is a religion that vents cruelty, teacheth cruelty, and breathes it every where. Their priests have taught, that it is no more sin to kill a heretick, than to kill a dog; that it is not only lawful, but virtuous and heroic, for private persons to kill Protestant princes. It is not enough that they raise wars against Protestants, and kill them in battle; but they justify the murdering of them in cold blood, or in their beds. Not content with doing so in single instances, they choose to massacre them by thousands and ten thousands in a night, or a hundred thousand in one day. And, though good nature and amiable qualities appear about some Papists, these flow not from their religion, but from the sweetness of their natural disposition. But one thing is certain, that good nature, relation, friendship, gratitude, and every engagement, must give way to the interest of their church, and their doing God service: yea, excommunication and cruelty would be executed against the merciful of that communion, if they did not fall in with the cruel measures concerted against Protestants. Some may say, that Papists have now changed their temper, and dropt their old persecuting spirit. But no credit is due to such suggestions; for the cruel spirit and bloody principles of Papists are just the same as ever: witness the continuing cruelties of the inquisition, their late barbarities to the French Protestants, to the poor Palatines, the Saltzburgers, and many others. Nay, how can it be supposed that Papists will amend of their cruelty? For, whilst their doctrine of infallibility is believed, the whole principles, decrees and canons of councils and Popes must be maintained as dictates of the Holy Ghost; and this among the rest, that it is just, yea meritorious, to cut off these who reject them.

VI. Abhor the idolatry of Rome, as I exhorted before, idolatry is a sin most odious and abominable in the sight of God, as it is most dangerous and damnable to the souls of men. Remember how severely the Jews suffered for it, though their dispensation was far from being so spiritual as yours. With what contempt doth God speak of idols, calling them abominations? as the abomination of the Ammonites, of the Zidonians, the Moabites, &c. And we may justly speak in the same stile of the abominations of the Papists, their idolatry being as detestable as either that of the Jews or heathens was.

VII. Keep up your abhorrence of their proud, self-exalting doctrine of merit; a most damnable doctrine! Why? it draws you back to the covenant of works; a covenant that curses and condemns you, instead of saving you, seeing it is evident you all do sin and come short of the glory of God. Nay, though you did not come short of your duty, but even came fully up to it, you do but what you was bound to do, and so can merit nothing by it. Can a man merit from you, or are you bound to give him an estate, because he paid you a just debt? Alas, then, what can you merit by your performances, though they were vastly better than they are! Nay, O man, though you could live without sin (which is impossible) and spend all your time and strength in religious duties, would that satisfy for the breach of the first covenant, or merit heaven? Though you should give all your estate to the poor, water your couch each night with your tears, and fast your body into a skeleton, yea, live like a holy angel in heaven, the best epitaph you should desire to have on your tomb is, *Here lies an unprofitable servant*; for, seeing you do but your duty, you can pretend to merit nothing from God. Hence it is that God tells us, that what he gives us is all a free gift through Jesus Christ. It is Christ only that merits, not we; and it is upon Christ's infinite merits alone, that we must rest our sinful souls. Holiness indeed is the way to heaven, but it is Christ that must enter us and lead us in this way, and bring us happily to the end of it. Oh, what are we, but sinful and unprofitable in ourselves, yet objects of mercy in Christ! As the worst of our sins are pardonable by Christ, so even the best of our duties are damnable without Christ. Let the holiest man then walk humbly all his days, abhorring himself for sinful defects, and be always willing to be beholden to Christ for all: this is the safe way.

VIII. If you would preserve the gospel and Protestant religion in the land, study to live holy lives answerable to the rules of the gospel. Would you have the truth preserved with you, and you preserved in the truth, then you must love and practise the truth, and hate all sin and un-

godliness opposite thereto. What signifies the profession of Protestantism, and the enjoyment of pure doctrine and worship, if these produce no change of heart or life, which is the end of all religion? What signifies your reforming from the errors, idolatries and superstitions of Rome, if you do not reform from the worldliness, wickedness and profanity that reign in the world? For what is the design of the gospel or the doctrine of grace, which the reformation brings you, but to teach you *to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ*, Tit. ii. 12, 13. Now, if this end be not answered, the design of our reformation from Popery is not obtained. The design of it was to reform your lives as well as your heads, your practices as well as your principles. A drunken Protestant, a whoring, a swearing Protestant, an impenitent, unbelieving or worldly Protestant, shall not be saved from God's wrath more than an idolatrous Papist. Though you do not bow to images and Popish idols, yet you are liable to wrath, if you make an idol of your money, or love the world too much. Though you profess to own Christ as the only King and Head of his church, and renounce the Pope as head of it; yet if you do not believe on Christ, choose him for your King and Head, and love him above all, you are still within the flood-mark of God's wrath. Do not think that the name or profession of Protestants will save you, or that God will preserve the gospel with you, if your lives be not such as become the gospel. Alas, that some Protestant nations should be so like to Popish nations in their language and practices! Oh! cursing, damning and swearing Protestants, will no more escape wrath than blasphemous idolatrous Papists

IX. Guard against the snares and stratagems of those who are agents and factors for Rome, and these who under sundry disguises and fair colours are paving the way for the return of Popery, as by introducing new usages into the church, or rather old errors and superstitions which our zealous reformers cast out and abjured. Beware of the arguments of these who plead for the setting up of Popish princes and rulers over us, the immediate forerunners of Popery. When they plead for a man's hereditary right to govern as indefeasible, believe them not; seeing there is nothing in scripture for it, but on the contrary there are frequent instances of God's passing by the eldest in families, and choosing the younger to govern. Neither is there any thing in reason for a man's right to possess a nation or millions of men as his property, which he may dispose of as absolutely as of his cattle; and that he cannot forfeit this right by the worst usage of them; and that this right should descend from him to his heirs as their natural inheritance, unalienable upon any account whatsoever. It would be a wicked arraigning of the goodness of God, the merciful Parent of mankind, to say, he gives a man an absolute right to dispose of his fellow-creatures at his pleasure, and hath left no lawful remedy in their hands against the most cruel and oppressive tyranny. This were in effect to make God himself the patron of lawless tyranny and oppression. But, let tyrants and their abettors talk as they will, it is evident, that mankind have a natural right to secure and preserve their valuable interest civil and religious; and also that particular nations have a right to secure to themselves true Bible-religion, together with their lives and properties, against the lawless and barbarous attacks of idolatry, tyranny and oppression. If such Romish agents use flattering speeches and fair promises to gain their design, believe them not; for their religion binds them to extirpate hereticks. If they use threatenings to bring you into sinful compliances with them, yield not upon any account to support antichrist, but keep your garments clean in the hour of temptation. Lose what you will, lose not the peace and purity of conscience, or the smiles of a reconciled God in Christ.

X. In this time of common danger, let all true Protestants drop their intestine jars, and unite their counsels, strength and prayers against the violent designs of antichrist against them and their holy religion. Let us all with one heart and mouth pray that Romish darkness and idolatry may never overspread these lands. Now the devil and his angels, the pope and his conclave, the French and Spaniards, together with Papists and malignants at home, are all at this time combining to overturn our Protestant establishment; wherefore cry fervently, that God may interpose and defeat their counsels and attempts, as he hath frequently done before. Pray for the continuance of the preaching of Christ, and of the gospel-way of justification through his imputed righteousness, in opposition to the doctrine of merit. Pray for the continuance of a pure spiritual way of worshipping God, in opposition to a carnal idolatrous worship that amuses the outward senses. Pray for your posterity, that the Bible, and its truths and worship, may still remain with them. Should Popery prevail, what a dismal prospect must we have of the young and rising generations! How soon would they be taught to worship images, pray to saints, and practise the superstitions of Rome! Oh! should not this consideration awaken your zeal against Popery, and excite you to use all proper means to oppose it?

Likewise pity and pray for illumination to these who are blinded with the delusions of antichrist, being carried away to dumb idols even as they are led, and taught to give blind obedience to their leaders, without looking to what God saith to them in his word. Pray that God may open the eyes of these who think they do God service by killing Protestants, or these who cannot fall in with Popish inventions, in opposition to divine institutions. And, *lastly*, Strive, in such an evil day as this, to get into the strong hold of Christ's wounds, and under the covert of his blood; for there is no safety in the day of wrath but here.

THE

YOUNG COMMUNICANT'S

CATECHISM.

BY

THE REVEREND JOHN WILLISON, LATE MINISTER

OF DUNDEE

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1817.

THE

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CATECHISM.

QUEST. IN what estate was you born?

ANS. In a woeful miserable estate, wanting the image and favour of God, which man at first had; and a sinful nature, prone to what is evil, backward to what is good, and exposed to the wrath of God both here and hereafter.

Q. How came you to be born in this estate?

A. Because of my descent from sinful Adam, who fell from his happiness, by breaking covenant with God, and incurring the penalty thereof; whereby he lost all his grace, and was wholly unable to recover himself.

Q. Is fallen man left without hope in this miserable estate?

A. No; there is a noble remedy provided: for though the old covenant be broken and dissolved, there is an excellent new covenant contrived, yea, revealed and tendered unto lost sinners of mankind.

CONCERNING THE TWO COVENANTS.

Q. WHAT are these covenants which God hath made with man?

A. The covenant of works, and the covenant of grace.

Q. By which of these two covenants is it that you can be saved?

A. Only by the covenant of grace, which is called the new covenant.

Q. What is the covenant of works?

A. It is God's agreement with Adam and Eve, wherein he promised them life upon their perfect obedience to his laws, and threatened death upon their disobedience.

Q. Why cannot you be saved by the covenant of works?

A. Because I am neither able to fulfil the condition, nor ly under the penalty of it; that is, I can neither give perfect obedience to God's law, nor bear his wrath which is due for breaking it.

Q. What is the covenant of grace, by which you are to be saved?

A. It is God's gracious paction with elect sinners in Christ, in which he is pleased mercifully to offer and promise salvation to all poor fallen sinners of Adam's race who believe in his Son Jesus Christ.

Q. Who are these that truly believe in him?

A. They are such, who, being made sensible of their lost estate, are content to receive Jesus Christ as their Surety and Saviour, and to depend upon his righteousness and satisfaction to divine justice, as the only ground of their justification before God, and are resolved, in his strength, to shew forth their faith by a sincere love and obedience to God.

Q. Why is this new covenant called a covenant of grace?

A. To distinguish it from the covenant of works, wherein the ground of man's justification is something done by a Surety in his room: and also because the Surety himself and all the blessings of this covenant are most gracious and free gifts bestowed by God upon deserving and ill-deserving creatures, who could do nothing to obtain them.

Q. How can this covenant be altogether of grace, when faith is required of us as the condition to interest us in the blessings of it, and likewise good works to shew forth our faith?

A. Though both these be required of us, yet the grace for producing that faith and those works it promised to us in this covenant, as freely as any other blessing in it; upon which account this covenant is frequently called in scripture a testament.

Q. Why is this covenant called a testament?

A. Because all the blessings and good things promised therein, are freely bequeathed and made over to the elect as legacies left and made sure to them by the death of Jesus Christ the Testator: and also, in it there is grace left them to perform all the duties required of them.

Q. What are the principal legacies of this testament?

A. Pardon of sin, deliverance from wrath, peace with God, all the graces of the Spirit, with perseverance therein to the end; safety through death, resurrection to life, and eternal glory.

Q. How is it that this covenant or testament is established and confirmed to us?

A. By the death and blood of Jesus Christ the Mediator and Testator of it; and by the outward signs and seals which he hath instituted to be dispensed to us, with the preaching of the gospel.

CONCERNING THE SEALS OF THE COVENANT.

Q. WHAT are the seals of the covenant of grace?

A. The two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper.

Q. For what end hath God appointed these sacraments or seals?

A. To be sacred signs, memorials, and pledges of his mercy to us through a crucified Jesus, he being the great Surety and sacrifice to which we are appointed constantly to look for pardon, grace, and glory.

Q. Why are baptism and the Lord's supper called seals of the covenant of grace?

A. Because, like sealed charters, they confirm and assure us of the certainty of the covenant, and all its promised blessings; and particularly, that God is willing in and through Christ to be a God to us, and to take us for his people.

Q. What is baptism?

A. It is the sacred washing, or sprinkling with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Q. What doth the sprinkling signify?

A. The cleansing of our souls from sin by Christ's blood and Spirit, and our entering in among the disciples and followers of Christ.

Q. Why are you baptized in the name of the Father?

A. In testimony of my chusing and owning God the Father, as my Father and great contriver of the gospel-method of salvation through Christ.

Q. Why are you baptized in the name of the Son?

A. In token of my chusing and accepting of the Son of God as my great Redeemer and Saviour in all his offices, Prophet, Priest, and King

Q. Why is he especially stiled our Saviour?

A. Because of the eminent hand he hath in the salvation we look for; he preached it to us as our great Prophet, he procured it for us as our high Priest, bestows it on us as our Lord and King.

Q. Why are you baptized in the name of the Holy Ghost?

A. In testimony of my owning and accepting of the Holy Ghost as my sanctifier, and the great applier of Christ's purchase to me, whose office is to work saving faith and all grace in the elect.

Q. What engagement have you come under by your baptism?

A. To believe and obey the Holy Trinity, and to renounce the three great enemies thereof, namely, the devil, the world, and the flesh; and to live as a christian indeed, always remembering the name by which I am called.

Q. How is it that a christian or baptized person ought to live?

A. As one that is solemnly consecrated to the faith and obedience of the Holy Trinity; and particularly, as one that is washen in the blood of the Lamb, who will not again adventure to defile himself with sin, but will study to make Christ his pattern.

Q. Are you not bound to renew your baptismal engagements, and to take them upon yourself?

A. Yes, I am, and I do it expressly, when I go to take the second seal of the covenant, and partake of the Lord's supper.

Q. What is the difference betwixt baptism and the Lord's supper?

A. The first is to be administered to us but once, but the second often: the first doth signify our spiritual birth, the second our spiritual nourishment; baptism is the door of Christ's house by which we must enter, but the Lord's supper is the table at which Christ's children must feed and get strength

Q. What should be your great design in attending and partaking of these sacraments?

A. That thereby I may shew my regard and obedience to the Author of them, and that I may find a crucified Jesus in them, and get myself assured of his love and purchase.

CONCERNING THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Q. WHAT is the Lord's supper?

A. It is a religious eating of bread, and drinking of wine, according to Christ's institution and example, in remembrance of his death and sufferings for us.

Q. When did Christ institute this sacrament?

A. In the same night wherein he was betrayed, and immediately after he had eaten the Jewish passover with his disciples.

Q. Why did he institute it at that time?

A. To shew that the passover was abrogated by this new ordinance, and the Lord's supper came in its room; and also to lay all his people under the stronger obligations to observe and attend it.

Q. Why doth the time of the institution lay us under such obligations to observe it?

A. Because the command and directions which he gave us at that time, are to be regarded as the solemn dying charge of a crucified Jesus, who was going to do more for us than all the world could do.

Q. Did Christ enjoin this ordinance as any task or burden on his people?

A. Not at all, but left it as a rare privilege and a precious legacy to the church, seeing it is a bright memorial of his dying love, a sure pledge of his second coming, and a quickener of all the graces.

Q. What are the elements or signs appointed in this sacrament?

A. Bread and wine.

Q. What do they represent unto us?

A. Christ's body and blood, with all the benefits and blessings thereby purchased to us.

Q. What is signified by the breaking of bread, and pouring of the wine?

A. All Christ's sufferings, and particularly, the breaking and wounding of his body on the cross, and the shedding of his blood, to take away our sins.

Q. What is signified by giving the broken bread and poured out wine to the communicants?

A. God's actual making over and giving a crucified Christ, with all the benefits of his purchase, to believing partakers.

Q. What are these benefits here made over and sealed unto them?

A. Remission of sin, freedom from wrath, peace with God, peace of conscience, adoption into God's family, increase of grace, perseverance therein, sanctified mercies and crosses, and a title to eternal life.

Q. What is signified by communicants taking the bread and cup in their hand?

A. Their putting forth the hand of faith to receive a crucified Christ for their Saviour in all his offices, and with all his benefits, as offered to them in the gospel.

Q. In what manner ought you to receive a crucified Christ at his table?

A. With much humility, self-denial, thankfulness, and with close and particular application of his offices and fulness to my soul's necessities.

Q. What is signified by communicants eating of the bread and drinking of the wine?

A. Their near union with Christ, their actual partaking of the benefits of his death, the great satisfaction they have in him, and the spiritual strength and nourishment they get from him.

Q. Why ought communicants to partake of the cup, as well as of the bread?

A. For the more full confirmation of their faith, and because Christ said to his disciples, *Drink ye all of it.*

Q. Why did Christ make choice of bread and wine as the symbols of his body and blood?

A. To hold forth their refreshing and strengthening virtue to believing communicants; for, as bread strengthens man's heart, so wine makes it glad.

Q. What were Christ's words when he instituted the sacraments?

A. He spoke something concerning the bread, something concerning the cup, and something concerning the whole sacrament.

Q. What spoke he concerning the bread?

A. He said, Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of me.

Q. What said he concerning the wine?

A. This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins

Q. What said he concerning the whole sacrament?

A. He said, As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

Q. Do we partake of Christ's body and blood here in a carnal manner?

A. No; but only in a spiritual way.

Q. What is the meaning of these words, Take, eat, this is my body broken for you?

A. The plain meaning is, that the broken bread signifies and represents Christ's body as it was broken and bruised for his people.

Q. Is not Christ really present in the sacrament?

A. Yes, he is so; but yet he is not bodily but spiritually present there.

Q. How is it we partake spiritually of Christ's broken body?

A. We do it when our souls do share of the benefits and fruits of his broken body, such as pardon of sin, increase of grace, access to God, spiritual discoveries, loosing of bands, and the like.

Q. How long did Christ intend his sacraments should continue?

A. Until his coming.

Q. Why no longer?

A. Because in heaven there will be no need of sacraments to represent Christ, he being always present there in a bodily way.

Something more particularly of the Nature and Ends of the Holy Supper.

Q. WHAT further account can you give of the nature and design of this sacrament?

A. It doth evidently partake of the nature of a seal, of a feast, and also of an oath.

Q. What hath it of the nature of a seal?

A. It is justly called a seal of the covenant of grace; because, like a sealed charter put into our hands, it doth make over, seal, and confirm to us, a right and title to all the benefits and fruits of Christ's purchase, which are therein promised to believers.

Q. What kind of a seal is this sacrament?

A. It is a spiritual seal, and of great value, seeing it is a seal of Christ's own devising and engraving, whose inscription is, Christ loving us; and whose image is, Christ dying for us.

Q. What hath this sacrament in it of the nature of a feast?

A. It is justly called a feast, as it brings food, nourishment, and delight to the souls of worthy communicants, the invited guests.

Q. What sort of a feast is it?

A. It is a spiritual feast, a marriage feast, a feast upon the sacrifice of the Son of God; a feast of Christ's making, of a strange nature, in which Christ is both master and matter of the feast, the provider and provision, the feeder and the food; for his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed.

Q. In what respect is this sacrament of the nature of an oath?

A. In respect the word sacrament was used among the Romans, (from whence it is borrowed for a military oath,) whereby they bound themselves to be true and faithful soldiers to their general; so in this ordinance we in effect swear allegiance to the King of heaven over the broken body and shed blood of the Son of God, and also bind ourselves to be true and faithful soldiers to Christ our captain-general in the spiritual welfare.

Q. What are these main ends you have in view in coming to this ordinance?

A. To keep up the remembrance of Christ's death and sufferings, to get communion with him, to renew my baptismal covenant, to get my faith strengthened and confirmed, and all my graces quickened.

Q. What are these sufferings of Christ, which you are to remember at his table?

A. These which are recorded in his word.

Q. What do you remember of these just now?

A. I remember the assaults and temptations he met with from the devil; the reproaches and persecutions he endured from wicked men; his soul sufferings and agonies in the garden of Gethsemane; the cruel mockings, buffetings, crownings, spittings, and scourgings he endured in the high priest's palace, and in Pilate's judgment-hall; and lastly, his bloody sufferings and bitter death on Mount Calvary, when he was nailed to the cross, forsaken by his friends, derided by his enemies, and deserted of God.

Q. What was the cause of all these sufferings?

A. Christ's own love, and our sins: for, having his astonishing free love, undertaken to satisfy divine justice for us. *He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities.*

Q. Are we not under the strongest obligations to keep up the sacramental remembrance of Christ?

A. Surely we are; for he is matchless in his love to us poor sinful worms, having remembered us in our low estate and done and suffered more for us than all the world could or would have done. And likewise, he hath strictly enjoined us, among his last words, to continue to celebrate the memorial of his death.

Q. Why do we need this memorial? Are we in any hazard of forgetting his matchless love?

A. Yes, for so worldly are our hearts, so unbelieving our minds, so treacherous our memories, and so wavering our affections, that we are apt to be ensnared by the world's allurements, and to let Christ and his love slip out of our thoughts.

Q. Is not the fresh and frequent remembrance of a crucified Christ in the sacrament very useful and advantageous to us?

A. Yes.

Q. In what respect is it useful?

A. For weakening and killing of sin, for melting a hard heart, for overcoming of satan's temptations, for quickening and increasing grace, and for giving comfort in all tribulation.

Q. What kind of a remembrance ought we to have of the sufferings and death of Christ at his table?

A. It should be an affectionate and believing, a mournful and sin loathing, and yet a joyful and thankful remembrance.

Q. How can we both mourn and rejoice at the same time?

A. We may upon different accounts: for, as we should mourn for our sins that pierced Christ, and put him to death; so we ought to rejoice in his wonderful goodness, that undertook to be our Surety and sacrifice to save us from sin and wrath: and the more we are helped to mourn, we have still the greater ground to rejoice and be glad in him.

Q. How so?

A. Because a mourning heart for sin is a good evidence of a person's interest in Christ and his purchase.

Of Worthy and Unworthy Partakers.

Q. ARE all partakers to be reckoned welcome guests at this holy feast?

A. No.

Q. Who then are such?

A. Only believers, and worthy partakers of it.

Q. Who are these?

A. They are such, who by faith do cordially consent to the covenant of grace; sincerely aim to do honour to Christ at his table, by shewing forth his death, and study preparation for it.

Q. Who are the unwelcome guests?

A. These who never closed with the offers of the gospel, and neglect preparation for this feast; and particularly these who continue in love and league with sin, while they pretended kindness to Christ, and to renew covenant with him.

Q. What is to be understood by the worthiness of these who are called worthy partakers?

A. Not any worthiness in a legal sense, for we are all unworthy before God of the least mercy; but only a gospel-suitableness and meetness of the soul's state and frame to attend this holy institution.

Q. May not even a believer be guilty of partaking unworthily?

A. Yes he may, if he neglect self-examination, harbour any known sin, or want grace in exercise.

Q. What is the duty of worthy partaking, and wherein doth it ly?

A. It is, in short, to eat and drink at Christ's table, with a believing and thankful remembrance of his dying love, looking by faith to him, that we have pierced, for salvation, and lodging our souls in his wounds, mourning for sin that pierced him, and solemnly resolving in his strength that we will pierce him no more.

Q. What is the advantage of worthy partaking?

A. Hereby remission of our sins through Christ's blood is assured, the power of sin is weakened, the graces of the spirit are strengthened, the soul's diseases are cured, the doubts of the mind are resolved, and sweet views of Christ and glory are obtained.

Q. What is the sin of unworthy communicating, and wherein doth it ly?

A. It is to partake without due preparation and right ends, to eat and drink without suitable knowledge and reverence, without reconciliation to God and our neighbour, or without the exercise of the sacramental graces, such as faith, love, and repentance; or to approach while we entertain any known sin.

Q. What is the danger of unworthy partaking?

A. Hereby the guilt of Christ's body and blood is contracted, and God highly provoked; and the guilty person draws down judgments and damnation upon himself, if it be not timeously prevented by repentance and free mercy.

Q. Why is a man's unworthy partaking charged mainly upon his not discerning the Lord's body in the sacrament?

A. Because the unworthy communicant doth not consider that the bread here is solemnly consecrated to represent the Lord's body, but eats it as carelessly as if it were common bread; and because he puts not due respect and honour upon the body of our crucified Lord here set forth; but treats it as if it were the body of a mere man or common person.

Q. How shall we prevent the guilt and danger?

A. By entering into God's covenant, and making due preparation for approaching to his holy table, both habitual and actual.

Of Preparation for the Lord's Supper.

Q. WHAT is the necessity of making such preparation for attending this ordinance?

A. Because the approach we make to God in it is very near and awful; and the Author of it is a holy, jealous and heart-searching God, who will shortly call us to account: and because we are assured there is great benefit by a worthy approach, and as great danger by an unworthy.

Q. What is our habitual preparation?

A. Our being in a gracious state.

Q. What is the actual preparation requisite for approaching to the Lord's table?

A. It mainly lies in these two; examination of ourselves, and excitation of our graces.

Q. What sort of examination is needful before our partaking?

A. There is a public church examination necessary by church officers, that the Lord's table be not abused by the ignorant and profane; and there is a private self-examination necessary by our own consciences, that the Lord's sup-

per be not unworthily received through unbelief, impenitency, formality, earthliness, pride, malice, or any secret sin entertained by us.

Q. What things must we examine ourselves about before we approach?

A. Principally concerning these three; our right to the Lord's supper, our need of it, and our actual fitness for it.

Q. Why about these three?

A. Because, if we have no right to it, we shall but usurp it; if we feel no need of it, we shall but despise it; if we be unfit for it, we shall but abuse it, and hurt ourselves.

Examination of our Right to the Lord's Table.

Q. WHAT is this right to the Lord's table?

A. It is twofold; 1. There is an outward and visible right before the church. 2. There is an inward and invisible right before God.

Q. Who are these that have the outward and visible right to this ordinance?

A. These who are baptised, and have a competent measure of christian knowledge, profess their faith in Christ, and are blameless in their lives before men.

Q. Are all such persons worthy partakers?

A. No; but they have such an outward and visible right before the church, that they cannot be excluded: for, of this outward right only the church is to judge.

Q. Who are these who have not this right?

A. Neither the ignorant nor profane have it, and therefore they are to be excluded from the Lord's table.

Q. Why are the ignorant to be excluded?

A. Because they are not capable to examine themselves, nor to discern the Lord's body; and so behoved in this case to eat and drink unworthily.

Q. Why are the profane to be excluded?

A. Because they who allow themselves to live in sin, can have no communion with a holy God: nay they expose themselves to his judgments; by coming with defiled hands to his holy table.

Q. Who are these that have the inward and invisible right to this holy ordinance?

A. These who not only have knowledge, and profession, and blameless walk; but are really within the covenant by a true faith in Jesus Christ, even a faith that works by love, and purifies the heart as well as the life; they are really in heart before God what they seem to be outwardly before men.

Q. Who are the judges of this right?

A. Of this inward right the church cannot judge; but every man is to enquire, examine, and judge of it with respect to himself.

Q. By what evidence may a man know that he is really within the new covenant, and thereupon judge that he hath an inward and invisible right to its seal before God.

A. If he can say, that he hath seen himself perishing, while upon the old bottom of a covenant of works, and that he hath fled from it to the new covenant, heartily approving the whole frame and contrivance of it; accepting of Christ the Mediator of it in all his offices, and giving up himself to be the Lord's, to live for him, and walk with him in newness of life; and that it is his earnest desire, that his inward man, as well as his outward, may be conformed to the laws and image of God.

Examination of our need of the Lord's Supper, and of the wants we should seek to be supplied thereat.

Q. WHAT need have you of the Lord's supper?

A. I need it upon many accounts; as, 1. To bring a crucified Jesus in a lively manner to my remembrance. 2. To renew my baptismal vow, and lay me under stronger engagements to be the Lord's. 3 To nourish and strengthen my weak graces. 4. To fortify me against satan's temptations, and all other discouragements. 5. To renew the sense and assurance of my pardon, which is frequently obscured and darkened.

Q What are these things which obscure the evidence of pardon?

A. Sins both of omission and commission, and especially sins against light.

Q. Why should you examine your wants before you approach to the Lord's table?

A Because there Christ is set forth with all his fulness for the supply of my spiritual wants and necessities; and it is necessary that I should have a lively sense of these needs, that I may know what to apply for to this full Saviour, when at his table.

Q What are those wants you ought to enquire into before partaking?

A. I ought to examine those chiefly; 1. What sins I want most to be subdued. 2. What graces I want most to be strengthened 3 What mercies I want most to be bestowed. 4 What faculties of my soul I want most to be sanctified. 5 What offices of Christ I want most to be executed in my soul

Q. How may you discover the sins you want most to be subdued?

A. By examining what are the sins or corruptions which do most prevail in me, if it be atheistical thoughts, unbelief, pride, passion, heart-hardness, earthliness, wandering, formality, backsliding, or any other other; and these I must keep in eye, that I may apply to a full Saviour at his table for strength to wrestle against them and overcome them.

Q How may you discover the graces you want most to be strengthened?

A. By examining which of the graces are weakest and lowest in me, if it be faith, hope, love, meekness, humility or any other; and these I must bring to a full Christ at his table, to be cherished, strengthened and increased.

Q. How may you find out the mercies you need most to be bestowed?

A. By examining; what are my present complaints, pinches, and difficulties; and what are the mercies which would be most suitable and relieving to me under them, if such as these, intimations of pardon, spirituality of affections, liveliness in duty, patience under crosses, conduct in intricate cases, strength against corruptions and temptations, deliverance from atheistical or blasphemous thoughts, or the like; and these mercies I must remember to ask them from Christ when at his table.

Q. How may you find out the faculty of your soul you want most to be sanctified?

A. By examining what is the power or faculty that is least renewed, and needs most the spirit's influences to be poured out upon it; if upon my understanding, to cure its blindness, and enlighten it with saving views of spiritual things; or if upon my will, to cure its perverseness, and make it pliable to God's will; or upon my memory,

to cure its treachery and weakness, and to strengthen it to retain God's word; or upon my conscience, to cure its searedness, and to make it tender and watchful; or upon my affections, to cure their coldness to Christ and spiritual things, and to fix them upon right objects.

Q. How may you discover the office of Christ you want most to be execute in you?

A. By enquiring into the case of my soul, and plagues of my heart, saying, whether do I need Christ most as a prophet to teach me and cure my ignorance? or as a priest to cover me with his righteousness, and intercede with God for me? or as a king to subdue my heart to himself, and conquer my indwelling corruptions? And being sensible of my soul's need, I must go to my full Redeemer at his table, and say, Lord, come and execute such an office in my soul.

Examination of our Sins necessary before Partaking.

Q. WHY must you enquire so narrowly about your sins before partaking?

A. Upon several accounts; 1. That there may be no Achan lodged to hinder the presence of God with me. 2. That, by discovering them, I may be helped the better to look upon him whom I have pierced, and mourn. 3. That I may be the more capable to point out my wound and sore unto my Physician for cure. 4. That I may behold the evil of them in the glass of Christ's sufferings, and be thereby moved to hate them, and turn from them all unto God, and walk with him in newness of life.

Q. How ought you to manage this part of your preparation work, so as to accomplish a diligent search of your sins?

A. 1. I must set time apart for it, and before I begin it, pray earnestly for the illumination of the Spirit of God to discover sin unto me. 2. I must think upon the sins of my heart and my life, my sins of omission, and commission, and these both open and secret, of ignorance, and against light, and the sins of my station and character in the world. 3. For my help, I will read our larger Catechism and the ten commandments, and the sins therein enumerated, with their many aggravations, and enquire how far I am chargeable therewith. 4. I will never give over searching and thinking, until I see my indispensible need of the blood of the Lamb of God, which cleanseth us from all sin.

Examination of our actual fitness for the Lord's Table.

Q. WHAT is that fitness which every communicant ought to have before partaking?

A. It is twofold, both habitual and actual; and both must be had by every one.

Q. What is this habitual fitness or preparation which every partaker must have?

A. He must be a believer, a man in a gracious state that hath the habits grace planted in his soul.

Q. What is that actual fitness you must have?

A. It is, when a man is not only in a gracious state, but in a gracious frame: when grace is not only in the habit but in the lively exercise.

Q What are these graces which must be examined, quickened and brought to exercise before partaking?

A. They are chiefly knowledge, faith, repentance, love, humility, thankfulness, spiritual appetite, and resolution for new obedience.

Examination of Knowledge.

Q. WHAT is that knowledge you must have to qualify you for worthy partaking?

A. It is a gracious discovery and uptaking of God and divine truths, as they are revealed in his word.

Q. What are these things particularly, which you must know in order to partaking aright?

A. I must have a competent knowledge of these five things; 1. Of God in his essential perfections and Trinity of persons. 2. Of man, and his estate both before and since his fall. 3. Of Jesus Christ the Mediator, in his twofold nature, and threefold office. 4. Of the new covenant, or gospel-method of justification by the Surety's righteousness apprehended by faith. 5. Of the seal of this covenant, and particularly of the holy supper, in its nature, ends and uses.

Q. Is a literal knowledge of these things sufficient for a communicant?

A. No; it must be a true, sanctified and saving knowledge.

Q. How may we discover if our knowledge be sanctified and saving?

A. We may know it by its properties and effects; as, 1. If it be experimental, and gives us a sweet taste and relish of the truths we know. 2. If it be humbling, and makes us, like Paul, look upon ourselves as the least of saints, and the chief of sinners. 3. If it leads us to Christ and his righteousness, as the only ground of our hope. *Lastly*, If it be communicative, practical, obediential, and fruitful, and puts us on to desire a greater conformity to Jesus Christ our Head.

Examination of Faith.

Q. WHAT is true saving faith?

A. It is a grace of the Holy Spirit, whereby a man, knowing his sin and misery, and assenting to the truth of God's record concerning Christ, doth cordially receive and rest upon Christ and his righteousness for pardon and salvation, according to the gospel offer.

Q. What need is there for the exercise of faith at the Lord's table?

A. It is needful, 1. For discerning the Lord's body, and the spiritual mysteries here represented; seeing faith is the spiritual eye whereby the soul sees Christ and things invisible. 2. For applying Christ and his benefits here set forth to our souls, seeing faith is the spiritual hand for taking hold of a crucified Jesus, and the mouth and stomach that feeds upon him.

Q. How may we know if our faith be true and saving?

A. True faith hath these effects; 1. It softens the heart

and makes it bleed for sin that pierced Christ. 2. It makes the soul approve and admire the gospel-contrivance of salvation through the righteousness of Christ. 3. It works by love, and carries out the soul to love Christ above all things, and to do all duties from a principle of love. 4. It makes a man sincerely obedient and fruitful in good works. 5. It looses the heart from the world and all earthly felicities, and carries it to things above.

Examination of Repentance.

Q. WHAT is the true repentance which worthy partakers must have?

A. It is a grace of the holy Spirit, whereby we are convinced of the evil of sin, sincerely mourn for it, and turn from it unto God, through Jesus Christ, resolving to serve him in newness of life.

Q. What parts are there in new repentance?

A. Chiefly three; conviction, contrition, and conversion.

Q. What is conviction?

A. It is a right sight and sense of the evil and sinfulness of sin.

Q. What is contrition?

A. It is a true and godly sorrow and grief of heart for sin, chiefly because God is offended, and Christ pierced thereby.

Q. What is conversion?

A. It is the soul's turning from all sin to God in Christ for mercy and pardon, and to all the ways of holiness and new obedience.

Q. What need is there for the exercise of repentance and godly sorrow at the Lord's table?

A. Because here we are to renew covenant with God, and certainly penitent mourning for former breaches and backsliding is very suitable upon that occasion. Again, we are here to behold Christ bruised for our sin, and to receive him into our hearts; and nothing suits a broken Christ so well as a broken heart; nay, this is what he prefers to all sacrifices.

Q. How may we know if our repentance be of the right sort?

A. We may judge it right, if, 1. We do lay the ax to the root of sin, the corruption of the heart and nature, and long to be delivered from it. 2. If we do hate all sin, and resolve to harbour no known evil, either in heart or life. 3. If we have recourse to Christ's blood and Spirit, for freedom from the filth as well as the guilt of sin, and breathe after universal holiness.

Examination of Love.

Q. WHY is the exercise of love so necessary at the Lord's table?

A. Because it is a love feast and ordinance where we have the highest representation of divine love to sinners that ever was given; which necessarily requires the exercise of love in us.

Q. What do you understand by the love, which is required of communicants? and what are the objects upon which it must be placed?

A. It is a saving grace or spiritual affection wrought in believers by the Holy Spirit, which terminates upon various objects, namely, upon God, upon Jesus Christ, upon the brethren, and every thing that bears his image, and in some sense upon all mankind; even our very enemies.

Q. Why do you make God and Jesus Christ different objects of your love?

A. I love Jesus Christ as he is God, and the same God with the other Persons of the glorious Trinity; but seeing the second Person is for us become God-man, our Mediator, and the great sacrifice to justice for our sins, in this respect I view him as a special object of my love.

Q. By what marks may you examine if your love to God be true?

A. By such as these; my care to please him, my fear to offend him, my desire after his presence, my regard to his laws, and concern for his glory.

Q. By what marks may you examine your love to Jesus Christ?

A. By the same before mentioned, to which I may add, true love to Christ far exceeds all our love to relations and dearest worldly enjoyments; it terminates upon him in all his offices, as a prince upon the throne, as well as a priest upon the cross; in his life as a pattern, as well as in his death as a sacrifice, and embraceth him as altogether lovely: also, it prompts the soul to have many thoughts of him, and even to look and long for his second coming.

Q. How may we know if we love him above all things in the world?

A. By these marks: if we value his favour more than that of any creature; if the loss of his countenance affect us more than any worldly loss; if we rather displease all the world than offend him; and if it be our greatest grief that we cannot love him now.

Q. By what marks are you to examine if your love to the brethren be true?

A. By such as these; if I love them, not for outward or temporal things, but upon spiritual accounts, because they are God's children, and bear his image; if my love be to all saints poor and rich, hated and honoured, strangers and friends; if I sympathize with them both in their joys and sorrows, and prefer their company to all others.

Q. How doth your love to God's people differ from your love to the rest of mankind, and these who are your enemies?

A. I love the rest of mankind, and even my enemies, with a love of benevolence and beneficence, being inclined to wish them well, pray for them, do them good, and even return them good for evil; but I love the people of God with a love of delight and complacency, and esteem them as the excellent ones of the earth, the friends of God, and the pillars of the land.

Examination of Humility.

Q. WHY is the grace of humility so needful in your approach to the table of the Lord?

A. Because I am a most unworthy creature, and he is a great and holy God with whom I have to do, and he hath a special respect unto the lowly: besides, this grace is necessary to make me resemble my Saviour; whose love I com-

memorate; for, as he was meek and lowly in his disposition, for he humbled himself deeply for my good.

Q. How may you know if your humility be of the right stamp?

A. By such marks as these; 1. If I have low and mean thoughts of myself under a sense of unworthiness, and be ready to say, with the Prodigal, *I am no more worthy to be called thy son;* and with the Canaanitish woman, *Truth, Lord, I am a dog.* 2. If I be grieved for the motions of pride and self-conceit within me. 3. If I renounce all confidence in my duties, and betake myself entirely to Christ for righteousness and acceptance with God.

Examination of Thankfulness.

Q. WHY is thankfulness necessary to worthy partaking?

A. Because it is the chief design of the ordinance to keep up a thankful remembrance of redeeming love, and to give thanks to God for the unspeakable gift of a crucified Christ; and hence it is called Eucharist, or thanksgiving.

Q. How may you discern if your thankfulness be of the right sort?

A. By these marks; 1. If I account myself unworthy of the least mercy, and admire God's undeserved goodness. 2. If I look upon Jesus Christ as the mercy of mercies, and the channel of all other mercies. 3. If I sincerely love my benefactor, and study to please him. 4. If I be oft meditating how to express my thankfulness to him, saying, with the psalmist, *What shall I render to the Lord for all his gifts and benefits towards me?*

Q. But what can you, or should you render for a crucified Jesus?

A. Though all I have be nothing in comparison of the benefit received, yet I should be willing to render it to the Lord; such as, 1. My endeared affections. 2. My triumphant praises. 3. My unfeigned repentance and reformation. 4. My faithful performance of vows. 5. My zealous actings for his glory. 6. My chearful resolution to suffer for Christ, who so willingly suffered for me.

Examination of Spiritual Appetite.

Q. WHY is a spiritual appetite so requisite at this time?

A. Because a feast is not relished but by those who have an appetite for it; and it is the hungry and the thirsty that God hath promised to satisfy with good things.

Q. How may you know if your appetite or spiritual desires be of the right sort?

A. By these marks; 1. If I be glad of the news of Christ's feast, and an invitation to it. 2. If I count the cost, and be willing to be at all pains to obtain soul-food; such as, to pray, to search, to humble myself, and part with my dearest sins. 3. If I be satisfied with no food for my soul, but a crucified Christ. 4. If I find this food very sweet and pleasant to my soul's taste.

Examination of Resolutions for New Obedience.

Q. WHY is a believer's obedience called new obedience?

A. Because it proceeds from new principles, faith, and love. 2. It is performed in a new manner, namely, by faith leaning upon Christ's strength for enabling him to do it, and upon Christ's righteousness for his acceptance with God. 3. It is done for new ends, not to advance his own secular interest, but to please God, and promote his glory.

Q. How may you know if your resolutions for new obedience be of the right stamp?

A. By these marks; 1. If I count the cost, and be deliberate in making them. 2. If they be absolute, without any reserve for a beloved sin. 3. If I make them in a deep sense of my insufficiency to keep them, and in a humble dependence upon Christ my Surety for strength.

Concerning the Excitation of Graces.

Q. HOW shall you get all these graces before-mentioned, excited and brought to lively exercise, before you come to the table?

A. I must use all the means which God hath appointed for this end; such as, reading and hearing the word, christian conference, retired meditation, fervent prayer, and frequent ejaculations to God for the awakening influences of his holy Spirit; and cry, with the spouse, "Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out."

Q. What ought you to do when spiritual deadness doth continue, after using all the aforesaid means?

A. I must go a little further in humiliation and prayer, and meditate more closely upon the sufferings of Christ, and also act faith upon him, as my head of influences for life and quickening to my dead graces, and resolve still to depend upon him for needful supplies of life according to his promise.

Q. How ought you to pray at this time, so as to prevail?

A. I must pray with humility, faith, fervency, and importunity, as knowing how much is at stake, both with respect to the glory of God, and the salvation of my soul; I must plead the power, the mercy, and free promise of God, and merits of Jesus Christ his beloved Son.

Q. For what things ought you mainly to pray before the solemn approach?

A. For these things: 1. For the preparation of the heart, and chiefly for sanctifying grace, and a spiritual frame of soul. 2. For life and liveliness to all the sacramental graces, and for the assistance of the Spirit of God in all the parts of the work. 3. For the cure of all my soul-distempers, and the pardon of all defects. 4. For much nearness and communion with God at his table 5. For the Lord's gracious presence both with ministers and people through the whole solemnity.

Q. How ought you to be employed upon the Saturday evening and Sabbath morning, before partaking?

A. Besides the work of self-examination, and excitation of grace, I resolve to spend much of that precious time in direct covenanting with God on my knees, taking and accepting of him for my God in Christ, and of Christ, the Me-

diator in all his offices, and giving up myself soul and body to be the Lord's, to be disposed of by him in time and to eternity. Also, I will make it a particular piece of my preparation, to consider, before hand, how I will act when I go to the Lord's table; how my faith and love shall then be employed; what objects I will think of, and what sins I will mourn over; that so I may not spend my short time here in confusion.

Concerning our Employment when at the Lord's Table.

Q. WHAT is that suitable communion frame and disposition with which you would desire to go to the Lord's holy table?

A. I would desire to go to it with a humble, believing, and affectionate frame of soul, having in it a mixture of holy mourning and rejoicing, which I look upon as a noble communion frame; I mean, mourning for my sins that were the cause of Christ's sufferings, and rejoicing in Christ Jesus that came to satisfy justice for me.

Q. How are you to be employed when sitting at the table, and when beholding and making use of the elements there?

A. 1. I must take a view of the sufferings of Christ both in soul and body for me; and particularly, I must remember the anguish of his soul, when he lay under the pressure of God's wrath for my sins. 2. I must take a view both of the mercy and justice of God, and of Christ's love, displayed in these sufferings. 3. I must exert faith in embracing a crucified Jesus, and my faith is to be attended with the exercise of all the sacramental graces, repentance, love, thankfulness, &c. 4. I am to be suitably affected with the amazing sights set before me. 5. I am to make vows and prayers after the partaking, and before I rise from the table.

Q. Seeing faith is the principal grace in communicating, how is it to be exercised and employed at this time?

A. Faith being the soul's eye to discern Christ, the soul's hand to receive him, and the soul's mouth to feed upon him, it is to be employed at this time in the most active manner, in looking to Christ lifted upon the cross for healing our soul's maladies, in embracing Christ our great Surety and Ransomer, in fleeing into his wounds for shelter, in applying his blood for cleansing, and in pleading his blood with God for all we want.

Q. What are the amazing sights set before you at the Lord's table, which ought so much to affect you?

A. They are, 1. The unspeakable evil of sin, and God's infinite displeasure against it. 2. The inexorableness of divine justice in demanding satisfaction for sin. 3. The infinite greatness of the love of God to lost sinners, in providing a Surety and sacrifice for them, and of Christ in becoming both. 4. The great worth and preciousness of immortal souls, and the costliness of pardon, and of eternal glory 5. Christ dying, and yet, in the mean time, conquering principalities and powers, and triumphing over them upon the cross.

Q. What ought you to vow when at the Lord's table?

A. That in the strength of Christ my Surety, I will abstain from all known sin, and make conscience of every known duty; that I will mind religion as the one thing needful, and make the pleasing of God the chief business of my life.

Q. For what things are you to offer your request at this time?

A. For grace to preserve my liveliness of frame; for strength to pay my vows; for wisdom and skill to improve a crucified Christ in my after life; for furniture for future trials, for victory over satan's temptations and indwelling sin; for mercy to my near relations, to my mother-church, and for the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ through the world.

Q. In what frame ought you to rise and go from this holy table?

A. 1. In an admiring and thankful frame, upon account of redeeming love. 2. In an humble and watchful frame, because of the snares and dangers I am still exposed to. 3. In a believing and depending frame, leaning on Christ for conduct through the wilderness.

Concerning our Behaviour after Partaking.

Q. HOW are we to behave when the public work is over?

A. 1. I will retire in secret, and solemnly on my knees re-act what I was doing at the Lord's table; I will renew my choice of God as my God, and my acceptance of Christ in all his offices, and my engagement to be the Lord's.— 2. I ought to pray for the continuance of a communion frame with me when the communion is over. 3. I must set about self-examination concerning my behaviour and success at the Lord's table.

Q. How may we keep up something of a lively frame when the communion is over?

A. In order thereto, we must, 1. Be jealous of satan, the world, and heart lusts, that ly in wait to rob us of it. 2. Learn the art of living by faith and of deriving life from Jesus Christ our Head, for maintaining our life. 3. Still plead for the quickening influences of the Holy Spirit, which must, like the bellows, blow up the fire, and maintain it against all the cold blasts of the devil and the world. 4. Delight in the company of lively christians.

Q. How may we examine our behaviour at the Lord's table, and discover if it was suitable?

A. We may take comfort, if we can say, 1. We had there very low and abasing thoughts of ourselves and our own righteousness. Or, 2. We had something of a heart-melting remembrance of Christ's death and sufferings, when the signs and memorials of them were presented to us. Or, 3. We are filled with abhorrence of sin that pierced him. Or, 4. We went in chearfully with the terms of the covenant of grace.

Q. How may we examine our success, and know if we have got any good by this ordinance?

A. We may discern it by such effects as these: 1. If we have got any further assurance of God's love. Or, 2. If we have a higher esteem of Christ. Or, 3. If we have greater delight in duty. Or, 4. If we have a better relish of ordinances and their usefulness, so as to make us resolve to hang still on about God's hand.

Q. What should be our conversation after this solemn ordinance?

A. We should walk circumspectly, and carry suitably

to the Lord's dealings and dispensations towards us, whether we had success at it or not.

Q. How ought they to carry, who have got no good by this ordinance?

A. 1. They must search into the cause, if it was unbelief, sloth, self-conceit, or any sin reserved, and mourn over it. 2. They must flee to the blood of Christ for pardon and cleansing. 3. They should look out for another communion occasion; and prepare for it more diligently and self-deniedly; and watch especially against that evil or defect in their management which conscience suggests was the cause of their bad success of the former.

Q. How should they carry who have got good at the sacrament?

A. 1. They should be thankful to the author, and, like the children of Zion, be joyful in their King. 2. Record what they have got, that it may be of use to them in a day of clouds. 3. Study to preserve it, by committing it to God, and walking humbly and tenderly before him.—4. Pity and pray for others under discouragement, and be ready to communicate their experiences to them for their support. 5. Study to recommend Christ and religion to strangers, by a holy and shining conversation before all men.

Q. What is that holy becoming conversation which communicants should study?

A. It is a conversation ordered aright and suitable to the rule of God's word, to the principle they profess, the sights they have seen, the benefits they have received, and the vows they have made.

Q. What is it that makes our conversation to shine before the world?

A. When we have it adorned with humility, purity, justice, charity, meekness, patience, resignation to God's will, and contentment in every condition.

Q. Are not the best of God's people in danger of miscarrying after such a solemn ordinance?

A. Yes; as appears from the instance of Peter and the rest of the disciples, after the first communion.

Q. Whence is it that we are in such hazards?

A. It proceeds from such things: 1. From the natural inconstancy of our hearts. 2. From that security and self-confidence we are prone to, after favour received from God. 3. From the malice and activity of satan, who seeks by all means to ensnare us into sin after the sacrament, that he may thereby exceedingly widen the breach betwixt God and us.

Q. How shall we prevent backsliding and yielding to satan's temptations after the sacrament?

A. 1. We must labour to preserve a warm sense of the love of Christ in our souls. 2. Maintain an everlasting jealousy over our treacherous hearts, and never trust them at any time. 3. Keep Christ our ascended forerunner still in our eye, and beware of losing sight or thought of him. 4. We must commit our souls, by humble and believing prayer, into the hands of God's power and mercy, as the child doth itself into the nurse's arms.

QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR SELF-EXAMINATION,

Proper for Young Communicants in examining the state and condition of their souls in secret, before their approach unto the Lord's Table: the which if they can answer in the affirmative, or some few of them, they have ground to hope they are in a gracious state, and have a right before God to this sealing ordinance.

Q. 1. CAN I say, that I am deeply affected about my soul, and my eternal state, so that my great and leading questions are, What must I do to be saved? What shall I do to be born again? What shall I do for the Holy Spirit to come and work a saving change on me, and make me a new creature?

Q. 2. Have I been spiritually enlightened to see the depravation of my nature, and the sinfulness of my heart and life, so as to be convinced that I am all as an unclean thing before God?

Q. 3. Have I been made to see sin as the greatest evil, and feel it as the greatest burden in the world, so as to account deliverance from it the greatest happiness?

Q. 4. Is my spirit very humble and lowly before God? Am I truly vile and low in my own eyes, under a deep sense of my unworthiness and ill-deservings, so as to cry, with the centurion, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; and with the publican, God be merciful to me a sinner?

Q. 5. Have I seen my absolute need of Jesus Christ to save me from sin and wrath, to restore the lost image of God, and to give me grace and glory, so that I am truly willing to part with all things for Christ?

Q. 6. Have I been made heartily to approve of the gospel-method of salvation through the satisfaction of Christ? And is my soul well pleased with the self-abasing and grace-exalting way of saving sinners by the righteousness of another?

Q. 7. Have I made choice of God in Christ the Mediator as my God and portion? And can I say, that which moved me to make this choice was a sight of the vanity of seeking a rest for my soul among the creatures, and that its happiness lies in the enjoyment of God, which is only to be had through Christ?

Q. 8. Have I an high opinion of Jesus Christ the Mediator? Is he very precious to my soul? Have I seen a matchless beauty in his person, in his offices and fulness, and that the fulness of the Godhead is in him, and all freely exhibited for the use of those that come to him?

Q. 9. Have I been helped to close with God's offer unto me in the gospel, and to accept of the well-qualified Surety and Saviour in his fulness, and in his offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, and to embrace him as altogether lovely?

Q. 10. Have I been determined to resign and surrender myself unto the Lord, to be taught, ruled, and saved by him? And have I given up all I have, to be disposed of by him at his pleasure? Or, am I willing presently to do so?

Q. 11. Am I willing to renounce my own righteousness in justification, and my own strength in sanctification, and to look to Christ as my Surety and Head for both,

saying, In the Lord Jesus only have I righteousness and strength?

Q. 12. Is Jesus Christ welcome to my soul as a King, as well as a Priest, so that I am as willing to be governed by his laws, as to be justified by his righteousness?

Q. 13. Have I got new discoveries of spiritual and heavenly things, which I had not before? Do I see a reality in a future life and glory, an awfulness in eternity, an emptiness in this world, a worth in my soul, an evil in sin, and a beauty in Christ and holiness, which I saw not before?

Q. 14. Do I seek more earnestly after the favour of God thro' Christ, than after any earthly comfort or enjoyment whatsoever?

Q. 15. Do I study the things which please God and make for his glory? And do I prefer his interest above the interest of the world, or of the flesh?

Q. 16. Is indwelling sin, and the corruption and plagues of my heart my daily grief and burden? Do I struggle and strive against them, and long for a deliverance, crying with the apostle, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?

Q. 17. Can I say, that I have respect to all God's commandments? and conscientiously practise whatever I discover to be my duty? that I dare neither omit duty when I know it, nor dare I venture upon any sin against my light?

Q. 18. Can I say, as I dare not omit duty, as little dare I rest upon it? that I see my prayers have need of pardon, and my tears need to be washed in Christ's blood. And therefore I can find no rest to the sole of my foot, but in my Cautioner's perfect righteousness?

Q. 19. Can I say, I am truly grieved in heart for sin that pierced Christ, and am ready to put a bill of divorce into the hand of every lust, yea, the most beloved idol, resolving never to give harbour to any of these traitors or enemies of my Lord?

Q. 20. Can I say, that I love Christ with my heart, and that I can appeal to himself for the truth and reality of it, though it be but weak? and that it is my great grief that I cannot love him more?

Q. 21. Can I say, that I breathe after great conformity to God both in heart and in life, and that I desire heart-holiness more than any temporal thing whatsoever? and that I cry oft, with the Psalmist, O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes?

Q. 22. Can I say, that I am truly desirous of converse and fellowship with God in the duties of religion? and that I look upon that prayer, that sermon, that Sabbath, as lost, where I find nothing of his gracious presence?

Now, let young communicants retire in secret for putting these questions to their souls, as in the presence of God, and let them wait till conscience give answer to them: but see that they do this, when they are in the best frame.

A PRO-

A Proposal for Young Communicants,

Their express renewing the Baptismal Engagements, before their first admission to the Lord's Table: which practice might be much for edification; especially if duly managed, and done with some solemnity before witnesses, such as ministers, elders, and other young persons.

Q. 1. WHAT moves you to seek access to the Lord's table?

A. The Lord's command, and because I desire to renew my baptismal engagements, and declare myself a christian by my own free choice and consent, and would join myself unto the Lord by my own voluntary act and deed.

Q. 2. Why do you desire to do so?

A. Because, when I got the first seal of the covenant, namely, baptism, I knew not what was done for me, nor was I capable to consent to my parents. deed; but now, when I am come to some knowledge and capacity, I am willing to declare, that I make religion my free choice, and reasonable service.

Q. 3. Why do you come so early? will it not be soon enough to mind religion in old age?

A. No; for besides that I may die young, these who neglect religion, and give themselves up to the world, or the flesh in their youth, do fall into hardness of heart, from which few recover.

Q. 4. What is the most proper season to seek acquaintance with Christ and religion?

A. The time of youth, because in this age the heart is more easily melted, and the habits of vice are not so riveted as afterward; and because God has a special delight in early piety.

Q. 5. What view then have you got of your natural state and condition?

A. I do see it to be a most sinful, wretched, and helpless case; I am condemned to perish under a load of guilt and wrath, having broke the covenant of works, which I cannot fulfil, offended the justice of God, which I cannot satisfy, and lost the image of God, and my precious soul, which I cannot recover. O what shall I do to be saved?

Q. 6. To what airth do you look for relief?

A. Only to Jesus Christ, who hath, in his free love to lost sinners, undertaken as Surety and Mediator in the new covenant, which is exhibited and sealed to believers at the Lord's table.

Q. 7. What views have you got of that covenant which is there sealed?

A. I see the way of salvation laid down in it through the Suretyship and righteousness of Jesus Christ, to be an excellent contrivance, well-ordered in all things and sure. I look upon it as a device every way worthy of God, and of infinite wisdom, and I do heartily approve of it, consent to it, and desire to come and venture my soul and eternal salvation upon it.

Q. 8. What think you of the love of God, that was the spring of this new covenant?

A. I view it as wonderful and amazing; I admire the love of the Father, in contriving and sending his beloved Son to execute it; I admire the love of the Son of God, in undertaking to be a Surety and sacrifice for lost sinners

of Adam's race, when the sinning angels were past by, and left to perish for ever; and I admire the love of the Holy Ghost, in undertaking to apply that redemption to lost elect sinners, by working in them conviction, conversion, and faith in Jesus Christ.

Q. 9. With what frame and disposition do you come to renew your baptismal covenant?

A. I desire to be sensible of my guilt in breaking this covenant, in running away from Christ's colours, in going over to satan's camp, and in standing so long out against Christ's calls and offers; and I desire now to return to the Lord as a penitent prodigal, and a mourning backslider, with my face Zion-ward, weeping as I go, willing to renew my baptismal vows with others, saying, Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord in an everlasting covenant never to be forgiven. And, in a word, I desire to go to a broken Christ with a broken heart.

Q. 10. What is that baptismal vow or covenant, which you design to renew?

A. According to my engagement and dedication in baptism, I desire expressly to own and acknowledge the only living and true God as my God in Christ, as he offers himself in the covenant of grace; and to give up myself, soul and body to him, to be for him and not for another. And I design, in the most solemn manner, to go and renounce all the enemies of the Holy Trinity, namely, the devil, the world, and the flesh; and to declare my acceptance of God the Father as my Father, of God the Son as my Redeemer, and of God the Holy Ghost as my sanctifier; in whose blessed name I was baptized, and to whose service and glory I was dedicated.

Q. 11. What do you think of Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the covenant?

A. I think him a matchless Person, and an excellent and all-sufficient Saviour; and I am content to accept of him in all his offices, namely, as a Prophet to instruct and teach me, as a Priest to atone and intercede for me, and as a King to rule in me and over me.

Q. 12. What do you think of your own righteousness and strength with respect to your salvation?

A. I look upon my own righteousness and strength as insufficient to answer the demands of God's law, and therefore I renounce them, and flee to a Surety for both, saying, In the Lord Jesus only have I righteousness and strength; and I am content and resolved to make use of a borrowed strength for my performing of duty, and of a borrowed righteousness for my acceptance in duty.

Q. 13. How do you like this self-denying way of saving lost souls?

A. I am well pleased with it, as it makes me an eternal debtor to free grace, as it doth exclude all boasting and glorying in the creature, and ascribes all the glory of my salvation to Christ only; as it takes the crown off the head of self, and puts it upon the head of glorious Christ.

Q. 14. How do you relish the kingly office of Jesus Christ?

A. I am well pleased therewith, and content to take Christ as a King to govern me by his laws, as well as a Priest to save me by his blood; nay, I am desirous he may come in as a King, and execute his kingly office in my soul; that he may set up his throne in my heart, subdue indwelling sin, and conquer all my rebellious lusts and [illegible]tion.

[illegible] 15. What view have you of the Holy Ghost, the third person in the Trinity, and of his office in the business of saving souls?

A. I look upon him as the blessed applier of Christ's purchase unto me, and do accept of him as such; and I am willing to give up myself to him, to convince, enlighten, renew, sanctify and guide me; and I believe he is as willing and ready to make the application, as Christ was to make the purchase; and therefore I desire to trust him for this blessed effect.

Q. 16. What think you of the things of this world as a portion to the soul?

A. I look upon all its profits, honours, and pleasures, to be insufficient to suit the soul's desires, and that they are nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit; and therefore I will never set my heart upon the world as my portion: it is only the enjoyment of God reconciled in Christ, that can afford complete satisfaction to my soul; and this only I chuse for my happiness and portion.

Q. 17. What do you think of the world to come?

A. I look upon it, and the things thereof, as awful, certain, and very near. I look upon hell as the eternal habitation of unbelievers; but I view heaven as the country and dwelling place of the followers of the Lamb, with whom I desire to join, to seek that country, and dwell with them for ever.

Q. 18. What do you think of a holy and religious life?

A. I think a religious life, or a life spent in the service of God, and in communion with him, the most pleasant and comfortable life that a man can live in the world.

Q. 19. How do you think to attain to holiness for living this life?

A. I look upon Jesus Christ as the Purchaser of holiness as well as of happiness, as he, who, by his death, hath obtained the Holy Spirit to effectuate the new-birth, and form the image of God in his people; and therefore desire to come to Christ and his blood for sanctification, as well as for justification; for conformity and likeness to God, as well as for access to fellowship and communion with God, and I will plead, that he may send his Holy Spirit unto my soul, for producing holiness, and all the graces of the Spirit.

Q. 20. What view have you got of the promises of the covenant, and their usefulness?

A. I look upon them as the ground of all my faith and hope, and I desire to make daily use of them, and to plead them with God for furniture and strength to perform every duty, and for perseverance and throughbearing in all the steps of my pilgrimage; and I resolve to have recourse to him in every strait and difficulty.

Q. 21. As you profess willingness to accept of God in Christ as your God, are ye not also willing to dedicate yourself to him for his use and service?

A. Yes, I am willing (I hope through grace) to give up and surrender unto the Lord myself, and all that belongs unto me, my soul and body, with all their powers, faculties, senses, members, and enjoyments, to be instruments of his glory, and to be disposed of him for his use and service at his pleasure.

Q. 22. How do you instruct your willingness to give up and surrender the powers and faculties of your soul unto the Lord?

A. I think I am willing to dedicate and give up my understanding to the Lord, to contemplate his perfections, and know his will; my memory to him, to retain and

treasure up his gracious promises and counsels; my will to him, to chuse and refuse every thing according to his will, and to comply therewith in all things, and my conscience to him, to be his deputy, to accuse and excuse according to his direction.

Q. 23. Do you also resign and give up the passions and affections of your soul unto the Lord?

A. Yes, I give up and dedicate my passion of grief to the Lord, to mourn for every thing that is offensive to him; my hatred, to abhor every thing that is hateful to him; my desires, to long for his presence; my love, to embrace and entertain him; my delight and joy, to solace myself, and to acquiesce chearfully in him as my soul's portion and happiness.

Q. 24. In what respects do you resign your bodily senses and members to the Lord?

A. I give up my eyes, to read his word, and behold his wondrous works; my ears to hear his word, and attend to his counsels; my taste, smell, and feeling, to discern and relish his sweetness and excellency in the creatures; my tongue, to proclaim his praise, and commend his ways and service; my hands to help his people; and my feet to walk in paths pleasing to him.

Q. 25. How do you resign your enjoyments and comforts to the Lord?

A. I resign my time, my health, my talents, my opportunities, my relations, my gifts, my interest, my power, my wisdom, my substance, my honour, my reputation, and all I have in the world, unto the Lord, to be employed and disposed of by him for his glory, as he thinks proper.

Q. 26. What view have you now of sin, and of these sins you once esteemed as your right hand and right eye?

A. I see and abhor them as the enemies and crucifiers of my Lord Jesus, and as the very nails and spear that pierced him, and desire to throw them out of my heart, and to cut off every right hand and pluck out every right eye, and to renounce all ungodliness and all beloved lusts, and count no sin too dear to part with for Jesus Christ my Lord.

Q. 27. What do you think now of companions in sin and their solicitations?

A. I am convinced of their folly, and resolve never to follow the multitude to do evil, nor to join them in any of the common sins of the age, and stedfastly (through grace) to avoid the snares, and resist the temptations of evil company; saying, with David, Depart from me, ye evil doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God.

Q. 28. What thoughts have you of the people of God and these who bear his image?

A. I look upon them as God's precious jewel, the excellent ones of the earth, and the most desirable company in the world.

Q. 29. But what will you think of them when you see them few and despised?

A. I resolve through grace to join Christ's little flock, his praying, and sin-hating flock, though they be few in number; desire to love them above all others, and to accept of them as my fellow-travellers to the heavenly Zion, and that notwithstanding of their being despised or reproached by the world.

Q. 30. But what do you think of the cross, and of sharp persecution, that sometimes attend the owning of Christ?

A. I desire to take Christ with his cross, as well as with his crown; and to welcome the world's hatred, reproaches, injuries, or any kind of trouble or persecution I may meet with for owning of Christ, his truth, and ways.

Q. 31. What think ye of the holy scriptures?

A. I believe they are indited by God's Holy Spirit, I value them above all books, I accept of them thankfully as a guide through the wilderness, a light to my feet, and a lamp to my paths, and a treasure of comforts and cordials suitable for me in all cases and difficulties, which I desire always to search into and study to be acquainted with.

Q. 32. What do you think of the Lord's day?

A. I regard it as holy and honourable; and as a standing testimony of the perfection of Christ's sacrifice; I look upon it as the best day of the week, as being Christ's weekly market day, for needy souls, which I resolve to improve carefully for getting provision for my soul through the rest of the week.

Q. 33. What do you think of gospel-ordinances?

A. I look upon the word, sacraments, prayer, and praise, to be God's institutions, and means of conveying grace to souls. I thankfully accept of them, as needful helps in the way to heaven, and as trysting places betwixt God and my soul; and I desire to make it my main errand in attending them to meet with him therein.

Q. 34. What do you think of the Lord's Supper that you have in view?

A. I look upon it as Christ's banqueting-house, and spiritual feast, which in his love he hath provided for refreshing and strengthening his people's souls, while travelling through this wilderness: desire to bless God for it, and to accept of it as a rare privilege, a quickener of grace, a memorial of redeeming love, and a pledge of Christ's second coming.

Q. 35 What do you think of the duty of prayer?

A. I look upon it not only as my great duty, but also as an honourable privilege, seeing hereby I have access to converse with God; and therefore I resolve, through grace, to live a life of prayer and acquaintance with God, in and through Christ, all my days, and that I will always go to God and consult with him in all cases and difficulties.

Q. 36. What do you think of the rest of the duties of christianity, and of all these which the moral law enjoins?

A. I look upon the law (which Christ hath adopted into the covenant of grace, as a rule of life to his people) to be holy, just, and good; and the duties enjoined by it to be most reasonable, calculated for the glory of God and his people's good. The gospel, which is the doctrine of grace, doth strongly enforce this law, by teaching us sobriety with respect to ourselves, righteousness with respect to our neighbour, and godliness with respect to God; and the love of Christ doth mightily constrain us to the diligent performance of all these moral duties.

Q. 37. What do you think of the rods and afflictions which attend the children of God?

A. I believe they are fatherly chastisements for our good; and that they are wisely and seasonably ordered by him, who hedges up his people's way with thorns, that they may not find their crooked paths, and therefore I desire to submit to the rod, as the needful discipline of Christ's house, and to welcome his convictions and reproofs, as well as his comforts and smiles; and to bless him for afflictions as well as for mercies.

Q. 38. What do you think of the life of faith?

A. I believe it to be the most happy life, and that it ought to be the daily life of God's people while in this world. And I desire to study and learn this noble life of faith, and of dependence upon the Son of God, and to make daily use of his blood and righteousness to cover my guilt, and of his grace and strength to enable me to perform duty, conquer sin, resist temptation, and bear affliction.

Q. 39. What do you think of the spiritual welfare which Christ calls you to?

A. I look upon that war as just and honourable; and therefore do come in a volunteer at the sound of the gospel-trumpet, to list myself a soldier under Christ's banner, I do for ever abandon the devil's camp, and am willing to swear allegiance to Christ Jesus, to take up arms for him, and to fight against his enemies, the world, the devil, and the flesh, all the days of my life. I resolve never to make peace with these enemies, nor agree to a cessation of arms. I will never wittingly nor willingly reset, nor give harbour to, the bosom traitors of indwelling lusts and corruptions; but under the conduct of my glorious Captain, and in his strength, I will carry on the war, till I attain to that complete victory which is promised to all believers in Christ.

Q. 40. What do you think of these who are deserters and runaways from Christ's standard?

A. I look upon them as guilty of the greatest madness, and exposed to the greatest wrath, seeing Christ's soul can take no pleasure in these who draw back from him; and therefore I purpose, through grace, to keep close by my Captain, and to adhere to his cause and interest all the days of my life.

Q. 41. In whose strength is it that you engage to all these parts and articles of the covenant?

A. Only in the strength of Jesus Christ my Head and Surety, who hath undertaken for me, and promised to make his grace forthcoming to me. Wherefore I altogether distrust my own strength and resolution, and betake myself to borrowed strength. I resolve never to trust in my promise to Christ, but in Christ's promise to me, that he will never leave me, nor forsake me.

Q. 42. Will you satisfy yourself with a public profession and engaging to these things before men?

A. No; I will, through grace, profess and declare all these things also in secret before God. And I will give my consent to all the parts and articles of God's covenant of grace, in the most serious and self-denied manner: and I will, by grace, bind and engage myself to them, by entering into secret transaction, or personal covenant with God, thro' Christ, before I come to take the seal of God's covenant. And afterwards I will adventure, in his strength, to approach to his holy table, to ratify and seal this bargain before men and angels.

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INDEX.

INDEX.